

**INFLUENCE OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN ON CONSUMER BASED BRAND EQUITY
OF BABY DIAPERS IN NAIROBI COUNTY**

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DECLARATION

This research project is entirely my original work and has not been submitted to another university or higher education institution for consideration of a degree, diploma, or certificate.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my effort to my fantastic parents, who have supported me unwaveringly throughout my academic career and have worked tirelessly to ensure that I receive education.

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ABSTRACT

The study's goal was to determine how country of origin affected consumer brand equity of baby diapers in Nairobi, Kenya. The consumer-based brand equity theory and utility theory served as the study's guiding principles. A descriptive research design was used in this study. The intended audience was those who visited the corresponding estate Kiosks in Nairobi County to purchase diapers. The target sample size was 99.997 rounded to 100 respondents. During a one-week period, a questionnaire employed at the time of diaper purchase was used to collect main data for the study. The gathered data was evaluated using descriptive and inferential statistics. The data reported in this study included both qualitative and quantitative information. The results were presented using tables, figures, frequencies and rates. Multiple linear regressions were utilized to demonstrate the influence of nation of origin and the customer brand equity of baby diapers in Nairobi County. The study findings established that the respondents concurred that they can easily picture in their mind the diaper brand of their choice. The analysis also found that the respondents largely agreed that they would repeatedly use their diaper brand of choice. It also established that the packaging of the diaper brand is of high quality. The study found that at 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, country product quality, country image, and country perceptions were all significant on consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya. The study concluded that the respondents check to confirm the country of origin of the baby diaper. The study also concluded that the respondents prefer buying foreign diaper brands, that their diaper brand of choice offers excellent value for money, and that their diaper brand of choice is a favourite brand among consumers. The study suggests that in order to draw in potential customers, diaper manufacturing businesses and marketers should concentrate on employing all the components of brand equity in their plans in target areas. It also recommends that diaper manufacturing companies and marketing managers to set aside enough budgets to promote these elements of brand equity and ensure they are well covered and established in the target market to realize the benefits. The extension of use of diaper products especially in healthcare has also created a different market and it would improve this study to include this new market in future studies in addition to babies. Further, the study proposed there be a deliberate consistent effort by diapers marketers to enhance customer based brand equity. Manufacturers of diapers should be aware that well-known brands often fail owing to poor management, overextension, and a lack of commitment in building brand equity and values.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The concept of globalization and international trade has greatly impacted international business by reducing trading distance and given consumers an opportunity to develop varied tastes and preferences (Mostafa, 2015). Consumers today have a variety of items and brands at their disposal for choice, both domestically and internationally. As a result, the desire to thrive in this global competitive climate has prompted businesses to focus more on understanding customer behavior in target areas, with a special focus on consumer ethnocentrism (Chowdhury 2013; Tsai et al. 2013). Knowledge about consumer behavior in foreign countries is especially essential because it aids marketers in developing effective marketing tactics aimed at increasing brand equity in the target market.

The consumer utility theory by Kahneman and Tversky and the consumer-based brand equity model by Keller (2003) served as the anchor theories for this study. The goal of consumer utility theory is to understand how a rational customer would make purchasing decisions. Consumers supplement the projected utility of individual benefit into preferences through decision structure, according to Merwe (2007). The consumer-based brand equity model posits that customer needs and preferences should be met to promote brand equity. The two theories provide insight into how country of origin affects brand equity (COO)

According to an International Trade Administration ranking in September 2020, Kenya has been singled-out as a great market potential for renowned international products and

brands. Being the leading stable economy in East Africa, Kenya is also the commercial, financial and logistics hub of East Africa with an educated population, fluent in technology, and strong multilateral relations with many developed countries. The Kenya Population and Housing Census Report 2019 shows that Kenya's population is 47 million people. Kenya has a birthrate of 28.3 per 1000 people translating to 1,330,100 babies born every year (Statista, 2021). Out of these, Nairobi County leads with majority of the births at 124,435 babies born every year and 524,987 babies below 4 years. These babies below 4 years form the market demand for diapers (Mwangi, 2013). Nairobi also forms the biggest economy of Kenya with most of population employed or involved in different economic activities. Many households in Nairobi also have access to a mobile phone, internet, television set, radio or even a laptop and can easily receive diaper marketing messages from companies through these mediums.

The babies below 4 years form an important population to this study since they are the consumers of baby diapers. In recent times, the diaper market in Kenya has been characterized by rapid entry by leading global players in the diaper manufacturing business. Moreover, baby diapers are affordable to most parents, hence the increased popularity for the product and the growth of the industry. With the increase in births annually, the demand for diapers has become a necessity, fashionable and has been on the increase especially after the transition from disposable cloth diapers. As noted by Yuan et al (2018), a child under the age of two can use up to more than three disposable diapers in a day, an implication that the population of babies below 4 years is a large market that different diaper companies seek to dominate in Kenya.

1.1.1 Country of Origin

The nation where a product is sourced is known as the country of origin. Han and Terpstra (1988) stated that COO stands for the country of origin of a corporation or a particular brand. According to Nagashima (1970), the idea of a country of origin is an association that customers make with products from that nation. The reputation attached to a country shapes perceptions of product quality, attitudes towards the product and purchase intentions. This reputation stems from national characteristics, economic, technological and historical background, that allows the country be distinguishable from others (Piron, 2000). Along with other intrinsic signals, consumers use information about a product's source nation as an extrinsic cue. When a company goes worldwide, its country of origin may be quite important. It is one of the elements that influences consumer impression and purchase intent.

Country of origin is viewed as an immaterial branded product or extrinsic signal, implying that customers utilize it in the inadequate knowledge concerning physical features (Sharma, 2011). According to Chen (2010), the perceived quality of imported goods which is determined by their technical, advancement, prestige, workmanship, economy and service is the intellectual or cognitive component of COO. COO, on the other hand, has a symbolic and emotional connotation in addition to serving as a further cognitive cue for clients Sharma (2011). Image relates to nation choice bias, which occurs when customers have stereotyped images of other countries, and these images influence how a product is purchased. Additionally, COO is viewed from the source nation of a brand (COB) and nation of manufacture (COM) (All Answers Ltd, 2018). This is because most multinational companies are setting up subsidiary companies in target markets to manufacture the same

product. Consumer perception of quality between two sources of the same product is not the same. This is due to a shift in customer perceptions of quality and purchasing behavior, which is reflected in the producing country (Mostafa, 2015).

1.1.2 Consumer Based Brand Equity

Every business wants to have a great brand. The customer's view of the brand is called brand equity. Keller (1993) established the business as the influence of brand information on a borrower's attitude to a product's advertisement. This means that when consumers are subjected to the marketing of a named brand, they react differently compared to when subjected to the marketing of an unnamed version of the same brand. As a result, according to Aaker (1991), customer loyalty is a compilation of five categories related with a brand to a branded form or symbols that enhance or reduce the advantages to a business or service. The five aspects of brand equity include market presence, brand perceived service quality, corporate reputation, brand attachment, business model, and many other brand associations including trademarks, channel relationships and patents.

A high brand equity is advantageous to a company as it allows a firm to set high pricing for their respective products, build an edge, enhance sales and profit margins, and lessen competition threats (Azadi, Yousefi, & Eydi, 2015). In other words, strong brand equity leads to increased uniqueness, brand understanding, and customer reaction (Buil et al., 2013), resulting in improved financial and consumer performance. Brand equity may assist customers in interpreting, processing, and storing huge volumes of information about a product or brand, as well as affect the consumer's trustworthiness in making a purchase decision, because the buyer has had previous exposure to the brand and is familiar with its qualities. The most essential factor is perceived equality and associated difficulties, which

might boost consumer happiness after they've used the product. For this study, brand equity is going to be measured using perceived quality, brand awareness, brand image, loyalty and brand association.

1.1.3 The Diaper Sub-Sector in Kenya

The Kenya Association of Manufacturers classifies disposable diapers as a sub-sector under the Cosmetics, Personal Care and Hygiene sector given their composition and nature of their use. Disposal diapers have become common in recent times among different societies and their use continues to increase globally. Diapers are special types of underwear made of synthetic disposable materials and are primarily worn by infants or children. Their absorbent material allows a baby or adult to pass urine or stool discreetly. Diapers are commonly worn by children who are not yet trained to use potties and experience bedwetting as well as adults suffering from chronic diseases and require support for personal care (Juliet & Nikki, 2012).

