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**Understanding the Nexus between Customers Satisfaction with Product Quality and Branding on Consumer Loyalty: The Case of Consumers of Les Brasseries du Cameroun Products in the Buea Municipality**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** Companies are today struggling for survival in a very competitive business environment. It has become very important for them to identify the factors that influence customers' loyalty to various products and how these factors are connected to the choices consumers make, hence their loyalty to the products they chose. This study examines how often consumers use various Les Brasseries du Cameroun products and test to what extent consumer loyalty depends on consumers' satisfaction with branding and quality of the company's products.

**Methodology:** Using survey method, a total of 390 questionnaires were administered to consumers of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products who were resident in the Buea municipality. 380 questionnaires were properly filled and returned.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that a majority of the respondents had never consumed any of the alcoholic beverages (33 Export, Mützig, Castel and Beaufort) produced by Les Brasseries du Cameroun as compared to non-alcoholic beverages (Djino, Top Grenadine, Top Orange, Top Pamplemousses, Top Anana and Malta Tonic). The data also suggest that the higher the rate of satisfaction amongst consumers with branding and the quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products, the more they agree that branding and product quality influenced their loyalty and vice-versa. The level of significance of these findings was further confirmed using linear regression in which the significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  was recorded in each of the cases. Therefore, both satisfaction with branding and quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products significantly influence customers' loyalty to the company's products.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:**

The findings validate the cognitive dissonance theory in the sense that, a consumer who is unsatisfied with any aspect of a product like quality, may look for other reasons, like his or her satisfaction with product branding to reduce any inconsistency within to remain loyal.

**Keywords:** *Branding, Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Consumer Loyalty, Les Brasseries du Cameroun*

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## INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction with product quality and branding is a key factor that influences consumer loyalty. Product quality refers to the extent to which a product meets or exceeds the expectations and needs of customers. Branding is the process of creating a distinctive identity and image for a product or a company in the minds of customers. Both product quality and branding can affect how customers perceive the value, benefits, and attributes of a product, and how they relate to it emotionally and psychologically. Customer satisfaction with product quality and branding can lead to positive outcomes such as repeat purchases, word-of-mouth referrals, customer retention, and customer advocacy (Rua, Saldanha and Amaral 2020 and Bose & Rao, 2021). These outcomes can enhance consumer loyalty, which is the degree of commitment and attachment that customers have to a product or a company. Consumer loyalty can generate long-term profitability and competitive advantage for businesses. Therefore, understanding the nexus between customer satisfaction with product quality and branding on consumer loyalty is crucial for marketers and managers who want to create and sustain loyal customers.

The customer is the main target of marketing and gaining a loyal customer is very important in a competitive market which is getting even more challenging to manage. According to Khan (2013), customer loyalty is considered as one of the key factors a company's success depends on. Generally, the concept customer of loyalty seems to have gained great interest amongst researchers. Kuusik (2007) reported that customer loyalty had, since the 1980s, been a major concern in the minds of most marketers and many companies. These marketers and companies according to Pitta, Franzak and Fowler (2006) spent millions on customer relationship management programmes to create customer loyalty.

As stated in Bose and Rao (2021), loyalty in the business context is considered to be the customer's commitment to do business with a particular company or producer which in effect leads to repeated purchases or repurchases of goods and services from that company or service provider. Similarly, Oliver (1999), Thakur (2016), Abu-Alhaija, Raja, Haslinda, and Jaharuddin (2018) maintained that, consumer loyalty has to do with a deeply held commitment from a consumer to repurchase or re-patronise a chosen good or service constantly in the future; hence, sticking to the same brand repeatedly despite influences that might cause them to change to similar brands. In other words, customer loyalty can also be described as an emotional relationship between a company and its customer that is demonstrated by how ready a customer is to engage with and repeatedly purchase from that company as compared to its competitors.

Having such loyal customers who can repurchase your goods and services despite related offers from competitors has remained the goal of producers of goods and service providers (Pi & Huang, 2011). Craner (1995) argued that a strong brand with loyal consumers is very important to the success of any business as loyalty is an important key to the success of business. The success of any business is highly dependent on getting and maintaining customers.

In the midst of a competitive market environment where companies do not only have their products competing with those of local companies, but also with those from multinational companies from abroad, Les Brasseries du Cameroun does not more have the monopoly of their goods dominating the local Cameroon markets. They, as well as other brewery companies have been undertaking different strategies to gain their own share of the market for their products.



Therefore, the challenge Les Brasseries du Cameroun is facing may not only be to attain loyalty status, but also to retain the status against other competing brands. These among others are the challenges a seller or producer must get answers to in order to remain strategic in the market. Loyalty is associated with trust which according to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) is relies on a brand that performs its stated functions. Trust is seen as the rational choice that is associated to branding and is said to be associated with anything positive. Such association contains its meaning to consumer and are used in making purchase decisions.

