

**The Impact of a Change in Brand Identity on Consumer Purchase  
Behavior and Loyalty**

Research dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MSc in international business Management- Global Brand Management

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2020

## Candidate Declaration

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I certify that the dissertation entitled: the impact of a change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty

Submitted for the degree of MSc in International Business Management- Global Brand Management is the result of my personal work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgement is given.



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Date:

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty and to my parent Mr. and Mrs. Omotayo Shenaike and siblings. Thank you for your support, prayers, sacrifice and love.

## **Acknowledgement**

All praises be to God Almighty who has been my protector, provider and also for his faithfulness without whom this would have not be possible. My special gratitude to my dissertation supervisor, Josh Moran for his guidance, advices, feedbacks and motivation, in bringing out the best in me. I would also like to appreciate the faculty of GBS and participants of my research, who agreed to be a part of research and interview process.

My sincere gratitude to the best parents in the world, Mr. Shenaïke Omotayo & Mrs. Shenaïke Oluyemisi, for their support and encouragement both morally, emotionally and financially towards my academics, achievements in life and most especially for believing in me. My special appreciation goes to my siblings; Mrs. Apata Abidemi and Mr. Shenaïke Omotayo(jnr.), thank you for your care, love, support and advice at every stage in my academics. My sincere appreciation to my best friend Bakare Olanrewaju, thank you for your motivation and contribution

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## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to explore the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The motivation of this research was owing to the lack of in-depth understanding of the impact change in brand identity may have on consumer decision and loyalty. The research objectives of this study were formulated to provide detailed understanding on the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

A qualitative, explanatory research method was adopted using a case study research strategy. The mono-method data collection was adopted in the study, which allowed for only one data collection instrument. Semi-structured interview was the research instrument adopted to collect data for the study. Data was collected from ten participants whom were consumers of eight brands and were interviewed.

The findings of this study show that consumers perceive change in brand identity to be a decoy for brands to reduce the brand quality. Also, it was shown that change in brand identity may hurt or help a brand. Moreover, it was revealed in the study that when product quality remains the same, change in brand identity do not affect the consumer loyalty. It revealed in the study that frequent change in brand identity can affect consumer purchase decision. It was also found that consumers believe that consistency of brand over a period of time connotes strength of the brand. The study also revealed that brand name does not have significant impact on brand as it seems, as element such as color pose a greater impact on consumer perception of a brand.

It is recommended that brand popularity should always be considered when a brand want to embark on change in brand identity as brand with cheap quality may struggle to survive when there is a change in brand identity, change in brand identity may hurt or help the brand, consumer, brands should also consider market culture in their industries before carrying out change in brand identity, and brands should be consistent with their identity as that may give them brand strength.

# Table of Contents

Candidate Declaration	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	v
Table Of Contents	vi
List Of Figures	ix
List Of Tables	x
List Of Abbreviations	xi
1.INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Research Purpose	4
1.3 Significance Of Study	5
1.4 Research Objective	5
1.5 Structure Of The Study	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1. Overview	6
2.2. Conceptualisation Of brand identity	6
2.3 Change in Brand Identity	8
2.4. Consumer loyalty	10
2.5. Consumer Purchase Decision	12
2.6. Change in Brand Identity and Consumer Loyalty	13
2.7. Change In Brand Identity and Consumer Purchase Decision	14
2.8. Element of Brand Identity as a competitive Advantage	14
SECTION 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & DESIGN	16
3.1: Overview	16
3.2. Research Philosophy, Paradigm And Approach	17
3.2.1 Research Philosophy	17
3.2.2 The Research Paradigm	19
3.2.3 The Research Approach	21
3.3 Research Design	22
3.3.1. Exploratory Studies	22
3.4 Research Strategy	23
3.4.1 Case Study	23

3.5 Research Methods-----	23
3.5.1 Mono Method-----	24
3.6 Collection Of Primary Data-----	24
3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interview:-----	25
3.6.2 Interview Outline-----	26
3.7 Sampling-----	28
3.8 Access And Ethical Issues-----	29
3.8.1 Access Issues In Data Collection-----	29
3.8.2 Research Ethics Issues-----	30
3.9 Approach To Data Analysis-----	30
 SECTION 4 – PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS-----	 31
4.1 – Overview-----	31
4.2 Findings-----	32
4.2.1 – Change In Brand Identity-----	32
4.2.1.1- Consumer perception of change in Brand Identity.....	34
4.2.1.2- Consistency of Change In Brand Identity.....	37
4.2.1.3- Change to Element of Brand Identity.....	38
4.2.1.4- Competitive Advantage.....	40
4.2.2 Impact of Change in Brand Identity On Consumer loyalty-----	42
4.2.2.1 Consumer’s Trust:-----	43
4.2.2.2 Prior Satisfaction.-----	44
4.2.2.3 Product Quality-----	46
4.2.3 Impact of Change in Brand Identity on consumer purchase Decision-----	48
4.2.3.1 Brand Popularity:-----	48
4.2.3.2 Impact of Perception of Change in Brand Identity on consumer Purchase Decision :-----	49
4.2.3.3 Purchase after Change In Brand Identity-----	50
4.2.4 How much a Brand Impacts Consumer Purchase Decision-----	52
 SECTION 5 – CONCLUSION-----	 53
5.1 Overview-----	53
5.2 Implications Of Findings For Research-----	54
5.3. Recommendations For The Brand Owners & Policymakers.-----	58
5.4. Recommendations For Brand Managers.-----	59
5.5. Recommendations For Future Research-----	60
5.6 Strength and Limitation of Study.-----	61
5.6 Final Conclusions and Reflections.-----	61
 REFERENCES-----	 63
 APPENDICES-----	 A
Appendix A - Interview questions-----	A



## List of Figures

Figure 1- Levels of brands.....	5
Figure 2- Brand Identity Prism.....	8
Figure 3- Phases of Corporate Rebranding.....	10
Figure 4- Conceptual Framework.....	15
Figure 5- Research onion.....	16
Figure 6- Research Philosophy.....	18
Figure 7- Inductive Research Approach.....	21
Figure 8- Research Choices.....	24
Figure 9- Sampling Technique.....	28

## **List of Tables**

Table 1- Interview Outline.....	26
Table 2- Participant Favorite Brand.....	29
Table 3- Categories and Codes for Changes in Brand Identity.....	33
Table 4- Impact of Change in Brand Identity on Consumer Purchase Decision and Loyalty.....	42
Table 5- Impact of Change in Brand Identity on Consumer Purchase Decision.....	48

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

Generally, it has been observed that consumers are known to have strong relationship with brands (Fournier, 1998). These brands can change due to some factors that affect human psychology, which maybe logo, color and other physical attributes of a brand. A brand is known as an important asset to a company and it may be represented by its name, logo and slogan (Muzellec, 2006). Simply, brand characterizes a means by which consumers recognize, remember and recall a brand (Khurram et al., 2018). Brand identity represents the physical attribute of a brand that ensure consumer identify with the brand with ease (Adidam, 2007). Therefore, it is essential for organizations to make conscious effort to build a strong, reliable and authentic brand that is capable of winning the trust of both regular and prospective consumers. The primary aim of this research is to know if a change in the brand identity can cause a reaction in consumer purchase decision and consumer loyalty.

The brand elements are inherent on consumers' minds. This happens overtime from continuous purchase and repurchase of brands. Brand elements could be in the form of brand name, color, logo, slogan, tagline and other possible identities chosen by brands. When a brand changes a brand identity, it simply means a change in any of its elements that symbolize the brand. Significant number of the brand consumers can identify and recognize the brand immediately (Hodgson, 2017). Brand identities are usually unique to a brand. The unique identity of brands makes them easily recognizable among competition. However, there are instances and conditions that warrant changes to brand identities. These changes may come positive or negative.

According to Tórkés (2019), brand identity ensures that a brand maintains its distinctive attributes which keeps it in favorable position compared to its competitors. This suggests that brand identification attach some form of uniqueness to a product and that enables the product to maintain an unwavering position in the market. Brand identity usually involves in-house strategy that is closely associated with a company's vision, mission and values, in which the highlight of brand identity policies primarily concerns the resources, skills and competencies available in a company (Burmann et al., 2009).

Customers are known to have strong relationship with a brand, which may change due to some factors that affect human psychology and that maybe from a logo, color and other physical attribute of a brand (Adidam, 2007). A brand is known as an important asset to a

company and it may be represented by its name, logo and slogan which characterize a means by which consumers recognize, remember and recall the brand (Alshebil, 2007). When a change occurs the brand in any of its element, it can cause a reaction in the consumer either negatively or positively (Keller, 1993). Brand identity represents the physical attribute of a brand in which different activities is being carried out to ensure customer identifying with the brand. Organization have to make a conscious effort to build a strong, reliable and authentic brand that is capable of winning the trust of all their customers(Keller, 1993).

Consumer experience a brand through a single element of their identity or a combination of the brand name, logo, theme line, shape of their product offering, graphics or color. According to statistics by university of Loyola, brand recognition is enhanced by brand color by up to 80%. Consumers make a sub conscious decision based on their initial recognition of a brand color. According to Gerald Zaltman's book 95% of purchase decision making takes place in the subconscious. Consumers makes decision based on their emotions and can be engaged by interaction with the brand(Zaltman, 2003). Changes made to a brand is associated with cost and risk in relation to the unknown reaction by the consumers and the cost of marketing the new changes made (Zhao et al., 2018). Brand identity is a foundation that form a basis for brand image and reputation (Buil et al., 2016). A well-positioned brand identity may produce the right attitude and positive perception from customers in which it also gives the brand a unique and coherent identity that produces optimum result and bottom line profit (Buil et al., 2016).

Loyalty is the commitment that consumer demonstrate towards a brand which may be due to different factors. The point of loyalty of consumer arises due to a notable difference in the satisfaction derived from their preferred brand to another unselected brand(Adidam, 2007). A change in brand identity may or may not cause a change in their loyalty.

Alvarado-Karste and Guzmán (2020) noted that value of a brand identity is as a result of how consumers analyze a brand whether emotionally or rationally. Loyalty is described as consumer's desire to continuously purchase and use a particular brand. Loyalty is the commitment that consumers demonstrate towards a brand due to satisfaction experienced from past activities. (Kasliwal et al., 2017).According to Kocoglu et al. (2015), loyalty has relationship with consumer purchase decision as it concerns consumers dependability on a particular brand.

Erdumlu et al. (2017)noted that when loyalty becomes habitual to consumers, they do not see it necessary to change their decision from their loyal brands to alternatives. Ordinarily, a change in brand identity may or may not cause a change in their loyalty. Brand identity has become more important to consumers in today's business environment compared to past

relationship and level of engagement has become more distinct and of great advantage to brands. There are literatures on brand identity and how to build a strong brand because the business environment is investing a lot in building a strong and reliable brand now more than previously observed in the business world in past centuries, which has given past researcher a reason to investigate if a change in organization brand identity can cause a decline in their performance(Adidam, 2007).

Consumers of brand products choose their most preferred brand based on some distinct characteristics and brands also constantly want to maintain a unique characteristic for proper identification by their target customers. This implies that loyal customers will be willing to go an extra mile for a brand they value and respect. A strong brand identity implies quality and contentment to consumers. Moreover, with strong brand identity organizations do not have to spend so much on promotional activities. It is observed that loyal consumers are inspired and anxious to pay more attention to all the offering of the brand and significant higher prices for their ideal brand. Be that as it may, a few organizations more often than not change their brand identity. These corporate identity changes are regularly determined by the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of such organizations as a reaction to shape the external market's impression of the value to their endeavors, especially after an acquisition or a merger.

Despite surge of efforts to examine the impact of brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty, it appears that the current literatures is not broad or rich enough to qualitatively uncover the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Consumers were asked to identify a brand they are loyal to and have high purchase intention towards and questions were asked with respect to what will happen to their loyalty and purchase intention if changes are made to the brand identity. Based on the foregoing, this study sought to examine the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

This study aims at investigating the impact of a change in brand identity on consumer purchase behavior and loyalty. Although change in this present business world is inevitable, a brand should be aware of the extent of change consumer can accommodate in order not to lose their current customer base, market share and the loyalty they enjoy from customers towards the brand. Change in identity has been classified into different component based on name, logo, color and tagline. A change can occur from a new name and logo, a new name only, a new logo and slogan and just a new slogan(Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). Brand identity is an important part of an organizational success and a change is usually adopted to create a repositioning strategy in the market amidst strong competition. This

repositioning will in the long-term increase the profitability status of the company. Moreover, this study explored consumers' attitudes about the importance of brand identity and how its stability or change can determine their purchase decision and loyalty.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study show the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This will inform brand owners on the impact change in brand identity has on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This will facilitate their policy making on everything that surrounds change in brand identity. The findings will position the brand managers to make better provision for rebranding and this will enhance the brand identity of the company. More so, the researcher will review related literature on brand identity, change in brand identity, consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The categories generated from the findings will be used as constructs of the major themes of the study and will subsequently develop into a conceptual model, which will theoretically explain the relationship among the variables. The model will elucidate on the impact of change in brand identity on purchase decision and loyalty. Furthermore, the consumers' attitudes were explored, and companies may be able to use the information to help organize their brands and understand consumer stances. Lastly, the finding of this study will also be of benefit to the academic community as the findings of this study will increase the frontier of knowledge in study area.

### **1.4 Justification of the Research.**

A brand identity symbolizes one of the most vital assets to a company which is personified by its name, logo, and slogan that portrays a means by which consumers identify and reminisce the brand. Considering the high influx rate of competition in the market, companies now embark on change in brand identity in order to stimulate the brand identity in the market. This trend has led made brands to undergo a level of change in other to stay relevant in the competitive business environment thereby repositioning their products or services (Chatterjee, 2019). Many studies have been carried out about brand identity and its element (name, color, logo, slogan) with more focus on the logo change (Alshebil, 2007). It was recorded from previous research that shoppers usually preferred no logo changes; however, they accepted the brand with minor changes (Walch et al., 2006). On the contrary, it was also observed that highly brand committed customers had more negative attitudes toward the brand after the logo change and other physical attribute, whereas weakly committed customers had more favorable brand attitudes towards the change in logo but no research has been carried to find out what percentage change experienced by the brand.

Most of the studies (Tevi and Otubanjo, 2013; Makori and Makori, 2013; Zahid and Raja, 2014; Das and Das, 2018) carried out on the impact of rebranding or change in brand identity

on consumer purchase decision and loyalty were quantitative in nature. All of these studies were quantitative in nature, which only describe a phenomenon. So, qualitative approach was adopted in effort to provide an in-depth exploration. Most of the studies did not assess impact of change in brand identity with elements like tagline, which this study addressed. Furthermore, majority of the studies have descriptively examined the impact of brand name and logo on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. However, there is lack or no study on how and why the change in brand identity has impact on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Having a qualitative understanding will provide new framework as regards change in brand identity and its impact on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.



**FIG 1.1** (Wheeler, 2017)

### **1.5 Objective of the Study**

- I. To discover consumers' perceptions to changes in brand identity of brand
- II. To explore the impact of change in identity on consumers' loyalty to
- III. To determine the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision.

### **1.6 Overview of the Research Structure**

This research study is structured in chapters and there are five chapters - introduction, literature review, research methodology, findings and analysis and the conclusion. The first chapter is an introductory chapter that gives clear explanation and overview of the research,

it gives details about the research topic, the objective of the research and the central question the research proffers solution to. This chapter explains the background, introduction to the study, statement of the problem, and justification. This chapter explains the significance of the study and the reason the research is to be carried out.