Previous washable cloth diapers played an integral part in baby hygiene due to their being soft, comfortable and made of natural materials. However, they were poor in absorbing urine especially for babies that pass large amounts of urine frequently. In addition, they also caused skin reactions for babies especially when the babies stayed for long without a change of the diapers. According to Odio and Thaman (2014), improvements in the cloth diapers and the need to reduce the prevalence and severity of skin reactions led to the development of disposable diaper technology. Further improvement in disposable diapers technology has given rise to the current efficient baby diapers with distinct features such as size, age, colours to signal when the baby has wet, add-on features for ease of use among others.

In recent years, the diaper sub-sector in Kenya is a booming business with multinational companies having set subsidiary operation sites in Nairobi and its environments to tap into the market whose demand is estimated to be 800 million pieces a year. There are currently over 20 different diaper brands available in the Kenyan market most of which are foreign (Mwangi, 2013). The increase in industry players for diapers has in turn reduced cost to affordable levels and increased their usage. Today especially in Nairobi, diapers are almost considered a basic necessity for all mother with babies under four years and most salaried people can afford.

Out of these, more than 20 different brands, multinational brands have the highest brand equity as well as market share. With an exception of a few that have set subsidiary manufacturing operation bases in Kenya in order to cut on cost of operation and increase market share, most of the popular brands are imported as finished products ready for sale (Mwanhi, 2013). Ironically, even after some of these foreign brands establish local manufacturing plants, they are still unable to edge out the ones importing in market share due to strong branding. These popular brands have invested in rigorous marketing and have huge marketing budgets to increase their equity. They utilize almost all channels including electronic and print advertising in an effort to reach their clients. So aggressive are the marketing initiatives that at no time are there be no diaper advert running on television. In addition, these brands are continuously innovating to improve on their products for customer satisfaction.

1.2 Research Problem

Many scholars have been interested in branding since its inception in the 1960s, with a particular focus on Brand Equity (BE) (Keller, 2008). Brand equity, in reference to Keller

(2013), is the is the worth that consumers attach to a particular brand. As a result, it represents customer attitudes about a certain brand (Yasin et al., 2007). In addition, branding is critical for gaining and retaining a long-term competitive edge (Ishaq et al., 2014). Despite its relevance, most research has focused on building brand equity measurement frameworks, with little attention paid to the elements that influence it (Valette-Florence et al., 2011). According to Keller (1993), these elements include brand quality, awareness, association, loyalty and image. Keller further argues that these elements can produce a strong brand with a high brand equity. This has a lot of benefits, including stronger brand extension prospects, more consumer preferences, improved margins, and increased buy intents.

Furthermore, greater international commerce and globalization made items from one country available to customers in another. As a result, a product's country of origin establishes a secondary relationship (Mostafa, 2015). Consumers views are shaped by the country of origin which influences their brand preferences and choices, as well as their willingness to pay more. In a developing nation like Kenya, customers see a product's source nation as a reflection of its overall quality. Samiee, (1994) argues that modern research on global consumers in developed countries, shows that there is positive ethnocentrism. In contrast, customers in emerging nations like Kenya practice reverse ethnocentrism and favor goods from other nations, which are typically regarded as superior to goods produced in their own developing nation.

A study by All Answers Ltd. (2018) with a sample of 400 respondents found that consumers preferred diapers produced from European countries unlike the diaper brands produced from China and Asian countries. This raises the question of COB and COM. The

study was comparative, since it compared the consumer preferences of European's, China's and Asia's production of the same diaper brands. This study was not comparative since it assessed consumer brand equity of diapers in Kenya. Kenya may not yet be at a point to distinguish COM and COB and mostly rely on the brand name to make decision. Although the study targeted baby diapers, it cannot be applied in Kenya given the economic, social, political and cultural differences in the areas it was conducted most of which are developed and Kenya, a developing country – factors which can compel a customer to decide to buy a certain product.

Focusing on the mobile phone brands in Egypt specifically the selected mobile phones brands. Data collected from 600 mobile phone consumers using structured questionnaires established that COO significantly influenced brand equity. However, this study presented a number of gaps to be explored by future studies including the current study. It is worth noting that this study was carried out on customers who had already made purchase of the mobile phone brands under investigation but this study was carried out at the point of purchase in estate kiosks. The study was also conducted in Egypt, presenting a gap for future research to be done in other countries including Kenya - the study's target nation. Aside from that, the study focused on durable products (mobile phones) while this study focused on non-durable goods (disposable diapers). The fact that the study focused on one product category paving way for future studies to focus on different product categories to argue how COO affects consumer brand equity is also a gap that this study seeks to answer. Similarly, Brenda and Adjnu (2018), in Mauritius assessed the effect of COO effects on customer buying behaviours towards mobile phones. Using a population of 150 respondents – subjected to questionnaires to collect data, the study used descriptive and

exploratory research as well as both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather detailed information on consumer experience with the different mobile phone brands under study.

Results from the study found that the COO influenced the decision by consumers to purchase specific mobile phone brands. The study however focused on the mobile phone brands, a field that had been previously covered by Mostafa (2015) leaving a gap for other sectors to be studied such as the baby diaper sector relating to brand equity and country of origin. This is in addition to the gaps identified in Mostafa (2015) study above.

In Kenya, few studies have been done on the concept of COO. Notably, Njuguna (2014) studied how COO affected customer traits, attitudes, and behavior toward foreign clothing brands and established that decision making by customers to make purchase of a specific product is highly influenced by the COO, with most consumers preferring foreign produced products. The study methodology used four variables namely country of origin, attitudes, characteristics and behavior to argue the influence in question unlike previous studies that used at most three variables. Primary data was derived from a study population sample of 384 through semi-structured questionnaires and personal interviews. However, the current study finds a gap in the variables studied given that the current study focused on COO and brand equity unlike what was covered before. The current study also finds a gap in the area of study noting that Njuguna focused on foreign clothing brands and this study focused on disposable diapers.

The other Kenyan study that touched on the COO concept was Mutheu (2014) focusing on its effect on Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG'S). The study utilised cross-sectional descriptive survey design which analysed 30 respondents selected randomly from a list of 15 shopping mall and supermarkets using questionnaires. The findings showed a favorable

correlation between COO and consumer purchasing choices. This study found a gap in the methodology used given that it utilised convenience sampling to gather information from the study's population. In addition, a gap also presented in the area of study noting that Mutheu (2014), focused on FMCG's while this study focused on disposable diapers a sub-sector which is growing rapidly with more than 20 diaper brands in the country. Therefore, there is need to assess how source nation factor has influenced brand equity of baby diapers. This study wanted to find out what impact country of origin has on baby diapers brands' equity in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Objective

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how the origin nation affects customer brand equity of baby diapers in Nairobi, Kenya.

1.4 Value of the study

This study added on to the few conducted studies on the topic and provide information that benefits researches and scholars. The study contributed to improved theoretical understanding how brand equity is affected by the source nation concept and enhanced knowledge on how the two variables relate. The study may be used by scholars as a reference and citations. Additionally, the study has also formed the foundation basis for scholars to conduct further research on how COO relates with customer brand equity.

This study is of significance to policy makers within the business environment. It may identify the existing gaps between local and foreign diaper brands which will provides an opportunity for policy makers to formulate strategies that ensure more local diaper brands are manufactured so as to improve the local economy.

Looking at Kenya's manufacturing sector for diaper products, this study yielded important information that may empower industry players with authentic information to guide their production as well as impact the development of effective marketing strategies by marketing managers to suit the consumer's tastes and preferences. The study may also identify the gaps that have led to dominance of the diaper market by foreign brand and opportunities that can be exploited for improvement by the local manufacturers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on theories underpinning the study. It also assesses the literature review on how country of origin relates with customer brand equity across the globe. Further, it summarizes the knowledge gaps as informed by the empirical review.

2.2 Theoretical Review

Country of origin has become an important aspect of international trade. This section presents the theories underpinning the study on how COO influences brand equity of baby diapers in Nairobi County. The theories include the consumer-based brand equity theory and utility theory.