As stated in Bloemer and Kasper (1995), loyalty is widely considered as one of the ways with which the consumer expresses his/her satisfaction with the performance of the product or service received. This paper is conceived on the premise that there is a paucity of research in Cameroon relating to consumers' loyalty in relation to branding and quality of products, especially brewery products. Les Brasseries du Cameroun has over the years been involved in different promotional activities to keep their products in the market. We have watched some of their products disappear from the counter. This could be as a result of lack of empirical evidence as to what they should exactly do to get customers loyal to their products. The objectives of this study is to examine the frequency at which respondents consume different products of Les Brasseries du Cameroun and how their satisfaction with the branding and quality of the products influences their loyalty to the company's products.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### A Background History of Les Brasseries du Cameroun

As reported in the company's website, [lesbrasseriesducameroun.com](http://lesbrasseriesducameroun.com), Les Brasseries du Cameroun known, as Société Anonyme de Brasseries du Cameroun (SABC) was founded as a subsidiary of a French company les Brasseries et Glaceries d'Indochine (BGI) in 1948. The first factory of this new found company was based in Doula. Others were later opened in Yaounde (Centre Region), Garoua (North Region), Bafoussam (West Region) and finally Ombe (South West Region).

This company fabricated its first beer in Cameroon in 1950 known as the Bull Beer. The second beer, Beaufort was launched in 1952. Champagne Soda, Orange Squash and Lemon Squash followed in 1953. Tonic Water was produced in 1960. The company's popular alcoholic brand, 33 Export which is amongst its top brands today and 33 Stout has disappeared from the market were introduced in 1962. This company signed a contract to partner with an international company, Coca Cola to produce through a license, the Coca-Cola, Sprite and Fanta drink in 1963, 1971 and 1972, respectively. The company proceeded to establish the first beer bottling chain in Yaounde in 1966 while a soft drink factory was opened in Bafoussam and Ombe the following year (1967). The installation of the brewery company took place in Garoua in 1968 while in Yaounde and Bafoussam were in 1970 and 1971, respectively.

The launch of the Top brand of soft drinks, Topanana took place in 1974, Topcitron in 1975, while Toporange and Toptonic both took place in 1976. The company created the Cameroon Water Company (SEMC) in 1979 but the activities of SEMC only started in 1983 with the launching of Source Tangui, the first natural mineral water produced in Cameroon. While the year 1984 saw the installation of another factory at Ndokoti in Douala, 1990 saw the takeover of Brasseries et Glacières Internationales (BGI) by the CASTEL group. The purchase of International Brasseries from the FOTSO group by the merger-absorption and manufacture of Mützig and Amstel beers took place in 1991 and two year later (1993), witnessed HEINEKEN's equity investment in the capital of SABC. The Company in 2008 went into

partnership with the Warsteiner group, Nichois International and subsidiary of Brasserie SIAC Isenbeck. It also started a partnership with Orangina Schweppes International in 2010. The year 2017 saw the creation of the SABC Group which brings together Les Brasseries du Cameroun, SOCAVER and SEMC. The company turned 70 in 2018 when they celebrated the 70th anniversary with the installation of a new box lines and extension of stores in big towns within the country.

### **Customer Loyalty and Its Dimensions Explained**

Scholars like, Bloemer and Kasper (1995), Razavi, Hossein, Hessem and Hadi (2012), Emond and Selling (2013), Wu and Ai (2016), Rua, Saldanha and Amaral (2020) and Mohammad (2022) are unanimous that the concept, customer loyalty, has gained much attention among scholars as well as marketing practitioners. The above cited scholars revealed a considerable amount of literature that focused on this subject, especially relating to the attention companies have been putting to satisfy customers in order to gain their loyalty.

According to Rua, Saldanha and Amaral (2020), consumer loyalty is an important factor that has a relationship with the income of companies. While explaining how this relationship manifest, Rua, Saldanha and Amaral (2020) noted that, a company's income is likely to increase when customers who are associated with a product repeatedly buy and continue to recommend the products to their partners thereby increasing sales. It is equally stated by Bowen and Chen (2001) that loyal consumers are consumers who buy products from a company repetitively, with a commitment to repurchase the good or service and suggest these same good and service to others to buy. Other scholars, Reichheld and Sasser (1990), Fornell and Wernerfelt (1987), Clark (1997), Oliver (1999), Reichheld (2003) cited in Emond and Selling (2013) also argued that companies can enhance their profit when they focus on retaining existing customers. According to these authors, customer loyalty, is all about earning trust from the right kind of customers and the results of that trust is their will to do all their business transactions with a particular company.

Customer's loyalty is categorised into four types in Dick and Basu (1994). These four types, which include no loyalty, loyalty, latent loyalty, and spurious loyalty according to Dick and Basu (1994), are based on two dimensions of relative attitude and repeat patronage. Similarly, Nurainy, Hidayat, Nani and Aprilina (2022) stated that the concept consumer loyalty includes two dimension that has to do with behaviour and attitude. Nurainy et al (2022) explained that behavioural loyalty is related to the frequency of purchases, profits, a specific time, and the quantity of comparison when buying a product. On the other hand, attitude loyalty is associated to consistency in buying products or connecting with the company emotionally or psychologically. In summary, the dimension of behaviour is grounded on preferences, relationships, and loyalty to a brand or product while attitude is also established on personal experience.

Abu-Alhaija, Yusof, Hashim and Jaharuddin (2018) recommended that marketing scholars should take this classification of loyalty into their research consideration due to its important impact and implications. This classification has taken into account both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of loyalty (Bowen and McCain, 2015). In competitive markets, practitioners should be motivated to create true loyal customers, who have high relative attitude with high repeated patronage behaviour via proper marketing strategies and tactics.