The second chapter has the critical review of related literature on the major concepts of the study namely: change in brand identity, consumer purchase decision and consumer loyalty. This chapter analyses the concept of brand identity, and research done by past researchers as well as the information that was arrived at in their research. The second chapter shows the importance of the action that consumers make in relation to a brand and change in brand identity.

The third chapter explains the research strategy and methodology, which include the research designs and methods. This chapter will give in-depth explanation to the method of primary data collection-research philosophy, research approach and the research strategy.

The fourth chapter will present the analysis of data collected and interpretation. The last chapter will entail the conclusions and recommendation

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Conceptualization of Brand Identity**

This research literature helps to analyze the concept of brand identity and changes that may cause either a reduction or no reduction in purchases made by a consumer or their loyalty. The research includes all the component part of brand identity and how the collective elements can affect consumers' purchase decision and loyalty of a brand and that of their target customer. Brand identity is a tool which is used to determine image of a brand. The image of a brand is the representation of a product or service of a company. Understanding that a product will have different and varying competitors with the ever-rising competition, it is expedient for a company to have distinctive representation that characterized its brand in order to make it unique.

Kotler and Keller (2008) explained that brand separates a product or service from other similar products or services that can serve the same purpose for the consumers in which it suggests the importance of brand to a company. It was believed that branding has become an idea which top managements in companies have started to pay enormous attention. This

critical attention may stem from the observation that brand goes beyond the tangible to the intangible like consumers' minds (Keller and Lehmann, 2009). Brophy (2011) emphasizes that brand transcends the brand name or logo but the attitudes and sentiments of consumers about a product or service.

Wheeler (2012) opines that brand identity is an asset and instrument used for planning in a company, which provides quality report, improved gratification and competitive edge. This suggests that a company's brand identity is a strategic tool adopted by top management to make the brand improve on its product or service. Brand identity consists of elements chosen by a company to distinguish itself or to place its product in the market. Brand identity represents what a company stands for and its values (Kotler 2012). It is essential for a strong brand to have a defined and valuable identity as absence of such suggests the need for change or extension. Brand identity is important for every company to survive in the competitive market and its absence may be at a very big disadvantage of a company. In a case where brand identity is not yielding desired results, there may be a need to change brand identity to achieve desired results (Chaves, 2017).

Identity of a brand goes beyond the physical attributes of a brand but how consumers perceive the brand. Brand identity involves the perception of consumer about a brand and this shows that the identity of a brand surpasses its attributes. According to Geuns, Weijters and Wulf (2009), brand identity is an important aspect of building a brand. Brand identity is a major factor to create an impression in consumers about a product or service. A company that wants to have a viable image in its customers' mind needs to create a unique brand identity. This will help form a mental image on the customers' mind. Bearing in mind that consumers have numerous alternatives to choose from, brand identity is given significant consideration in predicting consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This is because the image the brand identity creates on the mind of a consumer will ensure the sustainability of loyalty and also may affect the consumer purchase decision.

A brand portrays a unique image which is recognized easily and trusted by consumers of the brand's product or service (Adidas, 2007). The identity of a brand is the face of a brand that enables consumers associate with the brand. Brand identity represents the larger picture and idea of a brand visually. The consistency of a brand identity determines how well consumers can interact with the brand. Brand identity requires a level of consistency because it's representing the emotions of a brand, the message portrayed by brand identity components needs to be clear. Brand identity is an essential ingredient of an organization and rebranding will enable companies evolve their brand and meet up with consumer dynamic needs. But some strong brands should avoid changing their identity at all cost. Big brands like Coca-Cola and Procter and Gamble have been around for over a decade and found a way deep into

consumers psychology, a change in their identity might be of great disadvantage to the brand(Singh et al., 2013).

According to Adidam (2007, p. 48), “a brand with a strong identity have an higher percentage of awareness to their customer and portray a desirable, consistent and unique characteristics”. Every brand with a distinct identity involved a strategic decision at an early stage of the brand. A brand that is easily recognized on the shelf is more likely to be purchased, which implies that brand identity is a determinant to how successful a brand is in the market. A good brand identity is an organizational reality. Before a brand decides to change its identity, there should be a need to get the opinion of the customer especially when they have loyal customers(Kaikati and Kaikati, 2003). A brand identity can also be referred to a corporate visual identity which include the name, logo, color, slogan(Bolhuis et al., 2018). Aaker (1991) stated that a brand name is a tool that communicates brand awareness to the customers.

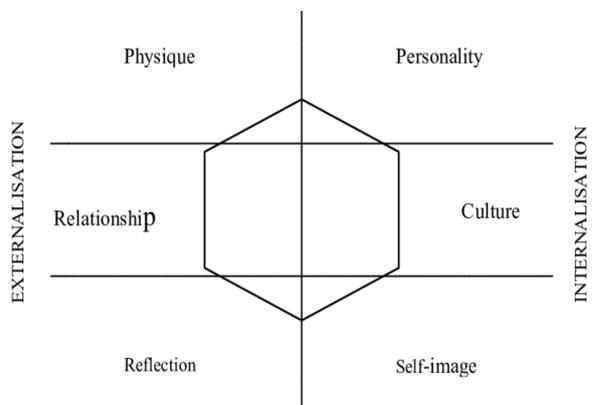


Fig 2: Brand identity Prism (Kapferer, 1986)

## 2.2 Change in Brand Identity

According to Brophy (2011), to change a brand would possibly bring more expenses than building a brand. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that companies can change to a successful brand identity without spending more compared to the cost of building a new brand. The primary motive of change in brand identity is to communicate with stakeholders that a change has occurred in the organizational hierarchy, structure or management. This change may be take-over, mergers, divestitures or effort to replace perceived old identity(Stuart, 2003). Change in brand identity is to improve the features of an already established brand in order to make it more appealing and ensuring its relevance to the need of the consumers(Östberg et al., 2017). The authors stated further that to change in brand identity can be on different inherent features of the brand, which often include the need to improve profitability.

Some of the reasons for the change of identity include unclear nature of brand image and influx of new competitors in the market(Todor, 2014). The reasons for change in brand

identity include change in corporate strategy, acquisition, and need to achieve more positive image or to revise company's image (Bolhuis et al., 2018). Dubey and George (2011) noted that reason for change in brand include change in the competition structure, change in product portfolio, emerging segments, changes in product/service quality, mergers and acquisition, demerger and global expansion. There should be some factors taken into consideration before a change in brand identity is implemented. These factors include the extent to which the brand will be modified or changed, calculations of the benefits and costs, support of internal structure and analysis of the way stakeholders and customers will see the new change (Merrilees and Miller, 2008). Todor (2014) stressed that to change brand is more complex and requires a great deal of strategy than branding. However, the importance and need that comes with change in brand will make sailing through the herculean task worthwhile.

Change in brand identity is a strategic process of modifying an original brand to a newly approved representation, which improves the status of a company (Juntunen and Jussila, 2009). Therefore, the improvement that comes with change in brand makes it imperative to go through the phase or process. Lambkin and Muzellec (2008) noted that change in brand can occur on three perspectives in a company, which include corporate, strategic business unit and product level. change in brand identity is a phased process, which companies employ to react to the vibrant and unpredictable business environment by modifying or changing its identity in order to thrive (Tevi and Otubanjo, 2013). The above suggests that a company do not consider changing its brand except there is need for that. This need may arise from internal or external factors.

In order to have a successful change in brand, companies need to adhere to some process that will engender a successful rebrand. Going through literature, it was observed that some scholars regard to change in identity as a process, not an act. It takes plans and careful steps to achieve a successful change in brand identity so that the huge investment in the change will not become a waste. Dubey and George (2011) highlighted the process involve in change in brand identity, which include identification of rebranding trigger point, select new brand image and new-value proposition, brand re-engineering, communicate rebranding and evaluate. A process for rebranding was proposed, which include triggering, analyzing and decision making, planning, preparing, launching, evaluating and continuing (Juntunen and Jussila, 2009).

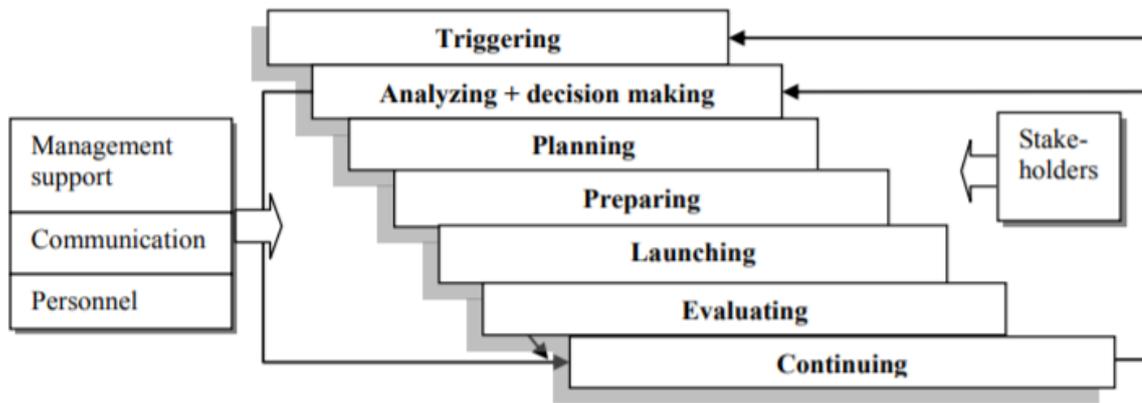


Figure 3: Phases of corporate rebranding

Source: Juntunen, Saraniemi and Jussila (2009)

Goi and Goi (2011) stressed that there are different strategies for a company to change a brand identity. These include retro-branding, transparent warning strategy, sudden eradication, counter take-over, phased-in or phased-out strategy and combining brands. Retro-branding involves the re-use of an old brand, transparent warning strategy involves carrying along the customer in the whole rebranding process, sudden eradication is an abrupt change in brand without prior notification or idea, counter taker-over happens when there is a new acquisition of a company and phased-in or phased-out involves the amalgamation of new and old brands which involves gradual phase-out of an old brand

### 2.3 Consumers' Loyalty

Some scholars believe that consumer loyalty is duo-faceted, which maybe behavioral or attitudinal (Chahal & Bala, 2013; Hawkins & Vel, 2013). It is perceived that behavioral facet of loyalty is when consumers repeatedly purchase a product, refer same product to other consumers and religiously trust in the product (Chahal & Bala, 2010). Liu-Thompkins, Williams and Tam (2010) viewed attitudinal loyalty as the positive prediction that is perceived to deliver supremacy and maintenance of continuous favorable reaction towards a product or service. However, it was observed that the concept of loyalty is closely connected to behavior than attitude (Wijaya et al., 2020). They noted further that consumers' loyalty is a mechanism employed by companies to strengthen mutually beneficial and lasting relationship with consumers. Loyalty is not forced but grows with appeal and persuasion. Hence, it requires effort from companies to ensure that consumers are loyal to their products or services.

Generally, it is believed that loyalty is developed from trust. If a consumer is loyal to a product, the consumer can go to any length to not only purchase the product but also refer and unconsciously advertise or promote it to other users that might have not been using the

product. This will prepare companies for somewhat assured long-term positives in profitability status of the company. Consumer loyalty is one of the factors that entrench the sales and services of a business(Othman et al., 2019). Mornay (2011) noted that customer relation is an important element in the approval of a new brand and consumer loyalty. Hence, companies should endeavor to maintain a cordial customer relationship and also with prospective customers. Chadha and Agarwal (2019) view consumer loyalty as a psychological state of a consumer, which is built from their sense of fulfillment about a particular product or service. This sense of gratification arises from consumers' sentiments and this usually determines their decisions in purchasing a product or service.

The continuous trust of a product by consumers elicits the confidence reposed in the product. It was noted that there are four stages of consumer loyalty, which include cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty and action loyalty. Furthermore, it was stated that cognitive loyalty is the earliest form of loyalty and action loyalty is the one of the greatest willingness to act in the purchase of a product(Tarigan, 2019). Studies (Shaines, 2012; Winnie, 2014) have found that the trust consumer reposed on a product or service has statistically positive relationship with consumer loyalty. This indicates that trust will only increasingly enhance consumers' allegiance and dependence on purchasing a product or service. Trust increases consumers' propensity to purchase and intention to repurchase, which will ultimately entrench consumers' loyalty(Ganguly et al., 2009).

Othman et al. (2019)noted that consumer loyalty is often influence not only by trust but by consumers' satisfaction. The authors drew inference that consumers' satisfaction will increase loyalty as fulfillment derived from the use of a product or service will entrench intention to repurchase. According to Kazemi et al. (2013) loyalty is the pledge to repurchase and maintain allegiance to purchase a particular brand. This provides an opportunity for a company to maintain its customers and such scenario is beneficial to the long-term plan of the company.

Aaker (2014) divided the levels of loyalty towards brand into five, which include non-loyal buyers (sensitive to price and easily switch brand), satisfied customers (habitually purchase), fulfilled clients (obtained dependability advantage), genuine customers (genuine lover of brand) and committed customer (fond of using the brand). This division of loyalty is in phases and it is hierarchical. Magatef and Tomalieh (2015) found that consumer loyalty plans are beneficial to build a trust and maintain consumer retention. Putting in place programs that will help retain consumers will at the long term be of benefit to the profitability status of a company.

## 2.4 Consumer Purchase Decision

In the process of buying of products by consumer, there are some conscious and subconscious factors that influence consumers' decision. This happens because consumers are replete with options to choose from. This makes it a necessity for consumers to carefully consider their options before making decision on their purchase. Lamb, Hair and McDaniel (2009, p. 140) described "consumer purchase behavior as how consumers make purchase decisions and how they use and dispose of the purchase goods or services". Consumer decision-making involves the selection of a choice from different options (Panjaitan et al., 2019). This is similar to Kotler (2008) view that consumer purchase decision is a psychological process which is instrumental in revealing consumers' thoughts on purchase decision.

These behaviors are often influenced by some intrinsic factors that may be personal or external factors to the consumers. Consumer behavior is often influenced during the process of making purchase decision by four factors, which include cultural, social, personal and psychological (Jones, 2010). All these factors may not be controllable by marketers but can be influenced to better derive a positive and favorable decision from the consumers. Demographic characteristic of a consumer is another factor that can influence consumer purchase decision. This factor includes age, relative income, and occupation. Jones (2010) identified that types of consumer purchase decision include habitual decision, limited decision making, extensive decision making and impulsive buying.

Hanaysha (2018) examined the factors affecting consumer's purchase decision in the Malaysian retail market and found that corporate social responsibility, perceived value and store environment have significant positive effect on consumers' purchase decisions. It was however found that sales promotion and effect of social media marketing have negative significant effect on consumers' purchase decisions. Rani (2014) believes that the factors that influence consumer purchase decision include cultural factors, social factors, personal factors and psychological factors. These four factors was expanded to five factors, which include emotional factor, social factors, economic factors, cultural factors and personal characteristics (Ramya and Ali, 2016).