2.2.1 Consumer Based Brand Equity Model

The consumer-based brand equity model was introduced by Aaker, (1991) and Keller (1993; 2003). Keller (2008) outlines four key phases to establishing brand equity, each of which is dependent on the prior step's success: Ensure brand recognition and linkage in the eyes of customers (brand awareness), Generate so this whole trademark connotation in the minds of clients by carefully linking a number of physical and intellectual product meanings with specified traits (business meanings), and elicit suitable user behaviors to the newly formed corporate image and interpretation (brand responses), Convert brand emotions into a powerful, energetic loyalty link among both brand and the customer (brand relationships). These four actions exemplify the proactive conduct that businesses must

adopt. Consumer behavior that is measured in order to meet their hidden requirements is the source of brand construction.

The consumer-based-brand-equity (CBBE) model, according to Keller (2008), provides a true evaluation of a brand's strength, i.e., how the customer feel, truly thinks and acts in relation to a particular brand. The concept provides businesses with significant insights into their customers' hidden requirements and desires. Clients' choices, desire to spend, and branding preferences reflect clients' favourable attitude to the model's promotional methods as compared to its peers (Yasin, Noor & Mohamad 2007). It also enables firms to operate in ways that allows them to profit from their brand equity.

Companies can involve a number of marketing campaigns, but the effectiveness of these campaigns is decided by customer response. Customers' responses are governed by the brand knowledge that has been placed in their heads (Keller, 2008). The hypothesis is applicable to this review since it underlines the need of organizations being proactive in their advertising endeavors and focusing on customer inclinations. As Keller's CBBE pyramid shows, a brand should be constructed bit by bit after cautiously creating advertising strategies. These stages are not all similarly troublesome, but rather they are generally similarly significant in the advancement of brand value, as confirmed by Keller's CBBE model. Consumers' functional and emotional demands are met by strong brands. Therefore, any brand regardless of its country-of-origin needs to satisfy the needs of its consumers to create customer-based brand equity.

2.2.2 Consumer Utility Theory

Kahneman and Tversky invented the term consumer utility theory in 1977 (1979). The goal of consumer utility theory is to understand how a rational customer would make purchasing

decisions. Consumers supplement the projected utility of individual benefit into preferences through decision structure, according to Merwe (2007). Given that picking diverse preferences includes risk, the consumer utility theory suggests that the selection act among many possibilities of preferences in decision making is crucial. When buyers compare one thing to another in order to raise their contentment and complete their emotional enhancement, utility happens (Kotler, 2001).

Consumer utility theory has been slammed for a variety of reasons. It has difficulties in explaining and forecasting consumer preferences that involves many and possibly alternative options. Despite having experience with the selection weight and degree of complexity, the theory is unable to account for the consistency of individual decision behavior, Hartinger, (1999).

The subject is significant to utility theory because customers would logically consider their options in order to maximize utility. When faced with ambiguity in purchasing decisions, consumers develop decision accounts for perceived risks and consequences (Baker, 2001). However, in terms of choosing between two or more things, this economic vantage point is insufficient to properly explain purchase behavior (Brady, 2003). It largely represents people's psychological concerns, but it ignores cost and benefit when it comes to consumer sentiments. In psychology, utility theory claims that consumer decision behavior may be anticipated, whether rational or irrational. Kotler (2001), on the other hand, claims that the issue in psychology is with the process of preference construction for decision-making.

2.3 Country of Origin and Brand Equity

Customer expectations of product nation of origin have shifted from one perspective to another in the present competitive business environment, where global marketing is

increasing at a rapid pace (Yunus & Rashid, 2016). The nation of origin of brand or product is a key influencing element in customer decision-making. According to Adina, Gabriela, and Roxana-Denisa (2015), the 'Made in.' label indicates country-of-origin information that serves numerous objectives in customers making-decision to buy. It serves as a key feature in consumer product assessment, creates curiosity on customer's interest in the product, and encourages them to buy it, behavioral intentions are influenced by social conventions, and buyer behavior is influenced by emotive processes, such as a consumer's patriotic emotions towards their own nation. Current item assessment is affected by country generalizing; that is, purchasers' assumptions about a specific nation sway their view of things from that nation (Panda and Misra, 2014). Clients' impressions of a nation of beginning impact their assessment of things from that country, which impacts their tendency, purchase want, and marking decision, deciding client reliability (Azadi, Yousefi, and Eydi, 2015).

COO, or the 'made in' mark, is utilized to survey particular items/brands and effect their value in either an ideal or negative manner, in view of public generalizations (Mostafa, 2015). This addresses the customers' acceptable or bad introductions of the 'made in' country, Ahmed et al., (2012). Liu (2012) explored the China generalization impact and found that it contrarily affects any remaining item classes that have the 'made in China' name. Similarly, when items are created in a less desired place than their country of origin, they are negatively influenced and assessed, and the same is true for COB products Fetscherin & Toncar, (2010). Brands from or related with nations with positive biases profit from it, as well as the other way around, Chen and Su, (2012). Within the sight of a known brand name and explicit item credits, country-of-manufacture (COM) influences are

considerably decreased, and customers rely on the branded version of a brand for its overall performance (Mostafa, 2015). This is especially widespread in developing countries. In general, when products/brands go global, they seek to grow their brand equity in the target market guided by the fact that COO is a critical extrinsic cue that consumers consider when deciding on what to buy.

2.4 Empirical Review and Knowledge Gaps

In a study looking at how COO relates with brand equity, Saydan (2013) observed that Beko, a popular electronics Turkish brand was very popular in the British market. Interestingly, the British population who consume the products consider Turkey as a country, to be insignificant to the success of the brand and concluded that Beko was successful in the British market not because of COO but because of its marketing strategies. This instance clearly demonstrates that companies competing in overseas markets should do public research on their target markets to determine public impressions of their home country. As a result, one of the most essential topics to consider when evaluating performance in foreign markets is whether or not this crucial source of competitiveness has been triggered. The study was based in Britain a developed country whereas this study was done in Kenya, a developing country. The case study was on electronics – a durable product while the current case study is on disposable diapers – a non-durable product.

In South Africa, Kamwendo, Corbishley, and Mason (2014), did a generalized study on the effect of COO on consumer perception on products thinking. Neither culture has a substantial association with consumer ethnocentrism, according to the study (CE). Despite the fact that the study's findings show that consumers have a favorable view toward foreign items, the study did not factor brand equity as a contributing component in consumer

product evaluations and purchase decision. Additionally, generalizing the study across different products may not have yielded substantive results given that tastes and preferences differ from one product to another.

Mutheu (2014) did a study in Kenya that looked at the impact of COO on Fast Moving Customer Goods (FMCG'S) and consumer behavior and found there was a positive relation between COO and consumer behavior. The majority of imported/foreign items were thought to be of superior quality than indigenous products. According to the findings, customers would frequently pick a foreign FMCG based on the product category. Despite the fact that international items were more expensive than local products, customers would frequently pick foreign FGCMs over local ones. The study was restricted, however, because it did not focus on brand equity - leaving a research vacuum that this study filled.

In a research looking at the effect of origin nation, customer attributes, and attitudes on consumer behavior toward foreign apparel brands in Nairobi, Kenya, Njuguna (2014) surveyed 384 respondents. To obtain data, the researchers utilized a descriptive research methodology and questionnaires. Kenyans in high and moderate income categories prefer international clothing labels, while those on public assistance prefer second or foreign clothing brands, according to the study results. The results of the investigation showed that customer behavior toward international apparel companies is influenced by COO. In addition, the findings revealed that consumer attitudes are vital in mediating the link between nation of origin and customer behavior. However, the study was constrained because it did not look into brand equity, which was accommodated in this study's dependent variable.

Mostafa (2015) did a study in Egypt on the effect of a brand's place of origin and country of manufacturing on total brand equity for a number of mobile phone brands. The study relied on primary data gathered from 600 mobile phone users via surveys. All four factors of market presence, such as consciousness, confidence, performance, and connection, were shown to be significant when evaluating mobile phone brands, according to the research. Nonetheless, among the four factors, quality was most significant in evaluating mobile phone brands. The associations between country of manufacture (COM) and in general brand value were demonstrated to be intervened by buyer based brand value (CBBE). Future research may look at many product categories, like this study did by concentrating on disposable diapers in Kenya.