Dick and Basu (1994) conceptualisation of customer's loyalty was based on the relationship between relative attitude and repeated patronage behaviour. That is to say, customer's loyalty

includes attitudinal and behavioural dimensions, where relative attitude refers to attitudinal dimension of loyalty and repeat patronage behaviour refers to behavioural loyalty. Dick and Basu (1994) further argued that integrating attitude dimension into the loyalty model (patronage behaviour) would enhance its predictive ability. More specifically, attitudinal loyalty refers to customer's emotional attachment while behavioural loyalty refers to customer's actual behaviour. In this regard, marketing scholars are advised to use both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of loyalty in their actual measurements and studies.

Though Antonios (2011) argued that the concept, customer loyalty is generally complex to discuss due to its many facets, he further maintained that conceptualisation of this concept is dominated by these two dimensions, which are behaviour and attitude. Antonios (2011) explicated that, behavioural loyalty can be examined through behavioural portrayals based on aspects of recurrent purchase behaviour that can be studied measuring the amount of purchase, frequency of purchase and amount of brand switching which have been offered. On the other hand, the attitudinal approach can be examined through the consumer attitudes, preferences and dispositions towards brands, and which, in turn allow for greater insight into loyal behaviour.

Given the complexity in understanding consumer loyalty, the use of composite or integrated loyalty measurements has been considered highly critical in giving a better understanding on customer's loyalty. Bowen and McCain (2015) considered using only attitudinal measurements or only behavioural measurements to be an inadequate procedure in evaluating and understanding customer's loyalty. Bowen and McCain (2015) recommended using a composite measurement of loyalty that combines both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions in measuring customers' loyalty. Their argument is based on review of literature that revealed that scholars generally use composite measurements of customer's loyalty for a better understanding of the concept. Khan (2013) had earlier encouraged the use of composite measures of behavioural and attitudinal loyalty while examining the concept, consumer loyalty.

In examining the loyalty construct from these three perspectives that include attitudinal, behavioural and composite measures has increasingly been adopted by scholars, according to Chang, Wang and Yang, (2009). This can be seen in Nisar and Whitehead (2016) and Srivastava and Kaul (2016) who successfully carried studies conceptualising customer's loyalty in terms of composite perspective which consists of attitudinal and behavioural loyalty.

### **Strategies and the Importance of Developing and Maintaining Consumer's Loyalty**

It is stated in Reichheld and Sasser (1990) that acquiring new customers entails some one-time costs in the form of advertising, promotions and so on. Having long-time customers who are loyal to the company will on the other hand, provide free advertising (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Since loyal customers tend to make positive recommendations to their friends about brands they have utilized or been in contact with, it further reduces customer acquisition costs (Oliver, 1999 & Reichheld, 2003).

Referrals from existing customers are particularly lucrative on the web since word of mouth online spreads even quicker than word of mouth offline. Customers can use e-mails (Reichheld & Schefter, 2000) or various social media platforms to broadcast a recommendation of a favourite online retailer to dozens of friends. In addition to reducing customer acquisition costs, having loyal customers can also reduce costs in the form of customer service and help-desks.

This is because referred customers turn to their friend(s) who recommended them for help and guidance instead of calling the brands customer service (Reichheld & Schefter, 2000). Also,

companies that have succeeded in establishing long-term relationships with their customers can usually charge more for their products. It is due to the fact that most customers prefer to pay a slightly higher price for something they know than to trust a less expensive competitor (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Thatcher & George, 2004).

Having proven that it is profitable to have loyal customers, it is also important to understand how to develop strategies to help companies to keep or maintain them. One of those strategies is developing trust. Trust plays a critical role in developing and maintaining loyalty especially for e-businesses. To gain customer loyalty you must first gain their trust (Hoffmann, Novak & Peralta 1999; and Reichheld & Schefer, 2000). Considering increasing distance from which business transactions are now conducted especially with the coming of e-commerce, there are more risks and uncertainties that are magnified (Reichheld and Schefer, 2000).

Hoffmann et al. (1999) argue that it is mainly the part concerning transactional security and privacy that influence customers in the online buying process. Reichheld and Schefer (2000) maintained that the consumers cannot touch, feel or smell the products nor can they look into the salesperson's eyes when they buy the product. They instead fully have to rely on images and product descriptions on the website and if they do not trust those promises, they will shop elsewhere (Reichheld & Schefer, 2000 and Gommans, Krishnan, & Scheffold, 2001).

For e-businesses, Gommans et al (2001) maintained that brand trust and loyalty in general, are particularly important since those components can be helpful in overcoming some of the Internet's disadvantages. Such disadvantages are perceptions that the Internet is a dishonest, unsafe and unreliable marketplace (Gommans et al., 2001). A company cannot buy trust with promotions or advertising, they have to earn it by acting in the best interests of their customers, as Reichheld and Schefer (2000) put it.

In a bit to acquire customer retention, Ishiguro and Amasaka (2012) cited in Akaeze and Akaeze (2017) on their part stated some current strategies used by auto dealers to gain customer retention. They considered these strategies to be critical. The strategies include providing customers with great services and a complimentary maintenance plan. According to them, greater service experiences can produce a satisfied loyal customer. On the other hand, they argued that auto dealerships who offer complimentary maintenance plan help them eliminate competition by securing customer service intentions before customers leave the dealership. Auto sales managers may use complementary maintenance plans to reduce time and money spent chasing lost opportunities.