Thangasamy and Patikar (2014) examined factors influencing consumer buying behaviour in Nagaland in India and it was found that necessity has the most significant impact on the consumer purchase decision. This suggests that consumers pay utmost attention to the need of the products they purchase. The most significant variables to measure consumer loyalty in telecommunication industry include maintaining brand awareness, reliability of broadband network, service charge and keeping of contacts (Kim and Lee, 2010). Rahayu et al., (2020) found that risk has a positive relationship with consumer purchase decision and it was however shown that trust is a mediating factor in the relationship. Eze and Bello (2016)

investigated the factors influencing consumer buying behavior within clothing industry in Kwara State, Nigeria. It was found that age, quality cloths, income and fund determine consumer purchase decision.

## **2.5 Change in Brand Identity and Consumer Loyalty**

It has been observed that change in brand identity can be used interchangeably with rebranding (Kimberley, 2012). Ali et al. (2019) noted that change in brand identity is aimed at building a new picture of a particular product on customer's mind, which will sanction the development of a new name, logo, slogan, design, color and tagline to maintain customer loyalty. Makori and Makori (2013) examined the relationship between rebranding and customer loyalty using Power and Lighting Company rebranded to Kenya Power. The agency changed their brand name, brand color and brand logo. Hence, the authors carried out the study to understand how these changes impact customer loyalty. The authors adopted descriptive survey design using questionnaire to collect necessary information from 234 sample size. It was found that rebranding moderately improves the company's image.

Tevi and Otubanjo (2013) investigated the effect of numerous changes in brand and customer loyalty with Econet wireless telecommunication. In less than ten years, Econet change their brand five times. Hence, the author assessed how the changes in brand affect customer loyalty. The study found that the frequent change in brand does not affect customer loyalty. The effect of rebranding on the level of customer loyalty in the Ghanaian banking industry and found that rebranding does not have statistically significant effect on customer loyalty in the industry (Bamfo et al., 2018). This suggests that change in brand of banks in Ghana does not have any statistically significant effect on customers' loyalty. Ahmad and Shaari (2017) found that brand loyalty mediate between rebranding and brand reputation after brand crisis in the media.

Zahid and Raja (2014) investigated the effect of rebranding on brand equity considering brand loyalty as a mediating variable and it was found that brand loyalty does not mediate between rebranding and brand equity. Das and Das (2018) examined the impact of rebranding on Airtel telecommunication in India and it was found that change in brand identity does not have statistically significant positive relationship with customer loyalty. Based on the findings, it was suggested that rather than focusing and investing heavily on rebranding, telecommunication company in India should endeavor to provide better service as that will make subscribers and users to be more loyal to the network provider. This shows that change in brand identity is not really given any cognizance or attention by Airtel subscribers or users in India.

## **2.6 Change in Brand Identity and Consumer Purchase Decision**

There are replete of literature on the impact of branding on consumer purchase behavior, however there are few on change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision. Walsh, Winterich and Mittal (2010) assessed the impact of brand logo redesigns on consumer purchase decision of Adidas and New Balance. The authors adopted descriptive survey method. It was found that brand logo can differentially impact consumer brand commitment to the extent that impulsively committed customer will react negatively to a change in redesigned logo.

Mauranx (2011) assessed the impact of Guinness's rebranding on consumer's perception of brand image. Descriptive survey method was adopted, and questionnaire was used in the collection of data. It was found that Guinness' popularity is a mediating factor not to make the consumer jettison the brand for other substitutes even with the rebranding. Makasi, Govender and Madzorera (2014) investigated rebranding and its effects on consumer perceptions in a Zimbabwean bank. A mixed method research approach was adopted, which necessitate the use of questionnaire and interview for data collection. It was found that rebranding has a statistically strong significant relationship with the consumers' perceptions, which may affect their decisions. It was recommended that that should be used as a marketing tool to improve the competitive edge of the company.

Gaskill (2019) examined the impact that the rebranding of Dunkin' Donuts to Dunkin' has on brand perception from the perspectives of Generation Z and Millennials through the lens of social identity theory. Qualitative research approach and focus group discussion was adopted to collect data from forty-four students. It was found that social identification decreased slightly through logo rebranding, however that did not have any impact on the purchasing behavior of the students. Effects of rebranding on firm performance and consumer's perceptions. The descriptive survey method was adopted, and questionnaire was used in the collection of data. It was found that the brand logo has an effective tool that affects consumers' purchase decision. This indicates the need to be careful in changing the brand logo(Assali, 2017).

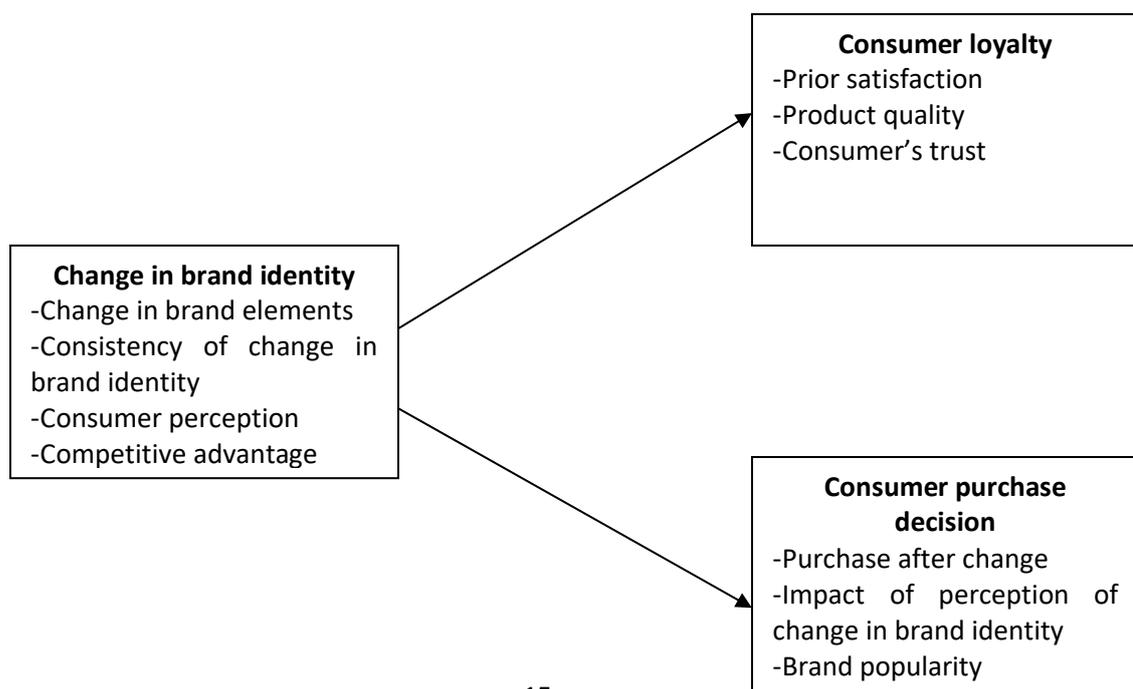
## **2.7 Element of Brand Identity as a Competitive Advantage**

Brands changes their identity because of the rate of growth and development in the marketing world whereby marketing moves from the method of mass marketing to one to one

marketing and customization in which target customers voice can be heard by the brand (Joyeeta Chatterjee, 2019). According to Chatterjee (2019) it was discovered that committed shoppers of consumable goods do not like a logo change and displayed a negative attitude toward changes of logo but only accepted minor changes to a brand. According to (Muzellec, 2006) a company's main identity is the name which has a powerful influence on consumers perception, a consistent brand name helps in building brand loyalty (Chahal and Bala, 2010). Brand identity is of a competitive advantage because it enables the consumer to differentiate the brand from other offerings in the market (Keller, 1993).

The attention to the design or logo portraying the brand name is extremely important in the global marketplace where the identity of the brand must transcend language and even alphabets. Some brand logos serve as a distinctive way to recognize the brand. Multinational brands have a logo that makes them stand out from their direct competitors and in the mind of their consumers (Zaichkowsky, 2010). According to Aaker (1996) a good brand name can create a favorable market share for the product of the brand and be a source of strength amidst competition. He went further to explain that a brand with a strong brand name tends to help consumers recall a brand. Consumers' purchase decisions can be influenced by a strong brand identity by which the image of the brand is imprinted on the mind of the consumer. A good logo helps consumers recall a brand and recognition of a logo is a major contributor to the purchase process (Pimentel and Heckler, 2007). Multi-national brands like Apple, Coca-Cola, Google, Toyota communicate with their customers without the use of words and just the display of the logo commands respect and loyalty. The answer to what will happen when a brand identity is changed or altered is unknown in regard to the loyalty to the brand.

**Figure 4 Conceptual Model**



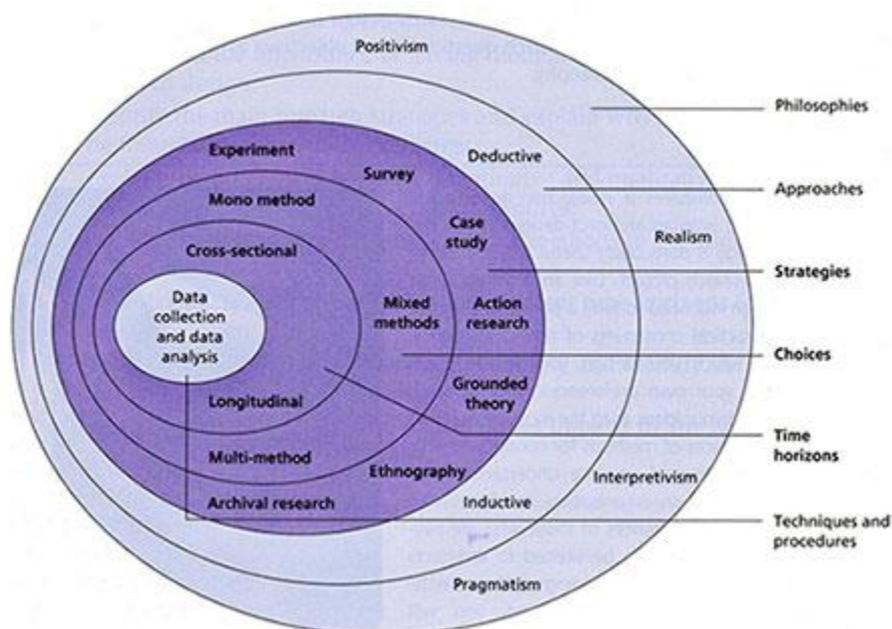
The conceptual model presented shows that change in brand identity has impact on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. It is established that consistency of change in brand identity can determine consumer loyalty. Moreover, it was shown that consumers' perceptions about change in brand identity determine consumer purchase decision.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

### 3.1 Overview

This chapter highlights the philosophical assumption, research methodology and research methods adopted to explore the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Research methodology and methods are essential in a research process as they ensure the study is based on valid and veritable research philosophical assumption, research paradigm, research design, population and sample, research instrument and its validation, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations. All these are important in ensuring the study produce reliable results. The adoption of different research methodology in this study was informed by critical review of related literature, researcher's objective judgment of the various available options and guidance of advisor. Moreover, the choices of different research methodologies and methods were defined by the research questions and objectives. Essentially, the research methodology and design of this study is underpinned by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's research onion.

**Figure 5: Research Onion**



Source: Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009)

## **3.2: Research Philosophy, Paradigm and Approach**

The philosophical assumptions in a study allow researchers to import their beliefs into a qualitative study, which will then shape the research process. This segment presents the philosophical assumption, worldview and research approach that will be adopted to investigate the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

### **3.2.1: Research Philosophy**

Research philosophy is the philosophical assumption that was considered by the researcher to guide the study. This centers on determining the research design and approach suitable for the study as different assumptions produce different results. Research philosophy depends on the nature of reality, nature of knowledge, research ethics and language of research. Creswell and Poth(2016)noted that verbal assumption (language of research) is essential in qualitative study as it allows a researcher to address the language and terms of inquiry. The authors noted further that there are three philosophical assumptions in research, which include the following:

- Ontology
- Epistemology
- Axiology

For the purpose of this study, the epistemology research philosophy was adopted as the study examines the nature of knowledge as regards the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

### **Epistemology Philosophy**

This research philosophy primarily concerns the theory of knowledge, which deals with how a researcher knows about a social construct and the right way to seek valid knowledge. This worldview connects the participants' opinions and researcher's thoughts and perceptions. Based on this, a researcher sought to verify the reality with empirical evidence, which help distinguish objective knowledge from myths/fallacies. In this study, opinions were sought by engaging with the participants in order to establish the knowledge on the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

#### **3.2.1.1 Realism**

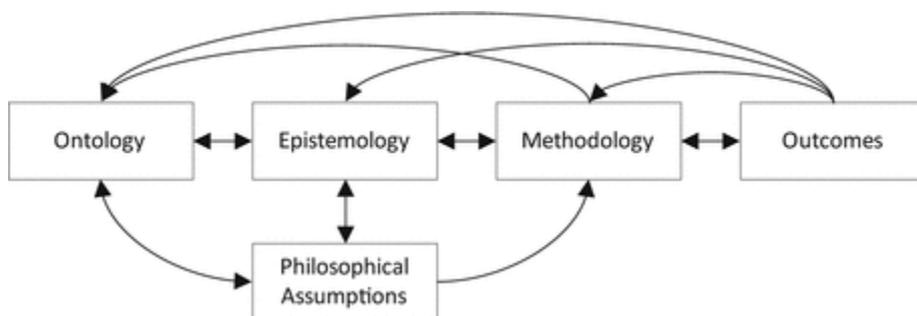
This epistemology approach deals with the independence of the reality out there from the researcher's mind. This means that social reality is free from researcher's conceptualizations and interpretations. Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz(2018) noted that realism offers a radically

different idea of objectivity and emphasizes on striking a balance between knowledge and reality.

### 3.2.1.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism research philosophy is rooted in the idea that there is a distinction in the approaches used for understanding knowledge related to human and social sciences are not the same as physical sciences, since people experience social phenomenon and view the natural environment while the world does not (Hammersley, 2012, p. 26). Interpretivism is essential as it allows for deeper understanding of a social construct rather than description of an event or phenomenon. Basically, interpretivist worldview is concerned with seeking knowledge of a social construct in a natural environment where humans play the role of social actors.

**Figure 6: Research Philosophy**



Source: Schlegel (2015)

### Justification for Interpretivist Epistemology Philosophy

The interpretivist approach of epistemology research philosophy was adopted for this study. The interpretivist assumption is that humans understand or perceive a phenomenon or event in a social context. This study sought to determine the contextual understanding of how change in brand identity impact consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The preference of interpretivist philosophy was informed by the notion that the reality of the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty does not precede the thoughts of humans.

Interpretivism epistemology philosophy was adopted in order to carry out an in-depth understanding of the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty (Saunders et al., 2009). This philosophy was adopted as it would be difficult to adopt positivism to understand the subjective perceptions and thoughts of the consumers as it concerns how change in brand identity influence their purchase decision and loyalty. The interpretivism philosophy allows a detailed understanding of how change in brand identity impact consumers' purchase decision and loyalty. Moreover, thorough understanding of

consumers' opinions about the event of change in brand identity will provide exhaustive revelations on their purchase decision and loyalty.

Consumer's perceptions and thoughts of change in brand identity, and its impact on purchase decision and loyalty, is characterized by their behavioral tendencies. Moreover, the idea of change in brand identity varies along company's line. This difference may be based on the diversities in companies' mission and vision statements and products characteristics. Against this framework, interpretivism philosophy is adopted to determine consumer's purchase decision and loyalty when there is a change in brand identity. More importantly, interpretivist philosophy supports in-depth and exhaustive analysis of the impact change in brand identity has on consumer's purchase decision and loyalty (Saunders et al., 2009).