Similarly, Brenda and Adjnu (2018) conducted a study on 150 respondents in Mauritius on the effect of COO effects on customers buying behaviour towards mobile phones. The study also used descriptive and exploratory design and used questionnaires and direct interviews to collect data. Findings showed that almost half of the respondents consider a mobile phones source nation before purchase with United States and South Korea mobile phones being perceived to be of superior quality. The study was on consumer behavior not brand equity – which this study focusses on and was based in Mauritius and therefore, due to the economic and market differences, the study cannot be applied to make a generalization of a related case in Kenya. This study filled this gap by focusing on the Kenyan market and how it is influenced by country of origin as well as focus on a different case study – disposable diapers.

In a closely connected study, four well-known diaper brands in China, Asian countries, and developing European countries were examined for their effects on customer behavior and

brand equity by All Answers Ltd. (2018). The findings from the sampled 400 respondents showed that consumers express unfavorable attitude towards buying diaper brands produced in China and countries in Asia but express favorable attitude towards the same diaper brands produced in developing European countries like Belgium, Greece, Turkey and Lithuania. This brings out the issue of source country of a brand (COB) and nation of manufacture (COM) as a factor to consider in evaluating COO. This study was conducted in developing European countries and cannot be applied in Kenya – a gap that this study aimed to filled.

According to Jain and Bariar (2019), a company's source nation image impacts the quantity of marketing strategy in hair care products. Company loyalty, customer commitment, brand knowledge, and overall quality, as well as other characteristics of customer loyalty, were investigated in this study, which took place in India. According to the study, in the absence of mediators, brand equity is positively and significantly impacted by source nation image. while with the connection shrinks, indicating the mediation effect. The past research looked at the moderating influence on the association involving COO reputation and corporate reputation, whereas the present study assessed the direct correlation between source country of brand equity.

Various studies have sought to demonstrate the interlink between source nations and consumer brand equity based on the empirical review. However, majority of the studies conducted have been done focusing on international countries such as Saydan (2013) in Britain; Kamwendo, Corbishley and Mason (2014) in South Africa; Mostafa, (2015) in Egypt and Brenda and Adjnu (2018) in Mauritius. Given the differences in economies and consumer markets, the findings cannot be applied to related cases in Kenya. Additionally,

the studies conducted locally such as Njuguna (2014) and Mutheu (2014) focused on the clothing industry and fast-moving products sectors respectively. This left a gap for similar studies to be conducted on COO and other variables, focusing on other case studies like disposable baby diapers, a sub-sector that is fast-growing as a result of the rising population in Kenya and the change in tastes and preferences as most parents prefer disposable baby diapers as compared to washable clothe baby diapers. This is the research gap that this study intends to fill focusing on the Kenyan market of baby diapers and assessing how county of origin of the different diaper brands influences consumers brand equity.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looked at the research methodology used including the suitable research design, data collection and method to analyze the data.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design. The technique allowed the researcher to better describe the characteristics of the variables under investigation. The independent variables included: country product quality, country image and country perception whereas the dependent variable was customer brand equity. A descriptive design was therefore most suitable because it assesses the characteristics of a large population.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of study consists of the actual group of individuals, occasions, or items that the researchers want to use to draw conclusions from, Kothari (2014). The research focused on Nairobi County whose population is estimated to be 4.4 million people (KNBS 2019). The target population was those people shopping for diapers in the respective estate Kiosks in the four districts within Nairobi County.

3.4 Sampling procedure

To ensure inclusivity and reliability, equal sample size under study was drawn from the four Districts within Nairobi County namely; Nairobi North, Nairobi East, Westlands and Nairobi West Districts KNBS (2019) Census division of Nairobi. From these districts, estate kiosks formed the point of data collection from the diaper shoppers. Estate kiosks

were suitable for this research because the customers are likely to create time to respond to written questionnaires as compared to supermarkets where respondents may not have time. Given the type of the population of study, this study utilized convenient sampling to collect data. In order to calculate the sample size, Yamanes 1967 formula of population size was used.

$$n = N/1+N(e)^2$$

Where;

n = sample size to be studied

N= Estimate of the population of study. In this case Nairobi County has a population of 4.4 million people (KNBS 2019)

e = signifies margin error. In this study, the margin of error was 10% or 0.1.

Therefore,

$$n = 4,400,000/1+4,400,000(0.1)^2$$

The target sample size was 99.997 rounded to 100 respondents.

3.5 Data Collection

Questionnaires were used to gather primary data from different shoppers in estate kiosks over a one-week period at the point of shopping for diapers. The answering of the questionnaires was on one-on-one basis not mailed. The questionnaires ensured uniformity on the format of asking questions. Brotherton (2008) notes that use of structured questionnaires ensures regularity and uniformity of responses compared to unstructured questionnaires. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale. The respondents were

expected to give their feedback on a scale of 1 to 5. For example, where (1=Very great Extent, 2= great Extent, 3= moderate Extent, 4= small Extent and 5 = No Extent)

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of a set of steps that puts together the information gathered from respondents to answer the question in your research (Sekaran, 2005). The gathered data was evaluated using descriptive and inferential statistics. Both quantitative and qualitative information was provided by this study. Tables, rates, and frequencies were used to present the results. To show the how country of origin and customer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi County relate, Multiple linear regressions was used. The regression model is illustrated as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Y= consumer brand equity

β_0 = Constant

X_1 = Country product quality

X_2 = Country image

X_3 = Country Perceptions

$\beta_1 - \beta_3$ are the regression co-efficient or change introduced in Y by each independent variable.

ε is the random error term accounting for all other variables that influence consumer brand equity but not captured in the model.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will detail data on the effects of country of origin on baby diaper brand equity in Nairobi County, Kenya. The research was conducted on 100 respondents that answered the questionnaires. The chapter looks at the respondent's analysis, information on demographics, and finally analyses the study objectives. Feedback from the questionnaires responses was presented in prose.

4.2. Response Rate

Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from different shoppers in estate kiosks over a one-week period at the point of shopping for diapers within Nairobi County. The good feedback rate was due to the researcher collecting the data through questionnaires at the point of shopping for diapers. Information on filled-in questionnaires and unreturned questionnaires are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Filled questionnaires	86	86%
Unreturned questionnaires	14	14%
Total Response Rate	100	100

Source: Field Data (2022)

From the population under study, 86 questionnaires were returned correctly completed making a response rate of 86%. This feedback rate was adequate and made it possible to

analyze the data and answer the research question. For reporting purposes, a response rate of 50% is considered average; a rate of 60% is good; and a rate of 70% or higher is exceptional according to Mugenda (2008).

4.3. Demographic Information

This section presents findings on respondent’s demographic information which include monthly gross income, age bracket, gender, highest education level, buying of baby diapers and the brand of diaper they prefer to buy. The following sections provide a discussion of the findings.

4.3.1 Monthly Gross Income

The respondents were asked disclose their monthly gross income. The feedback is shown in table 4.2. below.

Table 4.2. Monthly Gross Income

Monthly Gross Income	Frequency	Percentage
Ksh 30,000	31	36%
Ksh 30001-40000	3	3.5%
Ksh 40001-50,000	27	31.4%
over Ksh 50000	25	29.1%
Total	86	100

Source: Field Data (2022)

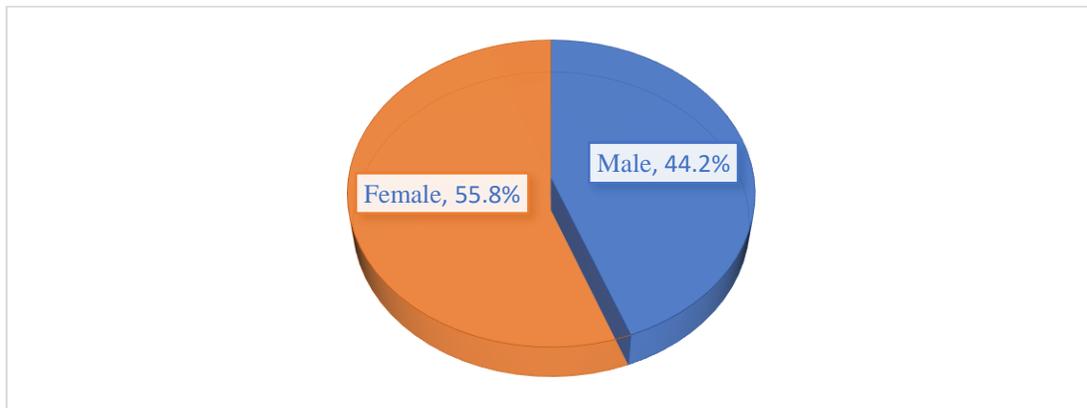
Following the data above, most (36%) respondents said that their gross monthly income was ksh. 30,000, 31.4% indicated between Ksh. 40,001-50,000, 29.1% indicated over

50,000 Kenya shilling, while 3.5% indicated their income was between Ksh. 30,001-40,000. These outcomes show that most of the respondents had at least a gross income of 30,000.