### **The Relationship between Product Quality and Customer Loyalty**

As stated in Albayrak (2015), product quality is an important function and perception of consumer performance related to existing product attributes or services. Expanding on the importance of product quality in marketing, Adhikari (2018) maintained that buyers always generally see and evaluate the quality of products in the market before buying. According to Mohammad (2022), it is well established in literature that the quality of a product (good or service) amongst others are determinants of customer loyalty. Ferencic and Wölfling (2015) explained that product quality is the base for customer satisfaction and that customer satisfaction is directly linked with the brand loyalty building process. They maintained that creating loyalty is not possible if the product quality does not meet the required standard in the long term.

It is stated in Grönroos (2002) that the quality of a product (goods or services) is what the customer perceives it to be. Very often, the technical measures of a service are seen as



important when measuring quality. In reality, the customers have a much wider spectrum of what quality is, customers often see other aspects as more important than the technical. According to Grönroos (1991), companies have to define their quality in the same way as their customers define it, or the companies might act in a wrong way. Though Abbas, Islam, Hussain, Baqir and Muhammad (2021) stated that a strong brand image helps to keep an establishment in the mind of potential consumers thereby resulting to customer loyalty, they also argued that quality products in terms of goods and services should be provided to make the customer loyal. Their argument is that high quality makes the image of the brand.

Similarly, Rual, de Sousa Saldanha and Amaral (2020) opined that there is a positive and significant effect that product quality has on consumer loyalty. They explained that this is because high quality products will attract consumers to buy repeatedly and recommend others as well to buy. Rual, et al. (2020) suggested that improving product quality will therefore, help increase consumer loyalty. The implication is that customers will buy repeatedly and recommend others to buy by word of mouth (word of mouth marketing) when they are satisfied with the quality of the product. Abugu, Ozo and Olugbenga (2018) made an assessment of determinants of beer brand loyalty building in Nigeria. They concluded that breweries in Nigeria need not rest on their competitive advantage but should continually improve on product quality and other factors established through research as propelling forces to loyalty.

### **The Relationship between Branding and Customer Loyalty**

According to Smithson (2015), branding is a marketing practice in which a company creates a name, symbol or design that is easily identifiable as belonging to the company. This helps to identify a product and distinguish it from other products and services. Branding is important because not only that it makes a memorable impression on consumers but it allows your customers and clients to know what to expect from your company. It is a way of distinguishing yourself from the competitors and clarifying what it is you offer that makes you the better choice. Your brand is built to be a true representation of who you are as a business, and how you wish to be perceived.

Di Cuia (2003) stated that branding is essentially what a customer perceives of a company's product or service. Balmer & Gray (2003) break these conceptual definitions of branding to entail marks denoting ownership, image-building devices, symbols associated with key values, means by which to construct individual identities and a conduit by which pleasurable experiences may be consumed.

The factor which drives the consumer behaviour differs according to the type of brand the consumer decides to buy. The word loyalty usually refers to the association and recognition. When a consumer is loyal to brand, he will always prefer that brand upon other brands purchase that product for many years. Whenever he will need to buy a particular product, the same brand will come to his mind which he always buys due to his attachment and satisfaction which he expects from that brand (McGoldrick, 1997).

Brands create the sense of status consciousness in many consumers which leads to the sense of recognition and using different brand products is the new trend of fashion (Zara, Sahar, Rafia, and Hayat, 2022). People feel pleasure when they are recognized in society, friends and family in connection to specific brand which is mostly used by a person. Now people want to have everything branded from the food they eat, clothes they wear to the decoration of their homes. Status and conspicuous consumption are also factors which affect the consumer behaviour.



Howard and Sheth (1969) showed that there is a relationship between consumers with brands which significantly affect the behaviour of consumers. Abbas, Islam, Hussain, Baqir and Muhammad (2021) also concluded that branding has an impact on customer loyalty and that this relationship is facilitated by customer satisfaction and brand awareness. Abbas et al. (2021) further explained that it is the satisfaction the consumer gets that creates interest of the consumer to the use of the product and specific brand and also that, brand awareness plays a significant part in the relationship between brand image and customer loyalty. That is, the consumer will prefer a product if it is uniquely branded.

Andreani, Taniaji and Puspitasari (2012) also reported a similar relationship between branding and customer loyalty. In a study on the impact of brand image, customer loyalty with customer satisfaction as a mediator in Mcdonalds, they found a positive impact associated between the strength of a brand and customer loyalty. Further analysis revealed there is a positive impact of strength of brand association towards customer satisfaction as well as a positive impact of customer satisfaction towards customer loyalty.

Sulibhavi and Shivashankar (2017) studied the impact of brand image on customer's loyalty towards private label brands as a mediating effect of satisfaction on Hubli-dharwad conglomerate in the city of Karnataka. The result showed that there exists a relationship between direct brand image and customer loyalty, between brand image and satisfaction, between satisfaction and customer loyalty and that satisfaction mediates the relationship between the brand image and customer loyalty.