Interpretivist assumption is not feasible to see the worldview from the participants' standpoint and therefore it is advised to strive towards practicing empathic understanding (Tracy, 2019). This suggests that researchers who adopt interpretivist philosophy interpret the participants' views except there is empathic approach to understanding their views. In analyzing the transcripts from the interviews conducted for this study, the researcher ensured and strived towards ensuring there is empathic understanding of the participants' views and opinions. This will improve the degree of understanding participants' thoughts and perceptions.

### **3.2.2 Research Paradigm**

Qualitative research was selected as it allows for in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. It promotes the "why's" and "how's" as it concerns an event. Philosophical assumption represents the particular standpoint the researcher took after choosing qualitative study. After the philosophy that guides the research has been selected, it becomes practical to scheme the research by adopting a method of inquiry or worldviews to carry out the investigation. Research paradigm is a general framework for theory and research that includes basic assumptions, key issues, models of quality research, and methods of seeking answers (Djamba and Neuman, 2002). This framework upon which a research is established is somewhat like a structure that determines how a researcher provides answers to research questions in a scientific manner. Tracy (2013) expressed that there are four different types of research paradigm, which include the following:

- Positivist/post-positivist
- Interpretive
- Critical
- Postmodern

The above-mentioned paradigms provide basis for researcher in an empirical study, and they can all be applied in a qualitative study. Since this study adopted interpretivist epistemology research philosophy, the research paradigm that was adopted in this study is the interpretive paradigm.

### **3.2.2.1 Interpretive Paradigm**

Interpretive paradigm is also known as the constructivist or constructionist, which does not believe that reality is in the social world for a researcher to clearly explain, describe, or translate into a research report (Tracy, 2013). This paradigm is of the worldview that reality and knowledge can only be socially constructed and reproduced through a participatory effort of the researcher, which involves interfacing and dealing with participants in a specific social context. This suggests that the researcher usually serves as the moderator in this paradigm. Consequently, this makes the paradigm to be subjective in nature as researcher interprets only what they hear and can understand.

In interpretive paradigm, interpretations cannot be separated from the researcher's background, history, contexts and prior understanding and conceptualization (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, there may be conflict of interest when the understanding of the researcher differs from that of the participants, which may bring about multiple views of the research problem and a depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. Subsequently, that may lead to deep issue in answering the research problems. Positivist paradigm advocates are of the view that there is reality out there waiting to be clearly examined and translated into a material knowledge. In this wise, post-positivist is related to the positivist paradigm. They believe social constructs shape social actors. However, in this study, the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty was examined from the humanistic perspective, which is supported by interpretivist. Therefore, consumers of different brands were interviewed to understand their opinions of the impact of change in brand identity on purchase decision and loyalty.

Interpretive research paradigm was adopted so as to understand and interpret the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The choice of interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to relate with the participants so as to understand their in-depth views on the impact change in brand identity has on their purchase decision and loyalty. This paradigm provides a subjective interpretation of the participants' perceptions and values about change in brand identity and its impact on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The interpretive approach makes the goals of this study achievable as it

allows researcher to collect opinions of consumers, which elicit deep understanding of the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty by collecting.

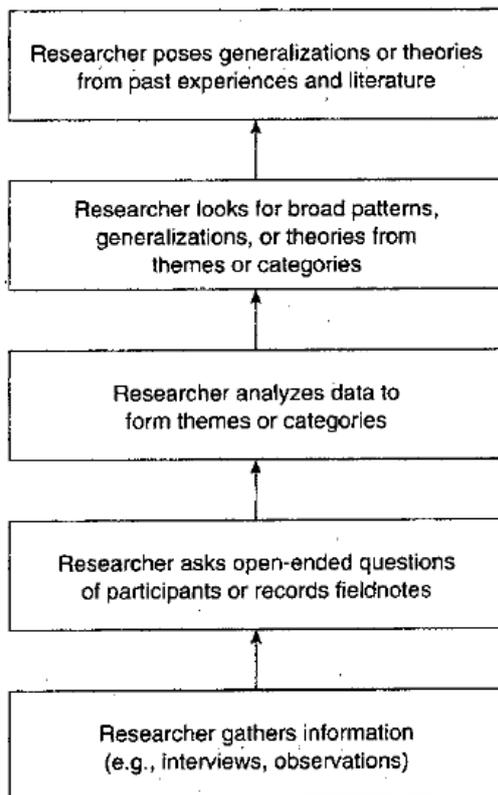
### **3.2.3 Research Approach**

This section highlights the theoretical approach adopted in this research study. There are two major approaches of reasoning, which are inductive and deductive approaches (Trochim, 2006). Inductive approach involves conducting a research from specific knowledge to general knowledge while deductive involves conducting a research beginning at a general to specific (Trochim, 2006). Inductive researchers believe that a research study should be conducted by “building patterns, categories, and themes from bottom-up by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information” (Creswell, 2007, p. 38). Considering that the researcher sought participants’ views to answer the research questions and address the objectives, and in the process generate a new theory, the inductive theoretical approach was adopted.

#### **3.2.3.1 Justification for Inductive Research Approach**

Inductive research approach is a well-known process among natural scientists. It involves the development of theory from data collected. It involves coming up with different codes from a set of data. These codes will then be grouped into different categories, from whence themes will be generated and theory is developed. The theory development is usually based on the findings and the observable patterns in a set of data. The logic of inductive approach is provided below:

**Figure 7: Inductive Research Approach**



Source: Creswell (2009)

Inductive approach was adopted for this study began with collection of data from participants on their views on the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The participants were asked to provide their understanding of how change in brand identity influences their purchase decision and loyalty to a particular brand. Their responses were analyzed, and conclusion was provided through the development of theory that explains the relationship among the variables namely: change in brand identity, consumer purchase decision and consumer loyalty.

### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design concerns the plan and outline for carrying out a research study. It involves the research strategies employed for the study, sources of data and data analysis, and ethical considerations considered towards providing answers to the research questions. There is need to have a proper research plan in order to be able to provide answers to formulated research questions. Creswell (2009) views research strategies as the different kinds of methods employed by a researcher to collect data with the aim reaching a logical conclusion. Going through literature, it was observed that descriptive research design is employed by most researchers that have studied the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This suggests that there is no detailed explanation as to how and why change in brand identity influence consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Hence, the

researcher adopts alternative method of exploratory or explanatory research design to provide in-depth analysis of the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

### **3.3.1 Justification for Exploratory Research Design**

The researcher adopts exploratory research design for this study. Exploratory research is primarily concerned with the examination of a phenomenon that is less understood in an effort to generate ideas from the participants of the study. Exploratory research is a kind of qualitative research as it involves a detailed and comprehensive explanation of a phenomenon that is little understood. This design is useful when the researcher does not know the essential variables to examine. Unlike the descriptive research design, exploratory study transcends describing a concept, but it involves going into detailed assessment of a less understood concept (Creswell, 2009). The exploratory research design is adopted for the study as it allows for the researcher to engage with the participants in order to have an understanding of consumers' views on the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The participants were given freewill to choose any brand they are faithful to in order to ascertain their knowledge of how change in the brand identity influences consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The other key reason for the adoption of exploratory research design is to inductively derive generalizations from the consumers on the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

### **3.4 Research Strategy**

Research strategy concerns the researcher's scheme to collect and use data for a research study. This can be described as effort in making sense of the data collected. There are various research strategies in qualitative study. The researcher adopts case study strategy, which is of the interpretive worldview. Yin (2009) argues that case studies can be employed by researchers to explain, explore or describe an event or a phenomenon in the social context of day-to-day activities. Case study approach deals with real-life context and it was deemed appropriate for the study as the consumers were interviewed on understanding of the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Case study is applicable in a qualitative research study. Simply put, case-study allows the creation of new knowledge from real-life perspectives. The researcher explored the impact of brand identity on consumer purchase decision by engaging with the participants, which involves exploring the event where there is a change in brand identity and how that can impact consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Hence, case study research strategy was adopted for this study.

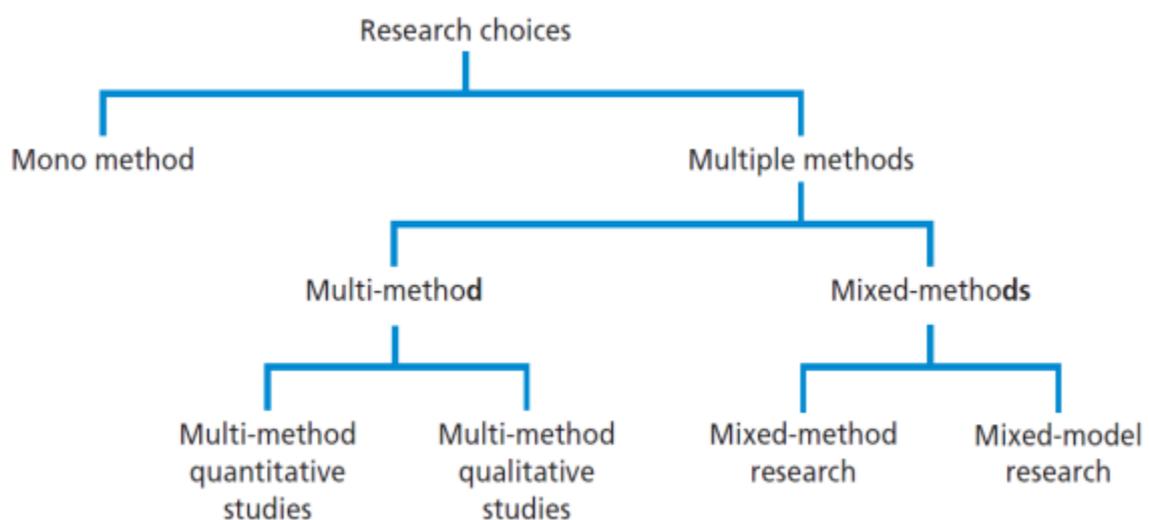
### 3.4.1 Justification for Case Study Research Strategy

The participants for this study described the event of impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This shows that the study focuses on the perceptions of participants on impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The researcher interviewed the participants on descriptions of what is obtainable when there is change in brand identity of their favorite brands and its influence on purchase decision and loyalty. From these participants' views, meanings were made, and patterns were drawn to ascertain different themes. The case study strategy allows for deep understanding of the consciousness of consumers with respect to change in brand identity and how that influence purchase decision and loyalty. This strategy provides an avenue to ascertain the explanation of the events of the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

### 3.5 Research Method

The research method concerns the process the researcher adopts as to collection of data and data analysis. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) noted that the two broad categories of research choices are mono method and multiple methods. As the concept implies, "mono method" simply means the adoption of a particular method in carrying out a research study while "multiple methods" provides the integration of different methods. For the purpose of this study, mono method is adopted as the researcher adopts only interview in the collection of data.

Figure 8: Research Choices



Source: Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016)

### **3.5.1 Justification for Mono Method**

In research, none of the available methods exist in isolation. This suggests that all method has its strengths and weaknesses. The mono method was adopted as interview was the only data collection instrument used in the study. This is so owing to the limited knowledge as to the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. In order to provide exhaustive explanation of how change in brand identity influence consumer purchase decision and loyalty, the lived experience of the consumers were sought. Detailed consumers' experiences were collected by engaging with the consumers and not simply administering instrument on them. This method ensures that enough data were collected for this study. In this study, however, it has been observed that limited studies have been carried out as to how change in brand identity influences consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Hence, the qualitative mode of inquiry was adopted in a bid to have understanding of consumers' experiences as to the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Qualitative study involves collection of data, which are in words or non-numeric form.

### **3.6 Method of Collection Data**

There are two broad methods of data collection, which include primary and secondary data. Primary data are usually collected directly from the source while secondary data might have gone through some form of modification. Owing to the fact that data were collected from the consumers directly, it can be said that primary data were used for the study. Kabir (2016) highlights that the three types of interviews include structured, semi-structure and unstructured. The interview design adopted is semi-structure interview has it allows comments and follow-up questions to main research questions from the participants. This was done to have in-depth understanding of the participants' perceptions of the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty without any form of barrier. The interview was carried out via Zoom in a one-on-one approach. The individual approach was adopted so as to give the participants no barrier in airing their views and perception.

#### **3.6.1 Justification for Semi-structured Interview**

The semi-structured interview is a planned and deliberate formal interview that is scheduled by both the interviewer and interviewee, which has the main interview questions and ensuing follow-up questions during the interview session. In the course of the interview, the researcher has clear scheme to answer the research questions of the study and all interview questions are guided towards achieving that. The semi-structure interview was adopted so as to collect exhaustive and detailed data to answer the research question and objectives. The interview questions have open-ended and close-ended questions with coordination by the

researcher. Prior the interview, the researcher (interviewer) gathered enough understanding of the various concepts in this study. This enriched and enhanced discussion with the participants as it concerns their views of the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

Owing to the pandemic that plagued the globe during the time of carrying out this study, the idea of face-to-face interview was erased. This made the researcher to opt for virtual interview through Zoom. The semi-structured nature of the interview provides some new development and generation of new questions in the process (Trochim, 2006). However, the researcher ensured that the questions are well within the scope of the research study in order not to deviate from the set-out objectives and research question. There was no note taking by the researcher during the interview process so as to ensure maximum concentration on the interview and not lose track of the interview proper. The interview was recorded and transcribed into Microsoft Word application.

### 3.6.2 Interview Outline

The interview guide consists of questions that are both open-ended and close-ended. Responses of the participants guide the flow of the interview session. Some responses of the participants escalated into new question that was not part of the interview outline. Nonetheless, all interview questions and new questions in the course of the interview were guided to answer the research objectives and question.

<b>RESEARCH OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</b>
To investigate consumers' perceptions of changes in brand identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is your perception/what do you think about changes made to a brand identity?</li>   <li>- What do you think should be the reasons for possible change in brand identity?</li>   <li>- Does consistency of brands determine how well you interact with the brand?</li>   <li>- What elements of brand do you think its change impact your perception of the brand?</li>   <li>- What is your opinion of how change in brand identity improves competitive</li> </ul>

	<p>advantage?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it help or hurt the brand?</li> <li>- Should changes be based on a type of industry?</li> </ul>
To examine the impact of change in identity on consumers' loyalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does your trust in a brand impact loyalty during a change in the identity?</li> <li>- How does prior satisfaction you derived from a brand impact your loyalty even when there is a change in identity?</li> <li>- Does your commitment to a product change when there is a change in brand identity?</li> <li>- Does product quality impact your loyalty to a brand when there is a change in the brand identity?</li> <li>- How does product value impact your loyalty when there is a change in brand identity?</li> </ul>
To determine the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How does popularity of a brand influence your purchase decision when there is change in brand identity?</li> <li>- Does your perception of a brand impact your purchase decision when there is a change in brand identity?</li> <li>- Does change in brand identity influence your purchase decision?</li> </ul>
To explore the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have you come across a brand that have changed their identities and made you buy?</li> <li>- If yes, what is it that made you stay with the brand?</li> </ul>

	- On a scale of 1 to 10 how much does a brand impact on your purchase decision
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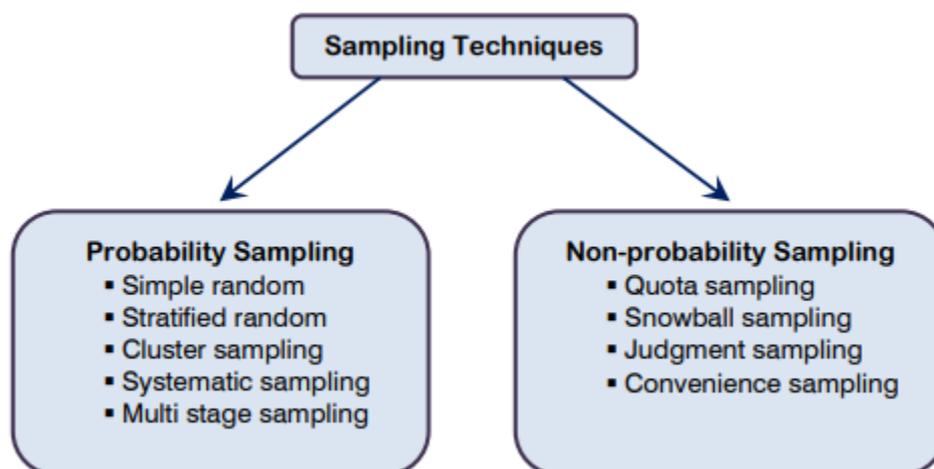
Source: Sample research objectives and research questions

### 3.7 Sampling

Sampling is the process employed by the researcher to draw the sample for a study from the population. There are two broad category of sampling techniques, which include probability and non-probability sampling techniques.