4.3.2 Respondents Gender

The survey respondents were asked to specify their gender and the following are the outcomes in figure 4.1. below.

Figure 4.1. Respondents Gender



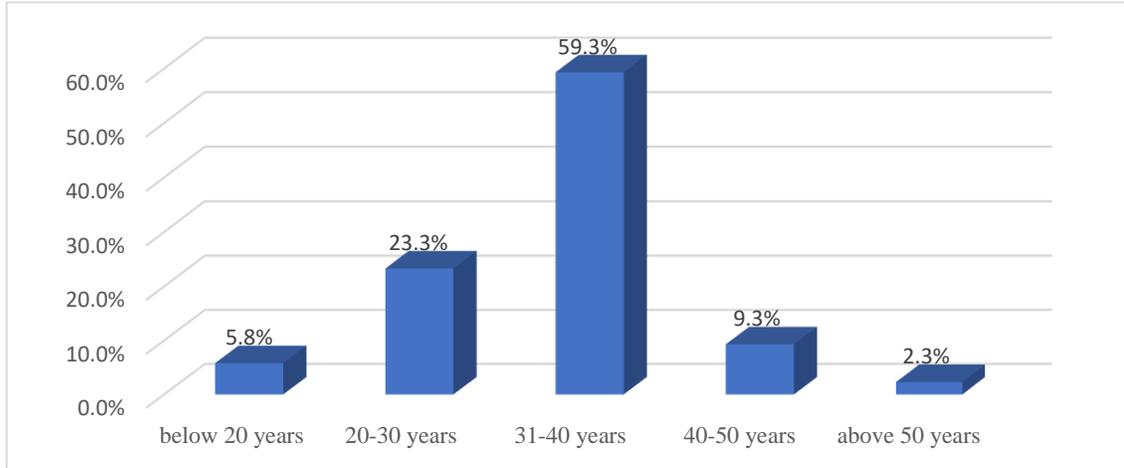
Source: Field Data (2022)

Following the outcome in figure 4.1. above, most (55.8%) were female and 44.2% said they were male. This depicts that women were the majority of the diaper shoppers and similarly most of the responses came from them.

4.3.3. Respondents Age Bracket

The study wanted to know the age ranges of diaper shoppers. The outcomes are shown in figure 4.2. below.

Figure 4.2. Respondents Age Range



Source: Field Data (2022)

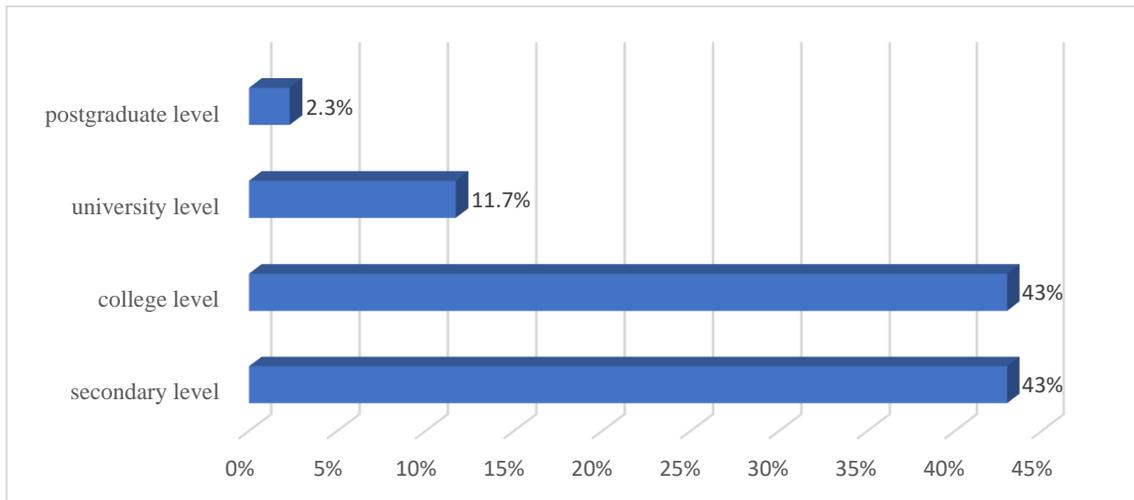
From the outcome, most (59.3%) of the respondents age was between 31-40 years, 23.3% indicated 20-30 years, 9.3% indicated 40-50 years, 5.8% indicated below 20 years while 2.3% indicated above 50 years. Therefore, most of the diaper shoppers were middle aged and could give reliable feedback with regard to the subject of the study.

4.3.4. Highest Education Level

The study wanted to find out the highest education level that the respondents had achieved.

The outcomes are presented in figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3. Highest Education Level



Source: Field Data (2022)

From the figure above, (43%) of the diaper shoppers had achieved secondary and college education as the highest level of education respectively. 11.7% indicated university level, while 2.3% had postgraduate level. From this outcome, it is evident that most of the respondents were educated enough to give reliable information.

4.3.5. Buying of Diapers

The study wanted to know whether the respondents buy diapers often. Feedback is presented in figure 4.4. below.

Figure 4.4. Buying of Diapers



Source: Field Data (2022)

The outcome shows that (98.8%) of the respondents indicated that they bought diapers often while 1.2% were of the contrary opinion and were doing it for the first time at the time of filling the questionnaire. From the feedback, it is evident that most of the respondents buy diapers.

4.3.6. Brand of Baby Diapers

The study wanted to know the brand of baby diapers the respondent buys. The feedback is represented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Brand of Baby Diapers

Brand of Baby Diapers	Frequency	Percent
Pampers	25	29.10%
Softcare	15	17.40%
Molfix	23	26.70%
Kiss Kids	8	9.30%
Huggies	8	9.30%
Snuggles	6	7%
Bouncy	1	1.20%
Total	86	100

Source: Field Data (2022)

From the feedback, (29.1%) of the respondents said that they bought pampers diaper brand, 26.7% indicated molfix, 17.4% indicated softcare, 9.3% indicated kisskids and huggies respectively, 7% indicated snuggles, while 1.2% indicated bouncy. Overall, the findings show that most of the respondents preferred buying pampers diaper brand.

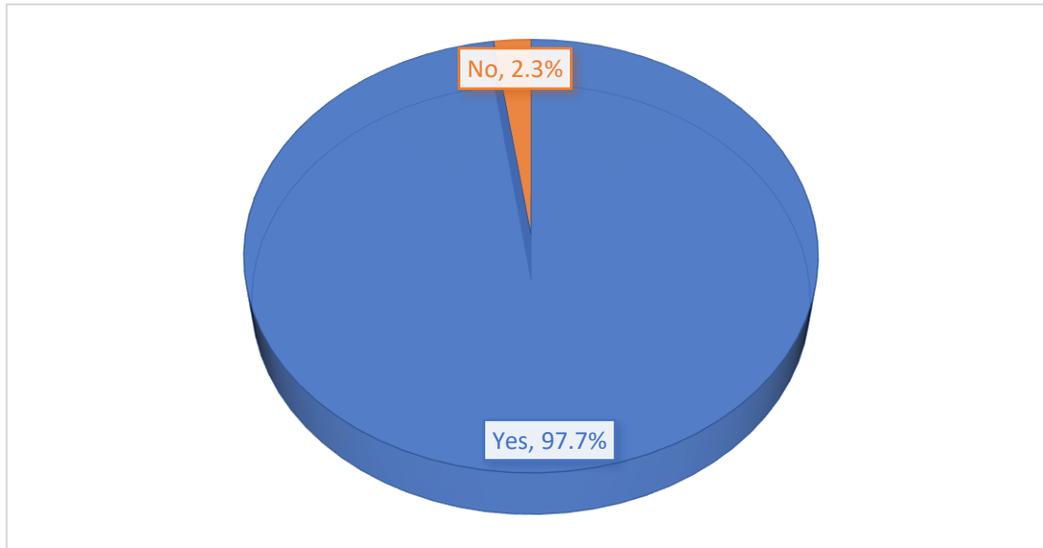
4.4. Country of Origin

This section gives findings on country of origin and presented in the sub-sections below.