### **The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in Building Customer Loyalty**

Satisfaction is generally that pleasing emotion that someone gets after receiving something they wanted, or when they have done something they wanted to do. One of the areas that marketing scholars and marketers have paid much attention is understanding the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Most of literature on this subject associates a strong and positive effect between customer satisfaction and their will and intention to repurchase goods and services, a phenomenon known as customer loyalty.

Customer satisfaction (CSAT) is a measure of how well a company's products, services, and overall customer experience meet customer expectations. It reflects how healthy a business is doing by showing how well its products or services resonate with buyers. As reported in Farooq, Salam, Fayolle, Jaafar and Ayupp (2018), consumer satisfaction is achieved when a product or service provides good benefits to the customer in accordance with the needs and expectations or positive feelings the customer gets after using that product or service. McMullan and Gilmore (2003) on their part predicted that satisfaction is a prerequisite for customer loyalty to a product or service of a company.

In a study to analyse the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, where service quality was used as the indicator, Hertzberg, Rask and Bengtsson, (2020) found that service quality has a significant effect on both customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, especially when the quality of the service was excellent.

Oliver (1999) and Chang, Wang and Yang (2009) maintained that the relationship between customer's satisfaction and loyalty is nearly intuitive and inseparable, Abu-Alhajib, Hussein and Abu Allan (2019) added that the link between customer's satisfaction and customer's loyalty is core to the survival of companies. In other words, companies can only do well and grow when they have loyal customers who are developed according to satisfaction they have derived from the services and products.

Similarly, Zephan (2018) highlighted that the customers are the most important part of every business and their satisfaction must be considered extremely important. To justify his statement, Zephan (2018) argued that customers may become loyal when they are satisfied, and that customer loyalty in return results to a positive effect on the profit margin of the business. He further noted that satisfied customers create the possibility for a business to gain new customers through their positive word-of-mouth expressed about the products and services of the company.

A recent study by Sao, Kumar, Bapat, Khan, and Singh (2023) examined the relationship between customer loyalty, service quality, and customer satisfaction at DLF Mall of India revealed a strong positive relationship between service quality and customer loyalty at  $\beta=0.528$ ,  $CR=2.681$ ,  $P<0.05$ , customer satisfaction and loyalty at  $\beta=0.78$ ,  $CR=1.091$ ,  $P<0.05$ , and service quality and customer satisfaction at  $\beta=0.65$ ,  $CR=2.014$ ,  $P<0.05$ . The study by Sao, et al (2023) revealed that service quality and customer satisfaction are key factors that contribute to customer loyalty, in the context of DLF Mall of India.

Our present study is also interested to examine customer loyalty by exploring how customer satisfaction with products quality and branding is related to customer loyalty using the context of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products in the Buea municipality, Cameroon.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by the cognitive dissonance theory. Salzberger and Koller (2010) stated that the concept of cognitive dissonance theory was first suggested by Leon Festinger in 1957 and that this concept has been a popular construct in both psychology and consumer behaviour research. In this theory, the American psychologist, Leon Festinger proposed that human beings strive for internal psychological consistency to function mentally in the real world. According to Festinger (1957), a person who experiences internal inconsistency tends to become psychologically uncomfortable and is motivated to reduce their cognitive dissonance. In this light, they try to reduce the dissonance by changing one of the inconsistent elements or restore consonance by adding consonant elements. Using this theory to explain the impact of cognitive dissonance and customer satisfaction on loyalty and complaint behaviour, Salzberger and Koller (2010) maintained that, dissonance and satisfaction are complementary constructs. According to them, a dissatisfied consumer who has no intention to be loyal would not develop cognitive dissonance. In contrast, a dissatisfied consumer who wants to be loyal will suffer from dissonance and, consequently, has a higher tendency to complain. In this case, the customer could complain as one of the ways to reduce dissonance.

Couret (2022) stated that when a purchasing process leads to doubts, the end result is cognitive dissonance in the mind of the consumer. However, Couret (2022) argued that loyalty plays an important role in helping consumers reconcile their purchase decision, especially where effective communication and targeted messaging are used to help dissipate any dissonance that may arise. This theory is applicable to this study in the sense that an unsatisfied consumer who intends to remain loyal to any product of Les Brasseries du Cameroun may look for other ways to reduce inconsistency within him or her, particularly when they are dissatisfied with some aspects of the company's product, but are ready to stay loyal to it.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The design for this study is the quantitative approach while the method of inquiry used is survey. The target population is made up of consumers of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages of Les Brasseries du Cameroun resident within neighbourhoods in the Buea

municipality of Cameroon. The sampling technique was purposive as the researchers targeted only consumers of the company's product. Therefore, the unit of analysis for this study was any individual who at the time of data collection confirmed that he or she was at least 18 years and a consumer of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products. The extent to which branding and quality influence consumers' loyalty to these brewery company's products can only be measured through those who have for at least once consume any of its products.

The instrument was a questionnaire that was designed with predominantly closed ended questions. The first section of the questionnaire examined the frequency at which respondents consumed various products of this brewery company while the second section measured how respondents' satisfaction with products quality and branding influence their loyalty to the products. The third section simply required respondents to state their demographic characteristics. A pre-test was conducted using 39 questionnaires representing 10% of the population (390) on randomly selected denizens. This was intended to fine-tune the instrument and ensure that the instrument can actually measure the variables.