- **Probability sampling:** This sampling technique involves giving every sample in the population the equal chance of being selected. Some of the examples of probability sampling technique include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, proportionate sampling and multi-stage sapling.
- **Non-probability sampling:** This sampling technique does not give the prospective sample the equal chance of being selected. Taherdoost (2016) stated that “non-probability sampling is related with case study research design and qualitative research” (p. 22). Some of the examples of non-probability sampling technique include purposive sampling, convenience sampling, quota sampling, judgmental sampling and snowball sampling.

Figure 9: Sampling Technique



Source: Taherdoost (2016)

Non-probability sampling involves a sample of participants in a nonrandom manner. In this kind of sampling technique, there is no need to ensure that the samples are representative of the population. However, there has to be sound rationale for selecting participants instead of the others. The sampling technique adopted for this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was adopted as it allows researcher to consciously select participants as they were declared to provide relevant and useful information during the interview process (Tracy, 2013). The interviewees were selected based on their trust in different brands. The sampling process was hinged on the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The sampling frame was the consumers of different brands. The researcher selected ten (10) participants from consumers of different brands. The ten participants were selected based to logistics, time restriction, movement restriction owing to pandemic and available contacts that showed interest to participate.

**Table 2: Participants' favorite brands**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Brands</b>
PT1COC	Coca-Cola
PT2LGT	Logitech
PT3APP	Apple
PT4NIK	Nike
PT5TRP	Tropical
PT6PaG	P&G
PT7MAG	Maggi
PT8SMS	Samsung
PT9COC	Coca-Cola
PT10APP	Apple

### **3.8 Access and Ethical Issues**

Ethical issues are essential and central to carrying out a study that is devoid of unethical practices, which could have an influence on the study outcomes. Hence, all ethical issues have to be considered as in the research process. These vary from selection of appropriate research

methodology, data collection procedure, access to the participants and proper analysis of the data. All these ethics are values that are attached to a research.

### **3.8.1 Access Issues in Data Collection**

Data collected for this study was carried out in a procedural way. The participants for this study were interviewed using virtual method. This was so as it was declared that it may be risky having a face-to-face interview during the period of pandemic. The researcher employed the following procedure to select the participants for this study:

- Selected participants with possible remote access were identified and invited for the study by the researcher; sending an introductory letter stating the research purpose.
- Consent of the participants to participate in the study was received with a fixed date for the interview proper.
- The interview was carried out.

All contact during the whole process was via emails and phone calls to all the participants.

### **3.8.2 Research Ethics Issues**

Through the whole research process, ethical issues were considered. This navigates the selection of research methodologies and research methods. The researcher ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants by not revealing their identities during the data collection, data analysis and writing of report of the study. In analyzing the data, participants were codified so as to ensure their anonymity. This research study adhered to the ethical guidelines of Griffith College, Dublin. This was to ensure that there is strict adherence to ethical values of research through the research process as that will ensure the generation of reliable knowledge. Moreover, all the participants were advised to withdraw from the interview if, at any point of the interview, they are not comfortable, or they feel answering the questions may arouse inconvenience in whatever way. In the course of data analysis, there was no fabrication and/or falsification of data as this is an act of unethical practice.

Also, it was ensured that the researcher does not have any relationship with all the sampled brand identity by the participants. This was to avert potential conflict of interest on the part of the researcher in a bid to ensure that there is no form of prejudice through the phases of data analysis and report of findings. Consents of the participants were sought as regards their choice to either have an audio or video interview; and ten of the participants chose to be interviewed on audio only. It was communicated and understood by all participants that the research was for master's dissertation and all participants were 18 and above. Also, it was made known to the participants that they were place on record. All these ethical values and measures were taken so that the researcher will not feel distressed with the interview session.

### 3.9 Approach of Data Analysis

After the interview was carried out with the participants, recorded session was transcribed into word format. During the process of transcription, the language of the participants was addressed. The transcribed manuscript was read by the researcher so as to comprehend meanings and draw patterns having at the back of mind the research objectives and questions. This allowed for coding of notable and remarkable phenomenon from the participants' responses. These codes are words and short phrases that symbolically assigns essential attribute to visual data. The codes were categorized into groups based on associational or relational characteristics. From these codes, categories were generated. The categories are relational codes drawn from the transcript using the research objectives and question. Themes were identified from the categories, which were all relating to the research objectives and question. The themes were alternatively linked with the literature review so as to see any similarities and differences.

## PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the analysis of data, presentation and discussion of the findings of the study. The data were collected from consumers of different kinds of brand. Qualitative approach was adopted so as to have an in-depth understanding of the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Data were collected from the ten participants whom voluntarily participated in this study. The participants were given the option of selecting their choice favorite brands and interview questions were answered based on the chosen brands by different participants. Some of the brands selected by the participants include Coca-Cola, Logitech, Apple, Nike, Tropical, P&G, Maggi and Samsung. Two of the participants selected Coca-Cola and Apple as their favorite brands. Other brands were selected by one participant apiece. All ten participants were interviewed via Zoom. Due to COVID-19 restrictions all interviews took place via Zoom

#### Participants' favorite brands

Participants	Brands
PT1COC	Coca-Cola
PT2LGT	Logitech

PT3APP	Apple
PT4NIK	Nike
PT5TRP	Tropical
PT6PaG	P&G
PT7MAG	Maggi
PT8SMS	Samsung
PT9COC	Coca-Cola
PT10APP	Apple

Interviews were semi-structured and have both open-ended and close-ended questions. Some of the questions led to another as far as the ensuing questions are within the scope of the research objectives and questions. Before the interview session, participants were sent an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the research study and seeking the participants' consents. The participants were assured of their anonymity and information collected was kept with utmost confidentiality. Each interview session lasted for an average of 20 minutes with each participant. The participants were selected based on their preferred brand. The interview was transcribed into Microsoft Word document. The coding was done on Microsoft Word. Transcript was analyzed using line-by-line coding in order to have enough codes owing to the paucity of data with transcript of 3101 words.

Transcripts were analyzed to discover the relationship and differences between the collected data and existing literature. Fifty-two (52) codes were extracted from the transcript. From these codes, a total of 14 categories were developed and that led to the three themes of the study. The three themes in the study include the following:

- i. Change in Brand Identity – This theme has six (6) categories, which were focused towards understanding consumer's perception of change in brand, reasons for change in brand identity, basis for change in brand identity, consistency of change in brand identity, change in elements of brand identity and impact of change in brand identity on competitive advantage.
- ii. Impact of Change in Brand Identity on Loyalty – This theme reflects the influence that change in brand identity has on consumer loyalty. This theme has categories such as consumer's trust, prior satisfaction, consumer commitment and product quality.
- iii. Impact of Change in Brand Identity on Purchase Decision – This theme shows the influence that change in brand identity has on consumer satisfaction. This theme has categories such as brand popularity, impact of perception of brand, reason for buying a brand after change and quantity purchase after change in brand.

## 4.2 Discussion of Findings

### 4.2.1 Theme 1: Change in Brand Identity

This theme developed from the participants' responses on perception and phenomenon that surrounds change in brand identity. Having knowledge of the concept of change in brand identity from the views and opinions helps provide insight to the behavior and attitude of consumer towards change in brand identity. Answers were provided to questions on perception of consumers to change in brand identity, reasons for change in brand identity, basis for change in brand identity, consistency of change in brand identity, change in elements of brand identity and impact of change in brand identity on competitive advantage. All of these provided answer to the research objective one – to investigate consumer's perceptions of change in brand identity. All of the participants for the study described their understanding of the concept through by using a particular product of choice as a case-study

From the information collected from the participants for the study, 28 codes were extracted from the transcript. These codes were significant words and phrases in the transcript. The codes were used to develop 6 categories. These categories were used to develop theme, which is change in brand identity. The six categories of the study include the following:

- Consumer perception of change in brand identity
- Reason for change in brand identity
- Basis for change in brand identity
- Consistency of brand identity
- Changes to elements of brand identity
- Competitive advantage

**Table 3: Categories and Codes for Change in Brand Identity**

Categories	Codes
Consumer perception of change in brand identity	Reach new audience
	Reach wider audience
	Remarketing
	Product quality reduction
Reasons for change in brand identity	Change in production process
	Policy change
	Reach a new target audience
	Ownership change
	Consumer taste
	Competition
	Bad phase in business
Basis for change in brand identity	Consumer wants

	Market culture
	Brand core
	Industry-based
Consistency of change in brand identity	Dependability
	Buying behavior
	Trust
	Loss of customer
Changes in elements of brand identity	Color
	Tagline
	Name
	Logo
Competitive advantage	Depends on company
	Product quality
	Consumable products
	Consistency

#### 4.2.1.1 Consumer Perception of Change in Brand Identity

On participants' perceptions of change in brand identity, the findings of the study provide that participants view change in brand identity as a means of reaching new audience by companies. PH10APP notes that:

“Changes are sometimes made to reach a wider target audience.”

The findings of the study revealed that change in brand identity is sometimes mechanism for a company to remarket and reach a new target audience. PT2LGT stated:

“It (change in brand identity) is a way to re-market and rebrand and may be potentially reach a new target audience.”

PT3APP:

“It (change in brand identity) is a way in reaching a new target audience.”

From these responses, it revealed that consumers view the change of brand identity as an avenue or measure taken by companies to reach out to potential customers. More so, it is believed by one of the participants (PT2LGT) that change in brand identity is carried out to remarket the brand. Calisir, Lehtinen and Orstberg (2017) submitted that change in brand identity is to improve the features of established brand with a view to make it more pleasing. This assertion somewhat is agreeable to the views of the participants that change in brand identity is for the realization of reaching new market and remarketing.

From the responses of the participants, it was acknowledged by PT3APP that the perception about change in brand identity could mean that there is reduction in the brand quality. The Participant stated thus:

**“I think once they make change sometimes there is quality reduction.”**

The findings show that change in brand identity is sometimes associated to a decrease in brand quality. It was noted in literature that change in brand identity may occur owing to product/service quality (Dubey and George, 2011). However, this is not a depreciating change but an improvement upon known brand. Hence, this shows that perception of the participant is not in tandem with company’s perceived effort in change of brand identity.

The findings of the study revealed that some of the factors that necessitate the need for a change in brand identity include change in production process, policy change, to reach a new target audience, ownership change, consumer taste, competition and bad phase in business. As stated by PT2LGT:

**“(Change in brand identity happens) If there is significant change in how they (companies) produce or a significant change in their policies or belief”**

Result shows that participants view change in production process or policy as a factor that motivates companies to change their brand identity. This policy change may be spurred by shift in roles, handlers, or owners of companies. This was supported by PT4NIK who stated that:

**“It (change in brand identity) happens sometimes when there is change in ownership.”**

PT9COC supported that:

**“It (change in brand identity) may be due to acquisition or change of ownership or reposition.”**

To buttress this, it was seen in literature that some of the reasons for change in brand identity include change in product portfolio, mergers and acquisition, and demerger (Dubey and George, 2012). Results of the study show that reaching a new target audience is one of the reasons for change in brand identity. PT3APP responded to question, on the reasons that motivate change in brand identity, as thus:

**“It (change in brand identity) is a way in reaching a new target audience.”**

The findings show that change in brand identity is to reach new target audience. One of the reasons for change in brand identity is for global expansion (Dubey and George, 2011). This statement is consistent with the findings of the study as global expansion is primarily concern

with reaching wider audience. The globally known a company becomes, the wider the audience of the company.

PT5TRP gave a brief response to the reason that cause change in brand identity, stating that:

**“Consumer taste and competition.”**

PT10APP notes that:

**“Sometimes (change in brand identity is carried out) to stay relevant in the market or because of competitors.”**

This findings show that the participant views change in brand identity as a measure carried out by company considering the sensitivity of consumers and the competitive nature of the industry the company finds itself. This suggests that there may be change in brand identity when there is stiff competition for the company.

PT8SMS acknowledged that poor business status of the company can be a reason:

**“Changes (in brand identity) might be made due to a bad phase in the business.”**

This shows that when a company is in an unhealthy position, there may be a need to carry out measure to help reposition the company. This may necessitate the need for change in brand identity in order to give the brand a new face in the industry and market. The need for a strong brand identity is usually done towards ensuring an improvement on company’s status and that requires the change from the existing brand identity (Balmer, 2013).

On the basis for change in brand identity, PT4NIK expressed that:

**“I think change made to a brand identity is based on what consumers want.”**

The result shows that the participant believe the changes in brand identity are primarily consumer focused. This may be in connection with effort to ensure in reaching new and wider audience as discovered in this study under the reasons for change in brand identity. Meanwhile, PT7MAG acknowledged that market culture is an essential rationale for change in brand identity citing instances of consumer taste and reaction:

**“It (change in brand identity) depends on the culture of the market the brand finds itself based on the consumer taste and reaction.”**

The findings of the study show that the fundamental of carrying out change in brand identity are done for consumers. A company’s pivotal stake holder is consumers, which without them a company will find it difficult to thrive. Hence, it is important that a company should ensure change in its brand is driven towards consumer’s wants. Change in elements of brand identity is usually done for consumers (Zaichowsky, 2010).

PT2LGT admitted that changes made to brand identity should be based on brand core. The participant stated thus:

**“I believe brand identity changes should be made based on changing something in the brand core.”**

Most of the participants acknowledged that change in brand identity should be industry-based:

PT3APP stated that:

**“Quite possibly it (change in brand identity) is based on the industry.”**

PT4NIK admitted that:

**“It (change in brand identity) should be based on the industry.”**

In somewhat similar fashion, PT5TRP expressed that:

**“It (change in brand identity) should be based on the industry.”**

PT6PaG mentioned that:

**“Change should be based on industry.”**

PT7MAG acknowledged that:

**“It (change in brand identity) should be based on the industry.”**

PT9COC stated that:

**“It (change in brand identity) should be based on the industry.”**

This revealed that significant number of the participants see change in brand identity as a measure that should be industry based. Findings in literature show that change in brand identity is usually industry based (Kim and Lee, 2010; Bamfo et al., 2018). Other participants noted that changes made in brand identity should be based on consumer wants, market culture and brand core.