4.4.1. Country of Origin of the Baby Diaper

The respondents were required to specify whether they check to confirm the country-of-origin of the baby diaper and the outcomes captured in figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5. Country of Origin of the Baby Diaper



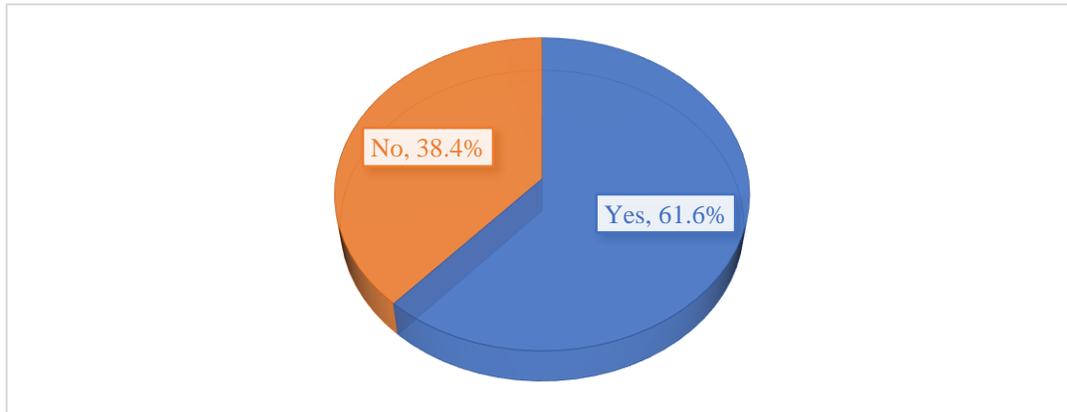
Source: Field Data (2022)

Findings show that (97.7%) of the diaper shoppers said they check to confirm the country of origin of the baby diaper while 2.3% were of the contrary opinion. This shows that the respondents check to confirm the source country of the baby diapers to purchase. These findings are reinforced by Samiee, (1994), that modern research on global consumers in developed countries shows positive ethnocentrism which is i developing countries like the opposite in developing countries Kenya where consumers exercise reverse ethnocentrism and prefer foreign products – usually perceived as superior compared to products manufactured in their developing home country.

4.4.2. Buying Foreign Diaper Brands

The shoppers were asked to specify whether they prefer buying foreign diaper brands and the outcomes presented in figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6. Prefer Buying Foreign Diaper Brands



Source: Field Data (2022)

From the above figure, 61.6% of the diaper shoppers said that they prefer buying foreign diaper brands while 38.4% were of the contrary opinion. This indicates that the respondents prefer buying foreign diaper brands. The findings are in line with Njuguna (2014), that decision making by consumers to buy a specific product is highly influenced by COO with most of them preferring foreign produced products.

4.4.3. Extent of Agreement on Country-of-Origin of Baby Diapers in Nairobi

4.4.3.1. Country Product Quality

The shoppers were asked to rate their level of agreement with the country's product quality. The feedback is show in table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Country Product Quality

Country Product Quality	N	Mean	Std. Dev
This diaper brand offers very quality products	86	2.140	0.671
This diaper brand products have consistent quality	86	2.488	0.628
This diaper brand is known reliable products	86	2.372	0.720
This diaper brand has excellent product features	86	1.977	0.632

This diaper brand offers excellent value for money	86	2.558	0.500
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Source: Field Data (2022)

Following the feedback, the respondents largely agreed that their diaper brand of choice offers excellent value for money (mean =2.558, SD=0.500), followed by the diaper brand is known for its consistent high-quality products (mean =2.488, SD=0.628), the diaper brand is known for its reliability (mean =2.372, SD=0.720), the diaper brand is known for its very high-quality products (mean=2.14, SD=0.671), and that the diaper brand of choice offers products with excellent features (mean=1.977, SD=0.632). These findings concur with Chen (2010), that the perceived quality of imported goods which is determined by their technical, advancement, prestige, workmanship, economy and service is the intellectual or cognitive component of COO.

4.4.3.2. Country Image

The researcher was interested in how much the respondents agreed with the country's image and the results are as shown in table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Country Image

Country Image	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Brands X is a renowned brand.	86	2.419	0.727
Consumers speak very high about this diaper brand	86	2.209	0.556
This diaper brand is a favourite brand among consumers	86	2.814	0.660
This diaper brand has a very good image	86	2.442	0.500
It makes sense to buy this diaper brand instead of others.	86	2.000	0.719
This diaper brand would be my first choice.	86	2.570	0.660

Source: Field Data (2022)

Following the outcome, the shoppers concur to a great extent that their diaper brand of choice is a favourite brand among consumers (mean=2.814, SD=0.660), followed by the diaper brand would be their first choice (mean=2.57, SD= 0.660), the diaper brand has a very good image (mean=2.442, SD=0.500), brands X is a renowned brand (mean=2.419, SD=0.727), consumers speak very high about the diaper brand (mean=2.209, SD=0.556), and that its sensible to buy the particular diaper brand and not other brands (mean=2, SD=0.719). These findings agree with Njuguna (2014). According to him, COO can be divided into three categories; product-country image, general country image, and particular product–country image. Image has to do with prejudice in nation selection, which occurs when customers have stereotyped images of other countries, and these images influence how a product is purchased.

4.4.3.3. Perception

The researcher sought to find out the respondent’s agreement level in regards to perception and the outcome shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Perception

Perception	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I have an opinion about this diaper brand	86	2.465	0.890
I have no difficulties imagining this diaper brand in my mind.	86	2.349	0.548
I associate this diaper brand with innovativeness.	86	2.849	0.660
I recognize the symbol of this diaper brand	86	2.372	0.669
I associate this diaper brand with distinctiveness.	86	2.384	0.770
The country where this diaper brand originates from has an innovative approach.	86	2.709	0.611
The country where this diaper brand originated from has advanced technologically.	86	2.361	0.796

Originality in workmanship may be seen in the country where this diaper brand comes from.	86	2.302	0.575
The country from where this diaper brand originates from is known for its innovative design.	86	2.907	0.566

Source: Field Data (2022)

Following the outcome, the shoppers largely concur that the country from where this diaper brand originates from is known for its innovative design (mean=2.907, SD=0.566), followed by they associate their diaper brand of choice with innovativeness (mean=2.849, SD=0.660), the country where the diaper brand originates from has an innovative approach (mean=2.709, SD=0.611), they have an opinion about their diaper brand of choice (mean=2.465, SD=0.890), I they associate their diaper brand of choice with distinctiveness (mean=2.384, SD=0.770), they recognize the symbol of the diaper brand (mean=2.372, SD=0.669), the country from where the diaper brand originates has advanced technologically (mean=2.361, SD=0.796), it's easy for them to imagine their diaper brand of choice in their mind (mean=2.349, SD=0.548), and that originality in workmanship may be seen in the country where the particular diaper brand was born (mean=2.302y, SD=0.575). The findings are reinforced by (Mostafa, 2015) that consumer perception of quality between two sources of the same product is not the same. This is due to a shift in customer perceptions of quality and purchasing behavior, which is reflected in the producing country

4.4.4. Customer Brand Equity of Baby Diaper in Nairobi

4.4.4.1. Brand awareness

The researcher was curious to know how the shoppers concurred with brand awareness and the feedback presented in table 4.7.

Table 4.7. Brand Awareness

Brand Awareness	N	Mean	Std. Dev
I'm well-versed with this diaper brand.	86	2.349	0.647
I have a good idea where to get the diaper brand I'm looking for.	86	2.349	0.763
I can easily picture this diaper brand in my mind	86	2.616	0.689
In comparison to other diaper brands, I am able to recognize this diaper brand.	86	2.326	0.832
I can easily recall the symbol or logo of this diaper brand	86	2.314	0.656

Source: Field Data (2022)

From the feedback, the respondents agreed to a great extent that they can easily picture the diaper brand of their choice in their mind (mean=2.616, SD=0.689), followed by they are well-versed with the brand of diaper of choice (mean=2.349, SD=0.647), have good idea where to get the diaper brand they are looking for (mean=2.349, SD=0.763), In comparison to other diaper brands, they are able to recognize their brand choice (mean=2.326, SD=0.832), and that they can easily remember the symbol or logo of the diaper brand (mean=2.314, SD=0.656). This shows that the respondents largely concurred that they can easily visualize the diaper brand of their choice in their minds. These findings are in agreement with Keller (2008), that brand awareness ensures brand recognition and linkage in the eyes of customers.