390 copies of the questionnaire were actually administered face-to-face during data collection from 13 April to 6 June 2020. The face-to-face approach was adopted based on Sekaran and Bougie (2013) recommendation. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) explained that personally administered questionnaires aid researchers to establish a rapport with the respondents that serves as motivation for them to respond to the questions; hence, high response rate. A total of 380 questionnaires were effectively completed and analysed giving a response rate of 97.4%. All closed and open ended questions were coded using numerals before they were keyed into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme version 21. The data has been presented using frequency tables. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) using linear regression method was used to generate the probability values in various relationships. The test was conducted to enable the researchers to confirm or debunk the stated hypotheses of the study.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

This study had a total of 380 participants. Most (52.6%) of the respondents were aged 21-30 years, followed by 18-20 years with 26.3%. Meanwhile, 12.9% were aged 31-40 years, 5.2% were aged 41-50 years while 2.1% were aged 51 years plus. However, a 0.3% failed to declare their age. The demographic also shows that, most (60.8%) of the participants were females while males represented only 36.6%. However, 2.6 % did not declare their gender.

In terms of marital status, 71.8% of the respondents were reported single, 15.8% married, 3.2% were cohabitating, and 2.9% was reported for widow (er), and 2.4% for divorced. 3.9% did not declare their marital status. Looking at employment status, a majority (67.5%) of the respondents were students, 16.3% working, 11.8% self-employed, 3.4% were retired, 0.3% for others. A percentage of .5% failed to declare their employment status.

For monthly income 46.8% earned less than 50,000 FCFA for income, 25.8% above 50,000-100,000FCFA, 8.2% above 100,000 – 200,000 FCFA, 6.3% above 200,000-350,000 FCFA, 5.0% above 350,000 FCFA. However, 7.9% were undeclared. In terms of level of education, 0.3% were holders of First School Leaving Certificate, while 5.3% were Ordinary level, 23.7% were Advanced level, 49.5% were first degree, 11.5% were masters, 3.2% were PhD holders, respectively. However, 6.6% failed to respond to this question. Also, place of resident was computed and 32.9% of the respondents were from Muea, 40.3% from Molyko, 26.6% from Bokwoango. However, some 0.3% did not

## Evaluating How Often Consumers Use Various Les Brasseries Du Cameroun Products

**Table 1: Percentage Representation of Consumers' Frequency of Consuming Various Les Brasseries du Cameroun Products**

Nature of product	Products	Frequency of consumption					Total	
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always		Undeclared
Alcoholic	33 Export	(257) 67.6%	(66) 17.4%	(29) 7.6%	(6) 1.6%	(11) 2.9%	(11) 2.9%	(380) 100.0%
	Mützig	(239) 62.9%	(87) 22.9%	(26) 6.8%	(11) 2.9%	(5) 1.3%	(12) 3.2%	(380) 100.0%
	Castel	(250) 65.8%	(47) 12.4%	(41) 10.8%	(19) 5.0%	(9) 2.4%	(14) 3.7%	(380) 100.0%
	Beaufort	(214) 56.3%	(74) 19.5%	(44) 11.6%	(16) 4.2%	(17) 4.5%	(15) 3.9%	(380) 100.0%
Non-Alcoholic	Djino	(63) 16.6%	(89) 23.4%	(94) 24.7%	(92) 24.2%	(30) 7.9%	(12) 3.2%	(380) 100.0%
	Top Grenadine	(62) 16.3%	(130) 34.2%	(112) 29.5%	(44) 11.6%	(25) 6.6%	(7) 1.8%	(380) 100.0%
	Top Orange	(67) 17.6%	(121) 31.8%	(94) 24.7%	(58) 15.3%	(22) 5.8%	(18) 4.7%	(380) 100.0%
	Top Pamplemousses	(53) 13.9%	(107) 28.2%	(103) 27.1%	(80) 21.1%	(32) 8.4%	(5) 1.3%	(380) 100.0%
	Top Ananas	(85) 22.4%	(111) 29.2%	(77) 20.3%	(65) 17.1%	(27) 7.1%	(15) 3.9%	(380) 100.0%
	Malta Tonic	(108) 28.4%	(109) 28.7%	(64) 16.8%	(49) 12.9%	(32) 8.4%	(18) 4.7%	(380) 100.0%
	Others	(22) 5.8%	(9) 2.4%	(13) 3.4%	(11) 2.9%	(1) 0.3%	(324) 85.3%	(380) 100.0%

Source: Field Data 2020

The data in table 1 above is a display of the frequency at which respondents consumed various products of Les Brasseries Du Cameroun. The data suggest that majority of the respondents had never consumed any of the alcoholic beverages (33 Export, Mützig, Castel and Beaufort) produced Les Brasseries du Cameroun as compared to non-alcoholic beverages (Djino, Top Grenadine, Top Orange, Top Pamplemousses, Top Anana and Malta Tonic). The percentages reported for 33 Export (67.6%), Mützig (62.9%), Castel (65.8%) and Beaufort (56.3%) are relatively higher compared to 28.4%, 22.4%, 17.6%, 16.6%, 16.3%, and 13.9% reported for Malta Tonic, Top Ananas, Top Orange, Djino, Top Grenadine and Top Pamplemousses, respectively. On the other hand, the frequency of consuming Les Brasseries du Cameroun products was higher for the non-alcoholic than the alcoholic beverages as compared to the alcoholic beverages in the selected neighbourhood.



## Evaluating the Extent Consumer Loyalty Depend on Consumers' Satisfaction with Branding and Quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun Products

**Table 2: Relationship between Consumers' Satisfaction with Branding of Les Brasseries du Cameroun Products and Consumer Loyalty**

Level of satisfaction with branding	Level of agreement on how branding influences loyalty						Total
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Undeclared	
Very dissatisfied	(14) 60.9%	(8) 11.3%	(10) 5.5%	(2) 2.7%	(1) 3.8%	(1) 25.0%	(36) 9.5%
Dissatisfied	(6) 26.1%	(30) 42.3%	(48) 26.4%	(4) 5.4%	(2) 7.7%	(0) 0.0%	(90) 23.7%
Neutral	(3) 13.0%	(25) 35.2%	(105) 57.7%	(33) 44.6%	(7) 26.9%	(2) 50.0%	(175) 46.1%
Satisfied	(0) 0.0%	(8) 11.3%	(15) 8.2%	(33) 44.6%	(10) 38.5%	(0) 0.0%	(66) 17.4%
Very satisfied	(0) 0.0%	(0) 0.0%	(3) 1.6%	(2) 2.7%	(6) 23.1%	(0) 0.0%	(11) 2.9%
Undeclared	(0) 0.0%	(0) 0.0%	(1) 0.5%	(0) 0.0%	(0) 0.0%	(1) 25.0%	(2) 0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>(23)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(71)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(182)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(74)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(26)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(4)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(380)</b> <b>100.0%</b>

Source: Field Data 2020

The data in table 2 above depicts that the higher the rate of satisfaction amongst consumers with branding of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products, the more they agree that branding influenced their loyalty and vice-versa. For example, the higher (38.5% & 23.1%) they rated that they were satisfied and very satisfied, respectively, with branding of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products, the more they strongly agreed that the branded Les Brasseries du Cameroun products influenced their loyalty for these products. On the other hand, the more (60.9% & 26.1%) they rated that they were very dissatisfied and dissatisfied, respectively, with the branding of this company's products, the more they strongly disagreed that branding influenced their loyalty.

**Table 3: Relationship between Consumers' Satisfaction with Quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun Products and Consumer Loyalty**

Level of satisfaction with quality	Level of agreement on how quality influences loyalty						Total
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Undeclared	
Very dissatisfied	(8) 72.7%	(0) 0.0%	(3) 2.8%	(2) 1.5%	(12) 12.6%	(1) 14.3%	(26) 6.8%
Dissatisfied	(2) 18.2%	(5) 17.9%	(15) 14.0%	(11) 8.3%	(12) 12.6%	(0) 0.0%	(45) 11.8%
Neutral	(1) 9.1%	(14) 50.0%	(51) 47.7%	(38) 28.8%	(18) 18.9%	(5) 71.4%	(127) 33.4%
Satisfied	(0) 0.0%	(7) 25.0%	(36) 33.6%	(68) 51.5%	(18) 18.9%	(0) 0.0%	(129) 33.9%
Very satisfied	(0) 0.0%	(2) 7.1%	(2) 1.9%	(11) 8.3%	(35) 36.8%	(0) 0.0%	(50) 13.2%
Undeclared	(0) 0.0%	(0) 0.0%	(0) 0.0%	(2) 1.5%	(0) 0.0%	(1) 14.3%	(3) 0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>(11)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(28)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(107)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(132)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(95)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(7)</b> <b>100.0%</b>	<b>(380)</b> <b>100.0%</b>

Source: Field Data 2020

According to the data in table 3 above, the higher the rate of consumers' satisfaction with the quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products the more they agreed that quality influences their loyalty to the products. From the data, it is observed that the higher the proportions (18.9% & 36.8%) of respondents reporting that they were satisfied and very satisfied, respectively, with the quality of Les Brasseries of Cameroun products, the more they strongly agree that quality influences their loyalty to the products. Likewise, the higher the proportion (72.7% & 18.2%) of those who reported that they were very dissatisfied and dissatisfied, respectively, with the quality of these products, the more they strongly disagreed that quality influences their loyalty to Les Brasseries du Cameroun products.

*Using hypotheses to test the level of significance in the nexus between product quality and branding on consumer loyalty on Les Brasseries du Cameroun products in the Buea municipality*

Despite the evidence in tables 2 and 3 above showing that the more the customers are satisfied with branding and the quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products the more it influences their loyalty to its products, separate statistical tests were conducted to examine the level of significance of these relationships. A linear regression method was used to test hypothesis one and hypothesis two as shown below:

***H<sub>1</sub>***: *The more consumers are satisfied with branding of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products the more it influences their loyalty to the product.*

**Table 4: Relationship between Customers' Satisfaction with Branding of Les Brasseries Du Cameroun Products on Customer's Loyalty**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	84.073	1	84.073	119.580	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	265.759	378	.703		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>349.832</b>	<b>379</b>			

a. Dependent Variable: How will you agree or disagree that branding influences your loyalty to Les Brasseries du Cameroun products?

b. Predictors: (Constant), What is your level of satisfaction with the branding of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products?

*Source: Field Data 2020*

From the model summary (see appendix one) R is 0.490 indicating the dependent variable (How will you agree or disagree that branding influences your loyalty to Les Brasseries du Cameroun products?) is 49% dependent on the level of customers' satisfaction with the branding of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products. The goodness fit for the model was tested using ANOVA and the analysis obtained F-count of 119.580 with a p-value of 0.000. From these results it can be concluded that the significance value obtained is 0.000 < 0.05, which shows that the level of satisfaction with the branding of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products significantly influences consumers' loyalty to the company's products. Then it can be stated that H<sub>1</sub> is accepted.

**Table 5: Evaluating Individual Independent Variable to Show Relationship between Satisfaction with Branding and Customers' Loyalty Using Beta Value**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>			T	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.376	.139		9.902	.000
What is your level of satisfaction with the branding of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products?	.473	.043	.490	10.935	.000

a. Dependent Variable: How will you agree or disagree that branding influences your loyalty to Les Brasseries du Cameroun products?

Source: Field Data 2022

Contribution of individual independent variable was further evaluated through computing Beta value. The Beta value for independent variable (satisfaction with branding) was found to be 0.490, that was tested through t-value was found to be 10.935 which is significant at 0.00% level of significance. This shows that satisfaction with branding significantly contributes to customer's loyalty to Les Brasseries du Cameroun products.

*H<sub>2</sub>: The more consumers are satisfied with the quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products, the more it influences their loyalty to the products.*

**Table 6: Relationship between Customers' Satisfaction with Quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun Products on Customer's Loyalty**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	26.382	1	26.382	25.265	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	394.700	378	1.044		
<b>Total</b>	<b>421.082</b>	<b>379</b>			

a. Dependent Variable: How will you agree or disagree that quality influences your loyalty to Les Brasseries du Cameroun products?

b. Predictors: (Constant), What is your level of satisfaction with the quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products?

Source: Field Data 2020

From the model summary (see appendix 2) R is .250 which indicates that the dependent variable (how will you agree or disagree that quality influences your loyalty to Les Brasseries du Cameroun products?) is 25% dependent on the level of customers' satisfaction with the quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products. The goodness fit for the model was tested using ANOVA from which the analysis obtained found the F value to be 25.265 with p-value = 0.000. It can be deduced from the results that the level of satisfaction with the quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products significantly influences consumers' loyalty to the company's products since the p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. Hence, H<sub>2</sub> can be accepted.

**Table 7: Evaluating Individual Independent Variable to Show Relationship between Satisfaction with Quality and Customers' Loyalty Using Beta Value**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>			T	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.957	.170		17.377	.000
1 What is your level of satisfaction with the quality of Brasseries du Cameroun products?	.241	.048	.250	5.026	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Dependent Variable: How will you agree or disagree that quality influences your loyalty to Le Brasseries du Cameroun products?

Source: Field Data 2020

Contribution of individual independent variable was evaluated through computing Beta value. The Beta value for independent variable (satisfaction with quality) was found to be 0.250, that was tested through t-value was found to be 5.026 which is significant at 0.00%. This shows that satisfaction with quality significantly contributes to the influence of customer's loyalty to Les Brasseries du Cameroun products.

### Conclusions

The main objectives of this study was to investigate how frequently customers use the various products of Les Brasseries du Cameroun and how related was their loyalty to these products with the satisfaction they derive from the branding and quality of this brewery company's products, in this case, customers in the Buea Municipality of Cameroon. The results revealed that a majority of the respondents depended more on the none-alcoholic beverages with a majority reporting that they have never consumed those that are alcoholic.

Though there are other factors that influence customers' loyalty to different goods and services, this study's focus was to examine how significant customer's satisfaction with branding and quality of the company's products was in influencing loyalty. The findings revealed that there exists a significant positive relationship between customers' loyalty to Les Brasseries du Cameroun products and the satisfaction these customers derived from the way the products are branded and their quality. These findings tie with Akaeze and Akaeze (2017) and Sulibhavi and Shivashankar (2017) who found that customer satisfaction, product quality and branding have an influence on consumers' loyalty.

The relationships were further proven using statistical test (linear regression analysis) to measure the level of significance. Based on the results, hypothesis one that stated that the more consumers are satisfied with branding of Brasseries du Cameroun products, the more it influences their loyalty to the products and hypothesis two, that stated that the more consumers are satisfied with the quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products, the more it influences their loyalty to the products were all accepted with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  in each of the cases. Therefore, concluding that both satisfaction with branding and quality of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products significantly influence customers' loyalty to the company's products.



Companies should hence, strive to ensure that the quality and branding of their products should be tailored to satisfy the consumers as a means to influence their loyalty to their products. This study found these two elements to have a significant influence on consumers' loyalty. We can also state that though we did not examine how customers of Les Brasseries du Cameroun products manage situations where they are not satisfied with their expectations from the products, some loyal customers will always look for consonance to balance any dissonance that arises. For example, consumers who are unsatisfied with any aspect of a product like quality, may look for other reasons, like his or her satisfaction with product branding to reduce any inconsistency within because they are determined to remain loyal to the product.

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