#### **4.2.1.2 Consistency of Change in Brand Identity**

Answering if consistent change in brand identity determine how well consumer interact with a brand, nine out of ten of the participants (90%) agreed that consistent change in brand determine how well consumer interact with the brand while one of the participants (10%) disagreed. PT2LGT disagreed by saying:

**“No, the consistency of the brand does not affect the way I interact with the brand.”**

The above comment suggests that brand consistency would yield an interaction between the consumers and the brand.

PT4NIK acknowledged that:

**“If they (brands) are not consistent, then I would not buy things from them.”**

PT1COC noted that:

**“I just take (select a product) because they are consistent.”**

The results show that consistency of brand identity can well determine buying behavior of consumer. The two comments reflect some sort of loyalty towards a brand that keeps its brand identity consistently. This shows that stable brand identity seems to be the best approach to retain customers. In a similar area, it was noted that consistent brand name helps in saving brand loyalty (Chahal and Bala, 2010).

PT3APP acknowledged that:

**“An example I can think of is a brand that have had three brand changes in a couple of years. So, I do not trust them anymore because they have not been consistent.”**

The findings show that frequent change in brand identity may raise suspicion on the side of the consumer. This may lead to distrust and subsequently may lead to a rethink in the consumer decision of the brand. In a quantitative study, it was found that frequent change in brand identity does not affect consumer loyalty (Tevi and Otubanjo, 2013). This shows that the finding in literature is not similar to what the results of this study show. It may be because of the study approach which differs as qualitative and quantitative approach. However, it is shown in this study that frequent change in brand identity can affect consumer loyalty.

PT10APP submitted that:

**“Consistency is a strength of the brand.”**

This reveals that brand consistency over a period of time can be strength to the brand. The consistency of a brand is a strong brand identity and it is the key in which a brand portrays (Durkee, 2017). This means that the strength of a brand lies in its consistency to keep to its identity. This will make recognition easy for consumers.

#### **4.2.1.3 Changes to Elements of Brand Identity**

On change in elements of brand that will impact consumer perception of the brand, the views of the participants are:

PT1COC stated that:

**“Changes in name will be accommodated but not color and tagline.”**

PT7MAG simply responded that:

**“Color and tagline.”**

PT5TRP noted that:

**“Tagline.”**

PT6PaG stated that:

**“Color. Most people remember color more than other identities.”**

It is shown in the findings that color and tagline are two elements of brand that changes made to it can impact the perception of consumer about the brand. One of the participants expressed that color is easy to remember than other identities. This may mean that if the brand color to a consumer’s mind changes that may have resultant impact on the perception of the consumer about the brand. The findings of the study show that changes in brand color and tagline may impact the perception of consumer about the brand. It was found that more than nine out of ten consumers can identify and recognize brand immediately from its color (Hodgson, 2017).

The findings of this study also revealed that brand name is not significant than other elements of brand identities, which negates literature with findings of (Chahal and Bala, 2010; Nyambane and Ezekiel, 2015) showing that brand name is the most significant in ensuring that brand perception and loyalty are stabilized. This means that there is disconnect as to the significant importance attached to brand name by consumers and what is available in the literature. This means that brand color and tagline are as important as brand name.

When asked about brand elements that their changes can impact consumer perception of the brand, PT4NIK responded:

**“Name.”**

PT9COC acknowledged that:

**“Name.”**

PT8SMS stated that:

**“Logo.”**

PT10APP mentioned that:

### **“Name and logo.”**

PT3APP stated that:

“It is the name and logo because whenever you see an Apple symbol you automatically think of apple products.”

Based on these responses, the findings show that change in brand name and logo can impact consumer perception of the brand. This is corroborated with the submission that company’s main identity is the brand name, which has a powerful influence on consumer perception (Muzellec, 2006). In a similar manner, it was found that consumers react negatively to brand logo redesign and that can affect the perception of impulsively committed customer of the brand (Walsh, Winterich and Mittal, 2010). Moreover, it was shown that good logo helps consumer to recall a brand and that contribute greatly to the purchase process (Pimentel and Heckler, 2007). Based on this, it can be said that change in brand name and logo can change consumer perception of a brand. And it also show that color is more important to some consumers.

#### **4.2.1.4 Competitive Advantage**

On participants’ views of whether change in brand hurt or help a brand, results show that three of the ten participants agreed that change in brand identity hurt a brand. It was stated by PT1COC as thus:

### **“It hurts a brand.”**

PT9COC mentioned that:

**“It (change in brand identity) hurts the brand more because there will be a reduction in the decision of the customer.”**

PT10APP noted that:

### **“Changes hurt the brand.”**

It was found that 5 of 10 participants believe that the condition that surrounds the change in brand identity can determine if the change will hurt or help a brand. This was acknowledged by PT2LGT as thus:

### **“It (change in brand identity) could help or hurt the brand.”**

PT3APP stated that:

**“It depends, if a brand has an already loyal customers based or group of customers, they would be fine.”**

PT4NIK mentioned that:

**“Sometimes it helps and sometimes it hurts the brand.”**

Findings show that carrying out a market research to see if there is need for a change in brand identity could be a determining factor on whether the change will hurt or help the brand.

PT7MAG stated:

**“If the brands do a better research about the market then it might help the brand.”**

Result shows that when changes to brand identity are too frequent, it can hurt the brand identity. However, it was shown that changes in brand identity will be helpful to the brand when it is not a regular exercise. PT8SMS mentioned that:

**“It (change in brand identity) hurt if they make changes too often, but it can help when changes is not regular.”**

Moreover, the findings of the study show that two out of the ten participants believe that change in brand identity will help a brand. PT5TRP noted that:

**“Yes, it (change in brand identity) helps the brand.”**

PT6PaG mentioned that:

**“Change could actually help the brand because it may seem up-to-date.”**

From the foregoing, results show that most of the participants were of the opinion that change in brand identity should only be considered if a brand has carried out the following namely: market research, ascertain the number of loyal customer, and frequency of change in brand identity. It is noteworthy that consumers of P&G and Tropical products are the ones that believe change in brand identity helps brand.

It was however revealed that consistency of a brand identity helps improve competitive advantage than change in brand in brand identity. PT8SMS acknowledged that:

**“When a brand keeps to their identity, they remain consistent which is good for competitive advantage.”**

The findings of the study show that when there is frequent change in brand identity, the brand will lose its competitive advantage in market. It was found by Tevi and Otubanjo (2013) that frequent change in brand does not affect customer loyalty to a brand. The disagreement in the findings may be because the study was a quantitative study, which focused on telecommunication industry. However, the findings of this study only show what is obtainable from consumers of Samsung brand.

Findings show that change in brand identity will not have any impact on competitive advantage of the brand as long as the product quality did not change through the process of changing the brand identity. PT2LGT mentioned that:

**“I actually stick to a brand because of its quality and not because of their outward appearance or presentation.”**

Findings of the study show that food and drinks industry is very sensitive when it comes to change in brand identity. PT6PaP stated thus:

**“Food and drinks can be a very sensitive industry.”**

PT8SMS mentioned that:

**“It (change in brand identity) should be based on the industry especially for consumable brand.”**

Based on these findings, it can be said that brands in the food and drinks or consumable industry should be careful about their approach and effort in change their brand identity. Overall, the findings of this study show that the results of change in brand identity can either be positive or negative, which is based on some variables. For example, the study findings show that when there is too many frequent changes to brand identity, then that may raise a question on the minds of the consumers and subsequently take negative toll on consumer perception of the brand. It was shown that foods and drinks industry is a very sensitive one for any change in brand identity.

#### **4.2.2 Theme 2: Impact of Change in Brand Identity on Consumer Loyalty**

This theme explored the impact of change in brand identity on consumer loyalty. Consumers' perceptions and opinions on the theme were collected and provide insight on how factors such as trust, prior satisfaction, commitment and product quality can determine consumer loyalty. All of these provided answer to the research objective two – to examine the impact of change in identity on consumers' loyalty. The participants responded using their favorite brand as case-study. Hence, it suffices to point out that there was no brand used as universal case-study for the study.

Based on the data collected from the ten participants, total of 11 codes were extracted. From these codes, a total of 4 categories were developed. These four categories are what merge to form the theme, “impact of change in brand identity on consumer loyalty”. The four categories include the following:

- Consumer's trust
- Prior satisfaction
- Consumer commitment
- Product quality and price

**Table 4: Impact of Change in Brand Identity on Consumer Loyalty**

Categories	Codes
Consumer's trust	Change in brand impact trust
	Communication
	Trust determines loyalty
Prior satisfaction	Motivation to stay with brand
	Brand identity does not determine satisfaction
	Satisfaction impact loyalty
Consumer commitment	Use of product
	Product quality determines commitment
	Satisfaction determines commitment
Product quality and price	Fear of quality reduction
	Product quality determines loyalty

#### 4.2.2.1 Consumer's Trust

Question was asked on whether the participants' trust in brand has any impact on loyalty during a change in identity, all the seven participants agreed to the question. This shows that most of the participants agreed that trust in brand has impact on loyalty even in the face of change in brand identity. PT1COC mentioned that:

**“I have to trust the brand to be loyal to the brand.”**

The results show that trust consumers have on a brand is essential in order to keep their loyalty when there is change in brand identity. It was found that consumer trust of a brand can influence their loyalty when there is a change in brand identity (Agrawal et al., 2012). Similarly, it was revealed that the consumer loyalty to a brand is determined by the trust the consumers placed on the brand (Shaines, 2012; Winnie, 2014).

Findings of the study also show that change in brand identity has impact on participants' trust of the brand. PT1COC mentioned that:

**“When I trust the brand, I trust the brand. I do not expect them to change their identity.”**

PT3APP acknowledged that:

**“So, if I trust the brand, I know what I am getting from them.”**

PT7MAG added that:

**“Initially, I will not trust but I might purchase to check the quality.”**

It is shown from the responses above that change in brand identity has impact on consumer's trust. The findings show that some of the participants' trust in a brand do not make them reconsider or rethink their decision to keep loyalty with the brand. It was further shown that trust placed on a brand after change in brand identity may be to test or see if the brand will still keep up with the quality it is known for.

PT5TRP acknowledged that:

**“I will want to know the reason behind the change. And if the reason is good then my loyalty will remain.”**

PT9COC mentioned that:

**“I might need explanation as to why they (brands) change.”**

Findings show the need for communication of a change in brand identity to the consumers. This will relieve fears on secrecy as to the reason why the change in brand identity and such will ensure that a brand keeps its loyalty in the face of change or intended change in brand identity. It was however noted that there is gap in communication of change in brand (Gupta, 2016). Afterwards, it was revealed in a study that adequate communication about new identity in identity appeared to be important for people's appreciation of the change in identity (Bolhuis, de Jong, and van den Bosch, 2018).

#### **4.2.2.2 Prior Satisfaction**

Consumer's prior satisfaction derived from the use of a brand is one of the categories under the theme of impact of change in brand identity on consumer loyalty. Prior satisfaction primarily concerns the fulfillment consumers derived from the use of a brand.

PT4NIK stated thus:

**“Prior satisfaction makes me more loyal to them (brands) because I know that things, I have gotten from the brands makes me satisfied so I will be loyal to them.”**

PT5TRP mentioned that:

**“I will stick to the satisfaction I derived from the brand and be loyal.”**

PT6PaG acknowledged that:

**“I will consider my prior satisfaction before I question my loyalty.”**

PT8SMS revealed that:

**“If I am satisfied with the brand then their changes does not affect my loyalty.”**

PT9COC stated that:

**“The satisfaction will make me want to try out the product to conclude if the quality remains.”**

Findings show that prior satisfaction consumers derived from a brand is a factor that determines consumer loyalty in the event of change in brand identity. Consumer loyalty is influenced by the gratification and fulfillment consumers derived from the earlier use of a brand. It was shown that customer loyalty is the most prevalent construct used in determining customer satisfaction (Agrawal *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, it was noted that consumer loyalty towards a brand is usually demonstrated when consumer has experienced satisfaction from past activities or services (Kasliwal *et al.*, 2017). Prior satisfaction connects with the theme of loyalty as it reflects some form of allegiance of consumers towards a brand.

PT1COC noted that:

**“I just need the motivation to pick the product.”**

Results show that consumers may need some form of motivation that will serve as incentive for them to go for a brand after change in brand identity. This implies that brands should endeavor to ensure there are some incentives that will make the consumers to still go for a brand after change in brand identity. It was shown that consumer experience with a brand determines repurchase intention (Ebrahim, Ghoneim, Irani and Fan, 2016). It was however agreed by PT9COC that:

**“The satisfaction will make me want to try out the product to conclude if the quality remains.”**

The findings of the study show that the extra motivation needed by the consumer after change in brand identity may just be prior satisfaction experienced. This shows that the quality of satisfaction consumers derived from a brand is an important factor in determining consumer loyalty after change in brand identity.

PT1COC acknowledged that:

**“If Coca-Cola changes the outward look of their packaging, I do not know if I will be forced to pick it and if I do once and it tastes the same, I think I will go back probably to buy it.”**

The result shows that the package of the product does not necessarily translate to the taste of the brand. This shows that brand identity does not determine satisfaction. The name, color, slogan and tagline of a brand do not determine consumer satisfaction. The point here is that there is gap between changing a brand identity and keeping participants informed of the process. This is because participants believe that they may not understand the reason for a change in brand identity but if the product tastes the same, they would still buy it. This opens a critical gap as to where brands need to get consumers to try with the new image.

On whether consumer commitment to a product changes when there is a change in brand identity; six out of ten of the participants agreed, three of the participants disagreed and one of the participants was neutral. This means that most of the participants were of the view that commitment to a product changes when there is a change in brand identity. The findings of the study show that brand quality can determine consumer commitment towards a brand. PT5TRP noted that:

**“The quality of the product makes my commitment stay with the brand.”**

PT9COC admitted that:

**“My commitment still remains if the quality is still there.”**

PT10APP acknowledged that:

**“Quality determines my commitment.”**

The findings revealed that product quality is an important factor in determining consumer commitment towards a brand. Provided product quality is of good standard, the consumer will be loyal to the brand; and if the quality is not of good standard, there is likelihood to lose consumer loyalty in the process. It was shown in the findings that consumers will stay committed if the product quality remains the same. However, synthesizing this with the findings that consumers are less willing to try a product again if the brand changes, it depicts that there a psychological effect of change in brand identity where people think the product is different when change takes places. This shows that brands needs to meet a gap where they get consumers to try a product with change in brand identity and brands also need to ensure that the product retains its quality as that will likely make consumers to stay loyal. PT4NIK stated that:

**“It depends on what I use the product for.”**

Results show that the use of the product may determine the consumer commitment towards the brand. This means that there may not be change in consumer commitment towards products used for essential purposes even in the face of change in brand identity.

PT8SMS noted that:

**“No (commitment would not change), if I get top notch satisfaction from the brand.”**

The findings of this study show how quality consumers' satisfaction experienced with prior usage of a product influences commitment towards the brand. Loyalty is the commitment a consumer show towards a brand owing to satisfaction derived from past activities (Kasliwal *et al.*, 2017).