4.4.4.2. Brand Loyalty

The researcher wanted to know how much the respondents agreed with brand loyalty and the outcome presented in table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty	N	Mean	Std. Dev
This is a diaper brand that I will certainly use again.	86	2.686	0.724
Despite the fact that their pricing is greater than other diaper companies, I will absolutely use this brand.	86	2.244	0.650
I consider myself loyal to this diaper brand	86	2.314	0.656
I would recommend this diaper brand to others.	86	2.419	0.563
I regularly seek news and information regarding this diaper brand.	86	2.279	0.807
I'm always curious to learn more about this diaper brand	86	2.198	0.527

Source: Field Data (2022)

From the outcome, the diaper shoppers agreed to a great extent that their diaper of choice is a diaper brand that they would certainly use again (mean=2.686, SD=0.724), followed by they would recommend the diaper brand to others (mean=2.419, SD=0.563), loyalty to the diaper brand (mean=2.314, SD=0.656), regularly seek news and information regarding the particular diaper brand (mean=2.279, SD=0.807), they would still buy the diaper brand price notwithstanding (mean=2.244, SD=0.650), and that they are always curious to learn more about the particular diaper brand (mean=2.198, SD=0.527). This clearly shows that the diaper shoppers agreed to a great extent that their diaper brand of choice is a brand that they would certainly use again. These findings are in line with Khan, M., & Mahmood, Z. (2012), that loyal customers have unconditional bond and a strong affection with the brand cost notwithstanding. This helps the firm reduce their marketing cost, enables the company to gain a competitive edge, increases the firms market share and gives the firm a positive word of mouth.

4.4.4.3. Perceived Quality

The researcher wanted to know how much the respondents agreed with perceived quality and the outcome presented in table 4.9.

Table 4.9. Perceived Quality

Perceived Quality	N	Mean	Std. Dev
The diaper brand is of good quality	86	2.663	0.644
I have never heard any complaints about the diaper brand	86	2.547	0.762
The price of the diaper brand matches its quality	86	2.244	0.702
The packaging of the diaper brand is of high quality	86	2.791	0.799

Source: Field Data (2022)

From the outcome, the respondents agreed that the packaging of the diaper brand is of high quality (mean=2.791, SD=0.799), followed by the diaper brand is of good quality (mean=2.663, SD=0.644), never heard any complaints about the diaper brand (mean=2.547, SD=0.762), and that the price of the diaper brand matches its quality (mean=2.244, SD=0.702). This depicts that the packaging of the diaper brand is of high quality. These outcomes concur with Chen (2010), who infers that the perceived quality of imported goods which is determined by their technical, advancement, prestige, workmanship, economy and service is the intellectual or cognitive component of COO.

4.4.4.4. Brand Association

The researcher wanted to know how much the respondents agreed with brand association and the outcome presented in table 4.10.

Table 4.10. Brand Association

Brand Association	N	Mean	Std. Dev
This diaper brand is tailored so as to work in best interest of the consumers	86	2.512	0.609
This diaper brand presents no risk to the customer	86	2.384	0.754
This diaper brand is very reliable	86	2.767	0.746
I'm a proud customer of this diaper brand	86	2.419	0.789
This diaper brand is reasonably priced	86	2.535	0.762
I receive a lot more value for my money with this diaper brand than I pay for it.	86	2.861	0.577

Source: Field Data (2022)

From the outcome, the diaper shoppers agreed that they receive a lot more value for their money with the diaper brand of choice than they pay for (mean=2.861, SD=0.577), followed by the diaper brand is very reliable (mean=2.767, SD=0.746), the diaper brand is reasonably priced (mean=2.535, SD=0.762), the diaper brand is tailored to work in the best interest of the consumers (mean=2.512, SD=0.609), they proud customers of the diaper brand (mean=2.419, SD=0.789), and that the diaper brand presents no risk to the customers (mean=2.384, SD=0.754). The findings show that brand performance makes customers develop positive benefits, attitudes and attributes, which develop from interacting with the brand and therefore concur with (Severi, Ling, & Nasermodeli, 2014).

4.5. Regression Analysis

To establish the connection between COO predictor variables and consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya, this study employed multiple regression analysis. After data from the field was cleaned and coded, regression statistics were produced using SPSS version 24. The coefficient of determination was utilized in this study to show how changing the independent variable can impact changing the dependent variable. Consumer brand equity of baby diapers in Nairobi, Kenya, was the study's dependent variable, while

product quality, national perceptions, and nation's image and reputation were its independent variables.

4.5.1. Model Summary

The table below summarizes findings on the influence between consumer brand equity for baby diapers and predictor variables in Nairobi, Kenya and the outcomes shown in table 4.11

Table 4.11. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.808	.652	.640	.7785

a. Predictors: (Constant), Country Product Quality, Country Image, and Country Perceptions.

b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Brand Equity of Baby Diaper in Nairobi, Kenya

Source: Field Data (2022)

From the outcome in the table $R^2=0.652$ that is 65.2% variation in consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya is explained by the independent variable in the model. However, other unexpected determinants in the regression model have led to 34.8% unexplained difference in consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya. From the outcome in the table, it can be concluded that the model is sufficient enough for estimation purposes. After reviewing the data in the table, there was a significant correlation shown by the variables as evidenced by $R^2=0.652$ that is 65.2%, indicating a notable influence exists between COO and the consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya.

4.5.2 ANOVA Results

Relationship between baby diaper consumer brand equity and the predictive variables in Nairobi, Kenya is shown by ANOVA results in the below table 4.12.

Table 4.12. ANOVA of the Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.864	3	1.621	51.265	.000 ^a
	Residual	2.594	82	.032		
	Total	7.458	85			

Source: Field Data (2022)

The significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 and therefore the model is statistically significant in measuring how country product quality, country image, and country perceptions impact the consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya. The F critical at 5% level of significance was 3.123. Since F calculated is greater than the F critical (value = 51.265), this shows that the overall model was significant.

4.5.3 Coefficient of Determination

The below table 4.14 shows the outcome of the coefficient of determination on how the predictor variables relate with consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya.

Table 4.13. Coefficient of Determination

	Unstandardized		Standardized		
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Model 1(Constant)	0.531	0.169		3.144	0.002
Country Product					
Quality	0.383	0.083	0.457	4.613	0.000
Country Image	0.232	0.072	0.255	3.237	0.002
Country Perceptions	0.196	0.077	0.231	2.561	0.012

a. **Dependent Variable:** Consumer Brand Equity of Baby Diaper in Nairobi, Kenya

Field Data (2022)

The results of a simple regression analysis were used to find out more about the baby diaper brand in Nairobi. From the SPSS results above, and regression equation becomes.

$$(Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon)$$

Y= consumer brand equity

β_0 = Constant

X₁= Country product quality

X₂= Country image

X₃= Country Perceptions

Becomes:

$$(Y = 0.531 + 0.383 X_1 + 0.232 X_2 + 0.196 X_3)$$

Taking the independent variable from the regression model and maintaining it constant (country product quality, country image, and country perceptions) constant at zero, consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya was 0.531. Results analysed also showed that a unit increase in country product quality will lead to a 0.383 increase in consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya. Taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in country image will lead to a 0.232 increase in consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya, and similarly, a unit increase in country perception will cause a 0.196 increase in consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya. This infers that country product quality contribute the most to consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya, followed by country image. At 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, country product quality, country image, and country perceptions were all significant on consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya.

4.6. Discussion of Findings

According to the study, respondents are curious about and confirm the product's country of origin. The results support a study by Batra et al. (2000) that checked if consumers in developing markets were more keen to buy brands that are seen as foreign than local. According to the authors, this effect was also moderated by the consumers under research in the respective developing countries' familiarity with the product category. Results observed a strong correlation between COO and brands preference among consumers with majority preferring foreign brands.