#### **4.2.2.3 Product Quality**

On whether product quality impact consumer loyalty to a brand when there is a change in brand identity, all ten participants agreed. This means that product quality is a determinant of consumer loyalty towards a brand. Moreover, the results of the study show that some consumers are skeptical of the product quality after change in brand identity. PT2LGT admitted that:

**“If the (brand) quality and delivery remain the same, I will remain loyal to the brand.”**

The participant stated further that:

**“If the product quality is still there or improves, then my loyalty remains.”**

PT8SMS acknowledged that:

**“If change (in brand identity) does not affect the price and quality, I will remain loyal.”**

PT1COC expressed that:

**“The quality of a brand offering is very important on how loyal I am to a brand.”**

The above comments show that consumers are skeptical of changes made to brand identity with the thought that it might be a ruse to reduce the product quality.

PT7MAG stated that:

**“If there is change in their quality, then it will affect my loyalty.”**

PT8SMS noted that:

**“Every brand has a quality they are known for, so if the quality remains then my loyalty remains.”**

PT9COC admitted that:

**“If the quality reduces then I will no longer remain loyal with the brand.”**

The results of the study show that product quality determines consumer loyalty towards a brand even when there is a change in brand identity. This means that the when a product quality is still satisfactory to the consumers, there will not be much impact of change in brand

identity on consumer loyalty. It was shown that product and service quality determines loyalty to a brand (Das and Das, 2018).

PT1COC expressed thus:

**“I just feel when a brand changes there is something they are trying to hide either they reduce the ingredient (sic) and they use a new packaging to make it look better.”**

PT3APP stated that:

**“I think once they make changes sometimes there is quality reduction. And there is something they are hiding.”**

PT7MAG noted that:

**“If they change the packaging of Maggi, I will think before buying the brand because I might think the quality may reduce.”**

The findings show that where there is change in brand identity, there is usually an ulterior motive that comes with it from the brand. This perceived concealed motive is largely attributed to reduction in the product quality of the brand.

### **4.2.3 Theme 3: Impact of Change in Brand Identity on Consumer Purchase Decision**

The theme “impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision” was used to explore how the consumer purchase decision changes when there is change in brand identity. The theme was formulated from four categories, which include the following:

- Brand popularity
- Impact of perception of change in brand identity
- Quantity of purchase after change in brand identity
- Reason for purchase after change in brand identity

From the transcribed opinions and views of the participants, a total of 13 codes were extracted.

**Table 5: Impact of Change in Brand Identity on Consumer Purchase Decision**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Brand popularity	Popularity determines purchase decision
	Likeness of a product affect decision
	Popularity draws attention

	Satisfaction
Impact of perception of change in brand identity	Trust determines perception
	Perception of brand quality influence decision
Quantity of purchase after change in brand identity	Product quality
	Type of change in brand identity
	No assurance
Reason for buying after change in brand identity	Satisfaction
	Brand quality
	Availability of brand
	Better packaging

#### 4.2.3.1 Brand Popularity

Asked whether brand popularity influences consumer purchase decision even when there is change in brand identity; six out of ten participants agreed that popularity influences purchase decision after change in brand identity, one of the participants was neutral and three out of them disagreed that brand popularity influences purchase decision. This shows that most of the participants believe that brand popularity influence consumer purchase decision. This is quite similar to the findings that brand popularity is a mediating factor that makes consumers to continue with a brand even when there is a change in brand identity (Mauranx, 2011). This shows that most of the participants view brand popularity as a factor that influences consumer purchase decision after change in brand identity.

PT3APP acknowledged that:

**“I will always go towards a popular brand.”**

PT5TRP stated that:

**“If everyone is talking about it, then it might influence my decision.”**

PT9COC mentioned that:

**“Popularity influences my purchase decision.”**

Results show that the popularity of a brand can influence consumer purchase decision in the event of change in brand identity. This simply means that regardless of change in brand identity consumer may choose to buy a brand simply because it is being talked about by people.

PT4NIK expressed that:

**“If I bought something from the brand and I like even if the brand is not popular, I will keep buying from them.”**

The findings show that consumer likeness for a product can influence purchase decision in the event of change in brand identity.

PT2LGT noted that:

**“If a brand is very popular then it gets my attention.”**

PT7MAG expressed thus:

**“Popularity makes me drawn to a brand.”**

Results show that brand popularity draw consumer attention even if there is a change in brand identity.

#### **4.2.3.2 Impact of Perception of Change in Brand Identity on Consumer Purchase Decision**

The findings of the study revealed that all of the participants agreed that perception of change in brand in brand identity impact consumer purchase decision. This shows the consumer perception of change in brand identity has impact on consumer purchase decision. Similarly, Makasi, Govender and Madzorera (2014) found that change in brand identity has a statistically strong significant relationship with consumers’ perceptions, which may affect their decisions. The finding is related to the results of this study as it shows that consumers’ perception has impact on consumer purchase decision. Meanwhile, it was acknowledged by PT1COC that:

**“What I think of (change in brand identity) impact how I buy.”**

PT4NIK noted that:

**“My perception of Nike impact how much I buy.”**

PT5TRP expressed that:

**“How I feel about the brand determines my purchase.”**

PT6PaG noted that:

**“It will slow down my decision because I have another product to think of. I might question if the quality also changed.”**

The findings revealed that the perception of consumers about a product has impact on consumer purchase decision. The perception of a brand about change in identity determines how consumers purchase the product. This could be feeling or sensitivity of consumers towards changes that were carried out on a brand identity. The findings show that changes in brand identity could slow down the purchase decision of consumer especially when there are other substitutes the consumer can think of. This may lead to doubt arising from questions

on why the brand carried out the change in brand identity. Makasi, Govender and Madzorera (2014) show that consumer perception affects purchase decision. This finding relates with results of this study as there is an observation that the perception of consumers about the product quality and other competing products may affect consumer's purchase decision.

#### **4.2.3.3 Purchase after Change in Brand Identity**

Asked whether change in brand identity influences consumer purchase decision in terms of quantity, six out of ten of the participants agreed that change in brand identity can influence purchase decision while the remaining four of the participants disagreed. This shows that more than half of the participants were of the opinions that change in brand identity influence consumer purchase decision in terms of quantity.

Meanwhile, PT1COC noted that:

**“Depends on what the change is (all about).”**

This shows that the quantity a consumer buys depend on the kind of changes that have taken place on the brand identity. This is subjective to every individual as human perceive and react to phenomenon differently.

PT4NIK acknowledged that:

**“If they change their (brand) identity, I will buy from them to see if I still like the brand.”**

The results of the study revealed that when there is a change in brand identity, such may lead to consumer settling to make trial purchase to see if the brand quality still remains the same. Provided the quality is still the same, that will lead to repurchase and if there is any observable changes as to the brand quality after the change in identity, then a consumer may rethink keeping with the brand.

PT8SMS expressed that:

**“It doesn't, if the quality remains.”**

The above comment supports that consumer perception of a brand remains the same as long as the brand quality is still the same in the event of change in brand identity.

It was found in the study that five of the participants parted with a brand after a change in its identities and five of them noted that they switched to a brand after it made a change to its identity. PT1COC stated that:

**“I like the brand before but packaging wasn't great. So, the packaging was changed and it became better.”**

PT9COC expressed that:

**“I did not stay long with the brand because of the satisfaction (derived from earlier usage).”**

This revealed that making improvement on the packaging of a brand is a reason why consumer buys a brand in the event of change in brand identity. This means that improved packaging has influence on consumer buying behavior. The results also show that in the event of change in brand identity with improved packaging, brands should not lose sight of consumer satisfaction. As the study findings show, the packaging may attract a consumer to a brand, but satisfaction will make the consumer stay long with the brand.

PT7MAG expressed that:

**“Their brand quality did not change.”**

The findings show that when there is no change in brand quality, the consumer will not have reasons to reduce the quantity of purchase even when there is a change in brand identity.

#### **4.2.4 How Much a Brand Impacts Consumer Purchase Decision**

The participants were asked to rate (1-10) how much a brand influence their purchase decision and it was found that the average rating of how brand impact consumer purchase decision was 7.2. This shows that the rating is well above half and this signifies that brand has impacts on consumer purchase decision.

## CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Overview

This study explored the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This involves understanding how change in brand identities like name, logo, color and taglines can affect consumer purchase decision and loyalty towards the brand. Brand identity helps to register on consumer's mind the brand unique identification characteristics (Ali et al. 2019). This suggests that brand identity helps to make a brand to be easily recognizable. Change in brand identity has been carried out by companies for various purposes, which could affect the performance of the brand in market and how consumers react to it. Hence, the importance of change in brand identity cannot be overemphasized. There are so many quantitative studies that have been carried out on what makes change in brand identity affect consumer purchase behavior and loyalty. However, there is lack of qualitative studies to explore the "how and why" change in brand identity affect consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The importance of this study is supported in the lack of enough qualitative studies on how change in brand identity impact consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

It is expected of every company to have a representation that best communicate the ideals, attitude and service of its brand. However, this may be subjected to unavoidable change when there is shift in the core or ownership of the company. Understanding the impact that comes with change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty, this study sought to prepare company owners to understand how and why change in brand identity should be carried out viz-a-viz consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This will prepare brands of the potential impact of undergoing change in identity. Moreover, the study established that consumers think change in brand identity reduces quality while research has shown that companies do it to increase quality. This shows a gap and companies should endeavor to make consumers understand that product quality increases when there is a change in brand identity.

The review of literature shows that the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision include brand popularity, perception of the change, inadequate knowledge for the reasons for change and quantity purchase after the change. Moreover, it was shown in this study that trust, satisfaction, product quality and commitment are what influence loyalty in the event of change in brand identity. This corroborates the view that there are various factors that may affect consumers' purchase decision (Makasi, Govender and Madzorera, 2014). It was shown that consumer's perception and consistent change in brand identity determine the performance of brand identity when there is a change (Mauranx, 2011).

Findings from the analysis show that change in brand identity makes consumers to be slow in making decision during purchase. Moreover, the usefulness of a brand and its availability in consumer vicinity are factors that determine consumer decision making. It was established in this study that trust, commitment and satisfaction are factors that makes consumer keep loyalty to a brand if there is a change in brand identity.

## **5.2 Implications of Findings for Research**

This section provides a reflection of the implication of the findings. The main objective of this study was to understand the in-depth analysis of how and why it may impact on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Furthermore, the impact change in brand identity has on consumer purchase behavior and loyalty was established.

The study findings show that change in brand identity is perceived by consumers as a way of reaching new audience, remarketing of brand and reduction in quality. This implies that consumers have both positive and negative perception of change in brand identity, which may be the reason why such effort could take positive or negative toll on the brand. It was however noted that the intention of companies on change in identity is to improve on brand image (Calisir, Lehtinen and Orstberg, 2017). It is not company's intention to get poor image with the change. Nonetheless, with some consumers believe that change in identity is for some ulterior motive, it becomes imperative for brands to be more purposeful in their effort to change identity.

Results of the study show that change in ownership, production process, reaching a new target audience, competition and bad phase of market. This shows that consumers' perceived change in brand identity usually takes place when there is a significant shift in standard of a company. This implies that companies should not embark on change in brand identity without goal or reason. However, study findings show that it is necessary to carry out market survey before embarking on change in brand identity. This could have impact on the brand process for companies as that that may take extra efforts and resources. However, provided the survey is done properly with adequate data collection, it is most likely assured that the change in identity will be a success.

Results show that consumers view change in brand identity as an act that should be consumer-based, industry-based, market culture, and brand core. This shows that when carrying out a change in brand identity, every change that is effected on the brand identity should be based on mostly factors such as consumers' wants, the need of the industry and sensitivity to market culture. It was also shown that brand core should be considered as a basis for carrying out a change in brand identity. It was stated that change in brand identity

should be characterized by what will make the brand stick to human minds (Zaichowsky, 2010).

It was shown that consumers raise concern on consistent change in brand identity as that could arouse distrust towards the brand and subsequently slow down the decision of the consumers in buying the brand. Similarly, it was shown that when a brand keeps consistent identity, it tends to get more loyalty from the consumers (Chahal & Bala, 2010). This finding shows that frequent change in brand could lead to like distrust with product quality and that may impact consumers' decision. Consistent identity may mean a sign of healthy company status as that will mean that there is no form of significant change in the structure and core of the brand. The findings show that consistency of brand over a period of time is a sign of strength of the brand and that also makes recognition easier for the consumers. Impliedly, it can be stressed that a brand should be wary of making change in brand identity a frequent activity as that may arouse unpleasant response from consumers.

The results of the study show that color, tagline, name, and logo are elements in brand identity that their change can have impact on consumer perception. All of elements are visual and verbal representation of a brand. This suggests that consumers pay more consideration to what they see and hear about a brand, and that they commit that into their minds. It was revealed that this is as a result of continuous hearing and seeing, which aid their sense of recognition. It was found that color is easy to remember than other identities for most consumers. It was revealed that color can easily be identified by consumers (Hodgson, 2017). Moreover, it was shown that brand name was not as important as it seems. As it was noted earlier, the findings show that brand name and logo have enormous impact on consumer perception about a brand.

The results of the study show that change in brand identity hurt or help a brand. Half of the participants believe that change in brand identity the success or failure of change in brand identity may be determined by factors such as frequency of change, carrying out market survey and loyalty of the customer. However, it was found that a brand may need to undergo a market research before embarking on change in brand identity. This should give the brand feel of what the consumers want as to change in brand identity. The consumers are very important stakeholders to a company. Also, it was found that change in brand identity is easier for a company with loyal consumers as they may not reconsider or rethink the essence of the change. Above all, it was found that change in brand identity can hurt or help the competitive advantage of a brand.

The study findings exhibit that trust has significant impact on consumer loyalty to a brand in the event of change in brand identity. Consumer loyalty is a function of the trust a consumer

put on a brand (Agrawal, Gaur, and Narayanan, 2012; Winnie, 2014). This implies that the loyalty of consumer to a brand is important in keeping the consumer loyalty in the face of change in brand identity. Also, the findings of the study revealed that consumers are usually wary of the reasons for a change in brand identity and they often have the ominous thought about a change that its reason is shrouded in secrecy. This implies that every change that its reasons are unknown to the consumers may have negative effect on the consumer loyalty.

Everlasting

The study findings show that there should be what will motivate the consumer to repurchase or purchase a brand when there is a change in brand identity. This may come in the form of incentives and promo. Results show that prior satisfaction a consumer had from using a brand influences consumer loyalty. This implies that when optimal satisfaction is derived from the use of a brand, it will improve consumer loyalty. When a brand gratifies and satisfy the wants of consumer, there will be loyalty towards such brand. The consumers' prior experience with a brand is a lasting impression in further moment of repurchase. It was established that consumer loyalty with a brand is determined by prior satisfaction. It is supported that loyalty towards a brand impacts satisfaction (Agrawal *et al.*, 2012).

Results show that committed consumer stick to a product even when there is a change in brand identity. This implies that a brand that still want to maintain the commitment of its consumers should hesitate or totally expunge the idea of changing its brand identity. It was supported that committed customer are fond of using a brand and their fondness does not change even when there is rebranding (Aaker, 2014). Walsh, Winterich and Mittal (2010) findings also support that committed consumers are sometimes led to impulsive buying. This suggests the psychological aspect of consumers' commitment towards a brand. Moreover, it was shown in the study that brand quality can determine consumer commitment towards a brand. This implies that a brand that wants to keep its consumers' commitment should endeavor to produce quality products. This means that when a product of high quality, it will be difficult for consumer to show commitment towards a brand. Similarly, it was revealed that committed consumers display negative attitude towards poor brand quality (Chatterjee, 2019). The implication of the findings is that quality product can be said to be the hallmark of consumer commitment.

It can be seen in the findings that product quality has impact on the loyalty of consumer towards a brand even in the event of change in brand identity. This shows that product quality is an important factor in determining consumer loyalty. This was consistent with the findings that product quality is a determinant of consumer loyalty (Tarigan, 2019). As revealed in this study, the fear of reduction in product quality is the major reason consumers rethink continuing with a brand. It is important for companies to keep to the brand quality they are

known for even when there is a change in brand identity. The implication of this is that there will be positive outcome when the change in brand identity is implemented. The importance that comes with brand quality after a change in brand identity should make a brand know that brand quality should not be compromise on the altar of change in brand identity. Ali et al. (2019) noted that change in brand identity should be aimed at improving the elements of brand identity.

The findings of this study show that brand popularity influences consumer purchase decision in the event of change in brand identity. The popularity of a brand among consumers was shown to have influence on consumer purchase decision. Similarly, Mauranx (2011) revealed that brand popularity can make consumers to stay loyalty to a brand even when there is rebranding. The implication of this is that there should be some form of brand popularity if a brand chooses to undergo change in brand identity. This implies that consumers are often entangled with a brand that is popular. It was also show that likeness towards a brand can impact consumer purchase decision. Moreover, less popular brands may be risking more by changing brand as it was revealed that popularity can help a brand in the event of change in brand identity. Ordinarily, it may be presumed that it will be harder for popular brands to change owing to known identities. However, the study result has dispelled the myths that popular brand may hurt itself with change in identity.

Analyzing the findings of the study, it was shown that consumers' perception of change in brand identity influences consumer purchase decision. Consumers' perceptions about a brand may change when there is a change in the identity and that can influence the purchase decision. This is consistent with the findings of Makasi et al. (2014) that consumers' perceptions have relationship with purchase decision. It was also shown that perception of change in brand identity can reduce consumer purchase decision. The implication of this is that change in brand identity may push the consumer to consider substitute products. Also, the study findings imply that brand trust is a mediating factor in the consumer perception of a brand. Overall, to put in context, it was shown that if product quality is stabilized there will be positive outcome. However, if the consumers perceive reduction in quality it can be lead to a negative outcome.

Results of this study show that change in brand identity may cause reduction or increase in quantity of purchase of a brand after change in brand identity. This study findings show that consumers are skeptical when it comes to change in brand identity and that could mean positive negative or positive impact on the brand. Consequently, be that as it may, it will only mean that brand have reduced or increased quantity of sales after change in brand identity. It was however found that when consumers are aware of the change and probably the reasons for the change, there may be positive outcome after change in brand identity. The implication

of this is that companies should take change in brand identity as a process and they should ensure communication of the change in brand identity is part of the process. This will put companies in healthy position as to the change in brand identity.

The results of the study show that whether a consumer will change a brand when there is a change in brand identity depends on factors such as improved packaging of the brand, availability of the brand, and consumer satisfaction. Also, it was shown that consumers purchase a brand they like in the face of change in brand identity and this has impact on purchase decision. The implication of this is that consumers usually buy a product they like even when there is a change in brand identity. Moreover, when there is an improvement of the brand packaging, this may lead to improved sales of the brand. Brands should ensure that when a change in brand identity is to be carried out, it should be an improvement on the current identity. This will help and not hurt the brand when there is a change in brand identity.

### **5.3 Recommendations for the Brand Owners and Policymakers**

The impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty could take its toll on a brand. This may be positive, and it improves the brand image and it may be negative and decrease brand image, which may consequently determine whether the brand will still be in existent or not. Therefore, it becomes essential for brand owners to take interest in the outcome of change in brand identity.

Brand owners need to place great importance to the brand quality, which will make the consumers stay committed regardless of the change in brand identity. The brand quality determines commitment, loyalty and satisfaction towards a brand. This shows the significance of having and being known for brand quality. Hence, brand owners should pay enormous attention to brand quality. The brand quality in this study seems to make brand changes a positive thing to do. Hence, product of cheap quality may struggle to survive when there is a change in brand identity. Provided that change in brand identity takes a negative turn, the quality of the brand will help the brand ease the inadequacies that may come with the change in brand identity as it concerns market performance.

Consumers are concerned about the meaning and reason for change in brand identity and they tend to develop doubt about the brand. Brand owners should ensure that change in brand identity comes with communication to all stakeholders. Brand owners can communicate the exact relevant information from stakeholders via some feedback mechanisms or survey. This will ensure transparency and reaffirm the confidence consumers have on a brand. Moreover, communication will show that the brand is not carrying out the

change in brand identity to reduce the brand quality. All these are measures that may help the brand to successfully implement the change in identity. However, it is well known that some information can be classified and not meant for the consumption of some stakeholders. Such information should not be provided to the consumers. The important thing here is that brand owners should ensure that they are not too secretive in respect of change in brand identity.

Brand owners should pay attention to brand popularity before undergoing change in brand identity. This is so because brand popularity helps float the brand when there is a change in brand identity. It has been established that a brand without noticeable image may struggle when there is a change in brand identity. It is advisable to ensure that a brand is popular among consumers before change in brand identity can be carried out. An unpopular brand which is not glued to consumers' minds can easily be forgotten when there is a change in brand identity. When a brand is popular, it can easily be retraced.

Before embarking on change in brand identity, brand owners should ensure that market survey is carried out so as to feel the perception and opinions of consumers about the current brand identity. Change in brand identity should be consumer-focused as consumers are important stakeholders of the brand. Also, it is recommended that brand owners should consider the market culture in their industries before carrying out change in brand identity.

It is recommended for brand owners in foods and drinks industry to ensure that they do not change brand identity recklessly. This is because change in brand identity of foods/drinks industry is very sensitive. It is recommended for brand owners in this industry to look to improve on brand quality rather than changing brand identity. The quality of services and foods/drinks offered should be paramount to the brand owners.

Brand owners should ensure that they are consistent with brand identity. This consistency will make consumers to be confident of the brand and that will increase loyalty to the brand, so far there is brand quality. Incessant change in brand identity usually brings suspicion to consumers and that may not end well on the part of the part owners. Therefore, it is recommended that brand owners should ensure that change in brand identity is a calculated effort that should take place only when there is a pressing need for such.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Brand Managers**

Based on the findings of this study, it has been established that most of the factors that hinder the success of change in brand identity are internal factors, which brands have exclusive control over. Since these factors can be controlled to sway the internal factors into buying into the change, it imperative that proper measures should be taken to ensure that change in brand identity has positive impact on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

Change in brand identity is usually causal in nature, which means change is usually caused by some factors that may include shift in practice, attitude and ownership of a brand. It is therefore recommended for brand managers to make change in brand identity a process. The process should be outlined and adhered to. This will enable the brand managers to evaluate the success of the change in brand identity as regards consumer purchase decision and loyalty. It is believed that such effort will help through the process of change in brand identity. Therefore, it is advised that change in brand identity is a structural process.

It is recommended for brand managers to carry out advertisement or other promotional activities, to ensure that change in identity is well understood by the customers who are important stakeholders of companies. This will help assuage the fears and concerns of the consumer as regards change in brand identity. When consumers are well aware of the intended purpose of change, having their loyalty and commitment will not be so difficult when there is change in the identity. It becomes a responsibility on the brand managers to see the consumers as being part of the process of change in brand identity.

Moreover, brand managers should observe and understand what is obtainable in the industry they found themselves. This will make brand managers understand the market culture of the industries as regards change in brand identity in order to put the brands in a healthy position in the industry. In fact, this may have an overall impact on the market participation of the brands in the industry. It then becomes beneficial to ensure that the market culture of the brand is understood before there is any change in brand identity. This can be done through observations or carrying out some research.

## **5.5 Recommendations for Further Research**

In the process of carrying out this research study, there were some observations as to possible areas that future studies can be carried out in order to provide answers to the unfulfilled areas owing to the results of this study. These areas will provide deep understanding of the concept, change in brand identity, consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

The need to ensure that change in brand identity is based on industry is replete in literature and it was observed that there is little or none on how consumer-focused change in brand identity can impact consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This study has addressed what brands should focus on in change in brand identity. However, there is need for further study to examine what and who brand should consider before carrying out change in brand identity. This, however, should be in the form of experimental study or test, which will see how well the observed and controlled concepts perform in the face of change in brand identity. Meanwhile, this study has provided understandings of the consumers on the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

Further studies should be carried out on which of the brand elements that its change will have great influence on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This will provide answers to which of the brand name, color, tagline, slogan, and logo have the most influence on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This study has shown how and why elements of brand identity determine consumer purchase decision and loyalty. However, there is need for quantitative study to be done in order to establish the results of this study. Meanwhile, the study is needed to provide a framework to know which of the brand elements can leave the most significant influence on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

It can be observed from the findings of this study that brand quality has great influence on both consumer purchase decision on loyalty when there is a change in brand identity. Further quantitative studies can be carried out to see how product quality as intervening variable influence the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty.

Moreover, as at the time of this study, there is limited research study on the effects of corporate communication on consumers about change in brand identity. Scholars can carry out further studies on how communication of change in brand identity can impact the perception of consumers about brand image. This is necessary has it has been shown in this study that communication of change in brand identity can help solve the puzzle of negative perception of consumers about change in brand identity.

## **5.6 Strengths and Limitation of the Study**

This strength of this study is reinforced in the in-depth understanding of consumers about the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. It provides the framework that established the conceptual and qualitative relationship that exists among the variables of the study. This will complement and refine quantitative study that may be carried out based on the framework provided in this study. Also, the qualitative nature of the study provides that there is detailed explanation about the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. Finally, the data collection is cost efficient.

However, the limitation is that the brands used as case study were randomly selected without focus on a particular brand. Based on this, the findings of this study cannot be generalized. Moreover, the qualitative nature of this study made data collection to be time-consuming. Also, owing to the pandemic, the initial plan to collect quantitative data was rejected for the qualitative data. However, this has provided a detailed explanation about the variables in the study.

## 5.7 Final Conclusions and Reflections

The findings of this study assume that product quality is an intervening variable in consumer purchase decision and loyalty when there is a change in brand identity. This shows that there is need for a new framework to be designed, which will include brand quality in determining consumer purchase decision and loyalty. This can serve as a model for brands that have the intention to change brand identity. This will make brands consider their qualities in planning for change in brand identity so as to not have negative outcome on consumer purchase decision and loyalty from the change.

Change in brand identity may be inevitable at some point in time for a brand; hence it is an important phenomenon that brands should not shy away from discussing. When companies are fully prepared towards change in brand identity, it will not be a difficult task to implement the change in any scenario. The preparedness of brand owners and managers will make it easy for brands to easily sail through the hassle of change in brand identity. Moreover, it was established in the study that people are skeptical of product quality when there is a change in brand identity. Consumers' skepticism with respect to change in brand identity is owing to fear that product quality might have been tampered with during the process of change in brand identity.

The idea of change in brand identity is usually industry-based, which involves understanding the market culture of the brand. The consumers are important stakeholders in a company and should not be left in such delicate decision. Their opinions can be sought through survey and that will be incorporated in the guidelines and steps involved in change of brand identity. This will put a brand in an advantage position as it will be aware of the wants and needs of the consumers.

Above all, it is established that change in brand identity has impact on consumer purchase decision and loyalty. The impact of change in brand identity may be positive or negative and that depends largely on how a brand takes the process of change in brand identity. In an event where there is nonchalant and haphazard approach to the change process, there will be negative outcome and vice-versa. Hence, this study concludes that brands should ensure that change in brand identity is taken in a careful approach that will yield a positive result.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Brand identity is the visible element of a brand such as a color, name, logo and tagline etc. what a brand is known for and what makes them unique and easily recognizable. When you see the color red you think of Coca-Cola, when you see an apple image or design you think of Apple product etc. A change in brand identity occurs when what a brand is recognized with is slightly or completely change.

#### **Are you loyal to any brand?**

##### **To investigate consumers' perceptions of changes in brand identity**

Q. 1: What is your perception/what do you think about changes made to a brand identity?

Q. 2: What do you think should be the reasons for possible change in brand identity?

Q. 3: Does consistency of brands determine how well you interact with the brand?

Q. 4: What elements of brand do you think its change impact your perception of the brand?

Q. 5: What is your opinion of how change in brand identity improves competitive advantage? Does it help or hurt the brand? Should changes be based on a type of industry

##### **To examine the impact of change in identity on consumers' loyalty**

Q. 1: Does your trust in a brand impact loyalty during a change in the identity? If there is change what will happen to your loyalty

Q. 2: How does prior satisfaction you derived from a brand impact your loyalty even when there is a change in identity?

Q. 3: Does your commitment to a product change when there is a change in brand identity?

\*Q. 4: Does product quality impact your loyalty to a brand when there is a change in the brand identity?

\*Q. 5: How does product value impact your loyalty when there is a change in brand identity?

##### **To determine the impact of change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision.**

Q. 1: How does popularity of a brand influence your purchase decision when there is change in brand identity?

Q. 2: Does your perception of a brand impact your purchase decision when there is a change in brand identity?

Q. 3: Does change in brand identity influence your purchase decision?

#### **Have you come across a brand that have changed their identities and made you buy?**

**If yes**

**What is it that made you stay with the brand?**

**On a scale of 1 to 10 how much does a brand impact on your purchase decision**

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Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)

Yes/No

I understand the information provided

Yes/No

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study

Yes/No

I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions

Yes/No

I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped

Yes/No

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**Participants Signature:**

**TYakub**

**Name in Block Capitals:**

**Toyosi Yakub**

**Witness:**

Ranti Yakub

**Date:**

14<sup>th</sup> April 2020

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**Name in Block Capitals:** \_\_\_\_\_ **OLUSEUN TAYLOR**

**Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Name in Block Capitals:** **O.S.Edosa**

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**Participants Signature:**      adenike

**Name in Block Capitals:**      ADENIKE FALOWO

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**Name in Block Capitals:** Wumi Hamzat

**Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Participants Signature: OKEAKWALAM JESSICA**

**Name in Block Capitals: OKEAKWALAM JESSICA\_\_**

**Witness: \_\_\_\_\_**

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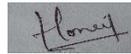
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\_\_\_\_\_

**Name in Block Capitals:** HONEY RATHORE

**Witness:**

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Yes/No

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Involvement in this Research Study is voluntary. Respondent can withdraw from the Research Study at any point.

**V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations**

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of participants. Participant names will not be recorded and it is not needed for the completion of the study.

**VI. Signature:**

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

**Participants Signature:            Fatmah Mvungi**

**Name in Block Capitals:**

**Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Informed Consent Form**

*I.        Research Study Title: impact of a change in brand identity on consumer purchase decision and loyalty*

University: Griffith college Dublin  
Principal investigator: Dr Garrett Ryan

**II.       Clarification of the purpose of the research**

The aim of this research is to understand the impact of a change in brand identity on consumer decision to buy and their loyalty to the brand. To explore if there is connection between brand identity, purchase decision and loyalty.

**III.      Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement**

this research study involves an interview through the use of online audio application.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)

Yes/No

I understand the information provided

Yes/No

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study

Yes/No

I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions

Yes/No

I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped

Yes/No

**IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary**

Involvement in this Research Study is voluntary. Respondent can withdraw from the Research Study at any point.

**V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations**

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of participants. Participant names will not be recorded and it is not needed for the completion of the study.

**VI. Signature:**

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

**Participants Signature:** Samuel Kolawole\_\_\_\_

**Name in Block Capitals:**

**Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