Further, the findings showed that respondents prefer buying foreign diaper brands, that the diaper brand offers excellent value for money, and that their diaper brand of choice is a favourite brand among consumers. The study found that the country from where the diaper brand originates from is known for innovative design. These findings agree with a study by Opoku and Akorli (2009) who stated that Country of Origin (COO) is a major factor than price and other attributes. It is as important as the brand name. Opoku and Akorli (2009) agree that other studies show that one of the most common sought after element by consumers when evaluating products was country of origin. Similarly, the authors compared their outcomes with Suwannaporn and Linnenmann (2008) who also established that country of origin was severally considered by consumers when evaluating rice brands in European, Asian, and Australian countries.

The study found that there was a lot of agreement among the respondents recall of the brand, they can easily picture their diaper brand of choice in their mind. The study also found that there was a lot of agreement among the respondents that their diaper of choice is a diaper brand that they'll certainly use again. The study found that the shoppers regarded the packaging of the diaper brand as having high quality. The study found that at 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, country product quality, country image, and country perceptions were all significant on consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya. According to Adina, Gabriela, and Roxana-Denisa (2015), the label tag 'country-of-origin' information is critical in helping consumers make decision to buy. It serves as a key feature in consumer product assessment, creates curiosity on customer's interest in the product, and encourages them to buy it. Current product assessment is

affected by country generalizing; that is, purchasers' assumptions about a specific nation influences their view of products from that nation (Panda and Misra, 2014).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations on influence of country of origin on consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The study outcomes indicate the respondents check to confirm the country of origin of baby diapers. The also confirms that the respondents prefer buying foreign diaper brands, that the diaper brand offers excellent value for money, and that the diaper brand is a favourite brand among consumers. The study found that the country from where this diaper business originates is also known for innovative design.

The analysis showed that the respondents agreed very much that they can easily picture their diaper brand of choice in their mind. The study also found that there was a lot of agreement among respondents that they would make a repeat purchase of their diaper brand of choice. The study found that the packaging of the diaper brand is of high quality. The study also established that at 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, country product quality, country image, and country perceptions were all significant on consumer brand equity of baby diapers in Nairobi, Kenya.

5.3. Conclusion of the Study

The study concluded that the respondents check to confirm the country-of-origin of the baby diapers. The 'made in' label is a guiding factor in product evaluation when shopping for diapers. The study also concluded that the respondents prefer buying foreign diaper brands. Foreign brands are usually perceived as superior compared to those manufactured in developing home country. Further, the review concluded that diaper shoppers feel that their diaper brand of choice offers excellent value for money meaning that they associate the product with high quality and, would make a repeat purchase of the same diaper brand.

Findings also led to the conclusion that different diaper brands are favorite among consumers. This means that the different varieties of diaper brands in the market attract different consumers with different tastes and preferences - who similarly settle for what they feel satisfies their desired outcome. The study also concluded that the packaging of the diaper brands is of high quality. Further, the study concluded that at 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, country product quality, country image, and country perceptions were all significant on consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya.

5.4. Recommendations for Study

This research has led to some interesting and thought-provoking findings that can be used for developing effective strategies to attract consumers with emphasis on brand equity elements including brand awareness, quality, association, loyalty and image. The findings show that most diaper brands only utilized a number of brand equity constructs but not all of them. Therefore, this study recommends that diaper manufacturing companies and

marketers should focus on utilizing all the elements of brand equity in their strategies in target markets to attract potential customers.

Based on the results from these research findings, there is a very strong influence between consumer's willingness to purchase and brand equity constructs. In regards to this, this study recommends that diaper manufacturing companies and marketing managers to set aside enough budgets to promote these elements of brand equity and ensure they are well covered and established in the target market to realize the benefits.

In conclusion, the outcomes of this study demonstrate that consumer choice of brand is greatly influenced by customer base brand equity, and that a lack of brand equity undermines consumer perception. Therefore, this study suggests that diaper marketers should make constant efforts to improve customer-based brand equity. Companies involved in the manufacturers of diapers should keep in mind that sloppy brand management, overextension, and a lack of effort in building brand equity and values cause well-known companies to fade away.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

This analysis suggests that subsequent research be focused on validating the study's findings by carrying out comparable investigations in other Kenyan industries and gathering information from other sources. Further, the scope of this study can potentially be expanded to include additional goods and services, for which consumer decision-making and purchasing intents vary. In addition, future studies should also take a longitudinal survey into consideration. In order to demonstrate how country of origin influences consumer brand equity in terms of short-, mid-, and long-term benefits as well as in the context of return on brand equity investments, more research is required. The

extension of use of diaper products especially in healthcare has also created a different market and it would improve this study to include this new market in future studies in addition to babies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data on the influence of nation of origin on consumer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi, Kenya. Please complete the following questionnaire by answering all of the questions to the best of your ability. All information provided will be kept with strict confidentiality and utilized solely for the objectives of this study. Please do not provide your name in the survey.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

(Tick Appropriately)

1. Your current estate of residence.....
2. Your occupation.....
3. Within which monthly gross income (from all sources) category do you belong? Up to
Ksh30,000 [] Ksh30,001– 40,000 [] Ksh40,001–50,000 [] Over Ksh 50,000 []
4. Kindly indicate your gender:
Male []
Female []
5. What is your age bracket?
Below 20 years []
20-30 years []
31-40 years []
40-50 years []
Above 50 years []

6. What is your highest level of education?

Secondary level []

College level []

University level []

Post graduate level []

7. Do you buy baby diapers?

Yes []

No []

8. Which brand of diaper do you prefer to buy?

Pampers []

Softcare []

Molfix []

Kisskids []

Huggies []

Snuggles []

Kiddy care []

Bouncy []

Any Other.....

SECTION B: COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN

9. Do you check to verify the baby diaper's nation of origin?

Yes []

No []

10. I prefer buying foreign diaper brands?

Yes []

No []

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on country-of-origin of baby diaper in Nairobi. Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1= Very great Extent, 2= great Extent, 3= moderate Extent, 4 = small Extent and 5 = No Extent

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Country product quality					
This diaper company is well known for producing high-quality products.					
This diaper brand is known for its high-quality goods.					
This diaper brand is known for its dependability.					
This diaper business provides high-quality items.					
This diaper brand offers excellent value for money.					
Country image					
Brands X is a renowned brand.					
Consumers speak very high about this diaper brand					
This diaper brand is a favourite brand among consumers.					
This diaper brand has a very good image					
It makes sense to buy this diaper brand instead of others.					

This diaper brand would be my first choice.					
Perception					
I have an opinion about this diaper brand					
I have no difficulties in imagining this diaper brand in my mind.					
I associate this diaper brand with innovativeness.					
I recognize the symbol of this diaper brand					
I associate this diaper brand with distinctiveness.					
The country that gave birth to this diaper company has a unique approach.					
The country from where this diaper brand originated has advanced technologically.					
Originality in workmanship may be seen in the country where this diaper brand was born.					
The country from whence this diaper business originates is known for its innovative design.					

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on customer brand equity of baby diaper in Nairobi. Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1= Very great Extent, 2= great Extent, 3= moderate Extent, 4= small Extent and 5 = No Extent

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
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Brand Awareness					
I'm well-versed in this brand of diapers.					
I typically have a solid idea where to get the diaper brand I'm looking for.					
In my mind's eye, I can easily picture this diaper brand.					
In comparison to other diaper brands, I am able to recognize this one.					
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of this diaper brand					
Brand Loyalty					
This is a diaper brand that I will certainly use again.					
Despite the fact that their pricing is greater than other diaper companies, I will absolutely use this brand.					
This diaper brand holds a special place in my heart.					
I would recommend this diaper brand to others.					
I regularly seek news and information regarding this diaper brand.					
I'm always curious to learn more about these diaper companies.					
Perceived Quality					
The diaper brand is of good quality					
I have never heard any complaints about the diaper brand					
The price of the diaper brand matches its quality					
The packaging of the diaper brand is of high quality					
Brand Association					

This diaper brand is tailored so as to work in best interest of the consumers					
This diaper brand presents no risk to the customer					
This diaper brand is very reliable					
This diaper brand makes me pleased to be a client.					
This diaper line is reasonably priced.					
I receive a lot more value for my money with this diaper brand than I pay for it.					

“THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME”