

## CUSTOMERS' LOYALTY AND SALES PERFORMANCE OF DANGOTE CEMENT IN AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE

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### **Abstract**

*The main objective of the study is to ascertain the relationship between customers' loyalty and sales performance of Dangote Cement in Awka, Anambra State. The study specifically examines the relationship between emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention; and, secondly the relationship between behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention. The study adopts the survey research design. The sample comprised of one hundred and sixty five (165) consumers of Dangote cement in Awka. The study relied on primary data; obtained from a structured questionnaire administered to the consumers. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and the hypotheses tested using Pearson correlation coefficient. The results showed a positive significant relationship between emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention; and, secondly a positive significant relationship between behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention. Based on this the study recommends that manufacturing companies strive to maintain customer trust via quality product or service delivery. The use of loyalty programs as strategies for rewarding customers is further encouraged; lastly, manufacturing companies are advised to engage in periodic customer satisfaction survey.*

**Keywords:** *Customer loyalty, Emotional Loyalty, Behavioural Loyalty, Consumer Purchase Intention, Sales performance*

### **Introduction**

Customers are persons (individuals) or corporate bodies that purchase goods and/or services from the market to meet their needs and wants (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). According to Ndubisi and Nwankwo (2019) customers are the reason for the continued existence of an organization. They purchase goods and/or services that are able to satisfy needs or wants at a fair competitive price. This pre-condition determines the continuous patronage to a particular brand and responsible for achieving profitable performance (Ndubisi & Nwankwo, 2019). This drives from the consequent development of loyalty by genuinely satisfied customers. According to Kleinig (2017) loyalty may be "characterized as a practical disposition to persist in an intrinsically valued (though not necessarily valuable) associational attachment". The Oxford Dictionary simply put it as "a strong feeling of support or allegiance". Customer loyalty is "a deeply held commitment to rebuild and re-patronize a preferred product or service in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviors" (Oliver, 1999).

Customer loyalty is not a one-off thing but achieved over time from multiple transactions (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). Customer loyalty is crucial to the survival of any business in today's highly competitive environment for two reasons. First, a positive link exists between customer loyalty, satisfaction and profitability (Chi, 2005). Secondly, cost of acquiring new customers is relatively more expensive than keeping existing ones (Magatef & Tomalieh, 2015).

From an organisational perspective, performance may be viewed as the ability of an organisation to achieve its goals (Stainer, 2006). Samsonowa (2011) identifies four dimensions for corporate performance: growth, return on investment, increase of market share and increase profitability. The last two are related to the issue of sales performance which has been linked to customer loyalty. Because satisfied customers are more likely to repurchase a product/service, become less sensitive to price changes, and engage in positive word-of-mouth recommendation (Chen & Wang, 2009).

Dangote Group is the largest indigenous industrial conglomerate in Sub-Saharan Africa founded by Aliko Dangote. Dangote Group is a Multinational Corporation (MNCs) with presence in several African countries and involved a diverse range of products such as Consumer Goods (e.g., Sugar, Flour, Spaghetti, etc.), Industrial Goods (e.g., Cement, etc.), among several others. According to information on the corporate website, the Group experienced "phenomenal growth on account of quality of its goods and services, its focus on cost leadership and efficiency of its human capital" (<https://www.dangote.com/our-businesses/>).

The TIME Magazine's report claim Dangote Group "investments contribute as much as 10 per cent of Nigeria's GDP". Dangote Cement a subsidiary of the Group is presently the largest capitalised company on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) with a market capitalisation of about N3.4trillion (ThisDay, 2019). The company was a major contributor to growth in GDP in 2018 with record revenue of N901billion in its financial year ended December 31, 2018.

Globalization, intense competition, advancement in Information and Communication Technology [ICT], changing consumer demands, among several other factors, pose a challenge to the survival of several organisations in this 21<sup>st</sup> century (Obasan, Ariyo, & Hassan, 2015). To survive businesses need to build and maintain relationships with customers and more so transform such into a competitive advantage (Cannon & Perreault Jr, 1999).

Studies have empirically shown a link between customer loyalty and customer satisfaction, they include Bontis, Booker, and Serenko (2007) in North America, Ibok and John (2013) in Nigeria, etc. However, while customer satisfaction is a pre-condition for customer loyalty; studies have also shown that customer satisfaction

only may not guarantee customer loyalty. In the Nigerian context, studies have mainly focused on customer satisfaction and organizational performance (Ndubisi & Nwankwo, 2019) and/or determinants of customer loyalty (Egbule, Onobrakpeya, Akpobire, and Obieze, 2017), etc. with a great emphasis on the service industry, e.g., Banks, etc.

The problem tackled in this study, is therefore two-fold: first, customer loyalty is disaggregated into emotional and behavioural loyalty components and individually assessed for their effect on consumer purchase intention. This approach represents a significant departure from prior studies in the literature and offers a novel contribution to the literature.

Secondly, despite the plethora of studies on service industry, there is a lacuna on studies that focus on manufacturing firms. The study focuses on a manufacturing firm, as against prior studies that mainly focus on service firms. Against this backdrop, the researcher empirically examined the relationship between customers' loyalty and sales performance of Dangote Cement Plc. To address these, the researcher formulated the following hypotheses to navigate his investigation thus:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention of Dangote cement.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention of Dangote cement.

The paper is organised as follows' the next section reviews relevant literature with regards to context justification and provide a theoretical background for the study, respectively. Next describes the sample data and empirical methodology. The last section summaries the main results, offers conclusion and recommendations.

## **Conceptual Reviews**

### **Customer Loyalty**

Customer loyalty refers to a customer who chooses a particular product against another to fulfill his/her need (Ranabhat, 2018). Oliver (1999) defines customer loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuild and re-patronize a preferred product or service in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviors". According to Andreassen and Lindestad (1998), customer loyalty refers to a profound commitment to the continuous shopping of a product or service in the future, regardless of the marketing efforts to change the customer's behavior. Oliver (1997, p. 392) describes a loyal customer as one who "fervently desires to rebuy a product or service and will have no other". An age long definition was crafted by Newman and Werbel (1973), when they explain

that loyal customers are those who rebought a brand, considered only that brand, and did no brand-related information seeking.

According to Yoo and Bai (2013), loyal customers are less likely to switch to a competitor's brand just because of price and other special promotions, bring in new customers through word of mouth and they are less expensive to maintain. Customer loyalty is not a one-off thing but achieved over time from multiple transactions (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). Loyalty requires the company to focus on value creation via its product/services and to show a genuine interest in building relationships with the customers (Griffin, 2002).

To maintain customer loyalty companies implement customer-centric approaches in designing products that meet the wants and interest of the service receiver (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). Gremler and Brown (1999) divided customer loyalty into three different categories: behaviour loyalty, intentional loyalty, and emotional loyalty. Behaviour loyalty is repeating purchasing behaviour while intentional loyalty is the possible buying intention. Emotional loyalty, however, is achieved when a customer feels that a brand corresponds with their value, ideas, and passion.

Oliver (1997) put forward a framework for describing different loyalty phases of a consumer:

1. The *cognitive loyalty phase* or loyalty based on brand belief only. Cognition can be based on prior or vicarious knowledge or on recent experience-based information (Oliver, 1999).
2. The *affective loyalty phase* is the phase when 'a liking or attitude toward the brand has developed on the basis of cumulatively satisfying usage occasions' (Oliver, 1999, p. 35).
3. The *conative loyalty phase*. Conation, by definition, implies a brand-specific commitment to repurchase. Therefore, conative loyalty implies a state of loyalty that contains the deeply held commitment to purchase a product or service (Oliver, 1999, p. 35).
4. Lastly, the *action loyalty phase* is the phase when all intentions are translated into actions with the actors willing to surmount obstacles that may hinder such intentions. Overcoming obstacles in this phase "is analogous to rebuying despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour" (Oliver, 1997, p. 392).

The four-stage loyalty model has different vulnerabilities, depending on the nature of the consumer's commitment, which are summarized in Table 1.

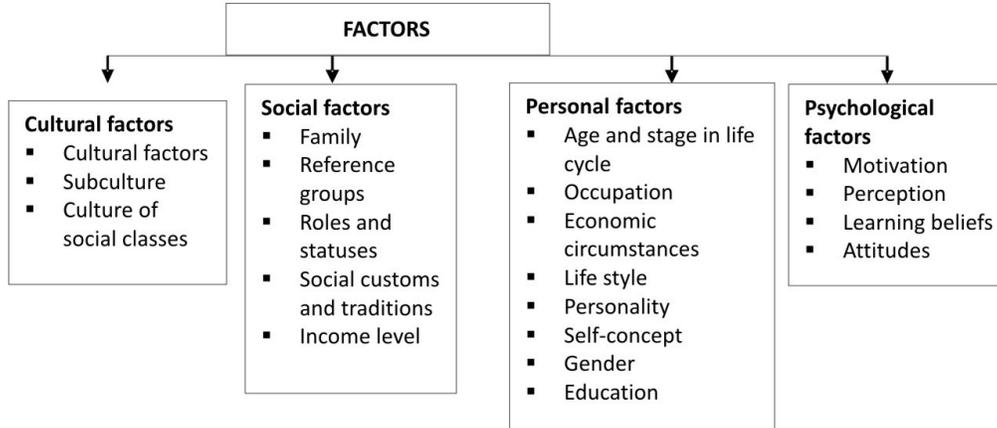
**Table 2.1: Loyalty Phases with corresponding vulnerabilities**

Stage	Identifying Marker	Vulnerabilities
Cognitive	Loyalty to information such as price, features, and so forth.	Actual or imagined better competitive features or price through communication (e.g., advertising) and vicarious or personal experience. Deterioration in brand features or price. Variety seeking and voluntary trial.
Affective	Loyalty to a liking: "I buy it because I like it."	Cognitively induced dissatisfaction. Enhanced liking for competitive brands, perhaps conveyed through imagery and association. Variety seeking and voluntary trial. Deteriorating performance.
Conative	Loyalty to an intention: "I'm committed to buying it."	Persuasive counter argumentative competitive messages. Induced trial coupons, sampling, point-of-purchase promotions). Deteriorating performance.
Action	Loyalty to action inertia, coupled with the overcoming of obstacles.	Induced unavailability (e.g., stocklifts—purchasing the entire inventory of a competitor's product from a merchant). Increased obstacles generally. Deteriorating performance.

Source: Oliver (1999)

The literature documents several determinants of customer loyalty. For instance, demographics like age, income, nationality, sex and location play a vital role on influencing customer loyalty (Ranabhat, 2018). Another major determinant of customer loyalty is trust because it lessens customers' fear of opportunistic behaviour (Ranabhat, 2018). Others include such as switching cost. Switching cost includes all type of problems such as emotional, technical, financial, operational or psychological faced by the consumers while using a product or service (Ranabhat, 2018).

**Figure 2.1: Consumer Characteristics affecting Consumer Behaviour**



Source: Jaideep (n.d.)

### **Emotional Loyalty**

Emotional loyalty, is achieved when a customer feels that a brand corresponds with their value, ideas, and passion (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). According to Kumari and Patyal (2017) such loyalty may be a commitment or trust in a company's product/service which may not result in any purchase. In a study by Kumari and Patyal (2017) on a sample of 300 participants in North India and a structured questionnaire showed evidence that loyalty of participants to public health care comprised of low emotional loyalty.

### **Behavioural Loyalty**

According to state Ehrenberg and Scriven (1999) behavioural loyalty can be defined as "an on-going propensity to buy the brand, usually as one of several". Behavioural loyalty is a form of repeat purchase behaviour (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). According to Ipsos Encyclopedia (2016) behavioural loyalty is when a customer continues to buy/use a particular product, service or brand (at least as much as before). Behavioural loyalty is defined as the customer's intention to repurchase and patronize the product or services (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Behavioural Loyalty is vital for a company in order to generate profitability (Kumari & Patyal, 2017). Kumari and Patyal (2017) on a sample of 300 patients of Government District Hospital Udhampur J&K (North India) and a structured questionnaire showed evidence that loyalty of participants to public health care comprised of high a behavioural loyalty.

### **Consumer Purchase Intention**

Purchase intention is a decision-making that explains the reason for a consumer to purchase a particular brand (Shah et al., 2012). Consumer purchase intention is a situation where a consumer decides to purchase a certain product/service in certain

condition. Consumer purchase intention is a complex act, and usually related to the behaviour, perceptions and attitudes of consumers (Mirabi, Akbariyeh, & Tahmasebifard, 2015). Consumers' purchase intentions or behaviour is generally an attribute of human behaviour (Wekeza & Sibanda, 2019). Gogoi (2013) observed that consumers are affected by internal or external factors in purchase decisions. Scholars propose six stages in deciding to buy a product: awareness, knowledge, interest, preference, persuasion, and purchase (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

### **Sales Performance**

The Business Dictionary states that sales volume is the quantity or number of goods sold or services rendered in the normal operations of a firm in a specified period. Broadly the factors affecting sales performance may be grouped into two: the internal factors and the external factors. The internal factors encompass decisions regarding the product, price, place and promotion, also called the 4Ps or the marketing mix in the marketing language (Berhe, 2010). The latter entails factors such as the natural environment, political-legal environment, economic environment, technological environment, and other socio-cultural forces. Performance is defined as the salesperson perception of his/her sales results, of the profits generated by his/her sales, of the overcoming of goals, and of his/her satisfaction in regard to the results obtained and the work performed (Donassolo & Matos, 2014). In addition, sales people performance is one of the key factors influencing sales volume, productivity, customer loyalty and unpredicted expenses (Buciuniene & Vida, 2015)

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Resource Based View**

The theoretical framework for the study is theory of Resource-Based View (RBV) propounded by J. B. Barney in 1991. According to Ndubisi and Nwankwo (2019) 'a firm will be positioned to succeed if it has superior inventory of attributes, abilities, organizational processes, knowledge, and skills'. The theory emphasizes that a firm can create competitive advantage if it succeeds in creating superior value for the customer in comparison to its competitors by making use of internal resources and capabilities (Sahaf, 2013). The theory defines resources as anything that a firm possesses (Barney, 1991). Amit and Shoemaker (1993) described resources as a firm's input into its value creation process, which include stocks of available factors that are owned or controlled by a firm.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted the survey research design. Survey research usually consists of methods of gathering data from usually a large number of respondents, who themselves constitute a sample (Ezejelue, Ogwo, & Nkamnebe, 2008).

The population is a collection of people or things that have common and measurable properties (Naderi, Seif-Naraghi, & Shahpoorian, 1990). Conceptually, a study of such may arguably collect data from the supplier's perspective, the customer's perspective, or both. However, it is usually the customer that ultimately makes the decision of whether to purchase from a supplier (Cannon & Perreault Jr, 1999). The population therefore comprises of consumers of Dangote Cement in Awka, Anambra State. And, for the purpose of this study, the population of consumers being studied is infinite; thus, in line with Soltanmoradi, Poor, and Nazari (2013) a portion that has similar attributes, i.e., congruent and homogenous with members of society is selected with acceptable criteria.

The sample size was calculated using the Cochran's formula. The Cochran's formula is considered appropriate in situations with large populations. The formula is stated below as follows:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

$n_0$  is the desired sample size

$e$  is the desired level of precision (i.e., the margin of error)

$p$  is the (estimated) proportion of the population which has the attribute in question

$q$  is the  $1 - p$

$Z$  is the confidence level (The Z-value is found in a Z table)

Thus, the sample is calculated as follows:

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times (0.7) \times (0.3)}{(0.07)^2}$$

$$n_0 = \frac{(0.806736)}{(0.07)^2}$$

$$n_0 = 164.64 \approx 165$$

The study is based on primary data. The primary data was obtained via structured questionnaires that were self-administered to the respondents. The questionnaire sub-divided into two sections; section A deals with background information; while, section B address questions emanating from the research questions of the study. The second section was designed in the Likert scale form, as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) – 5; Agree (A) – 4; Un-Decided – (3); Disagree – (2); and, Strongly Disagree (1).

### Methods of Data Analysis

The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics involved the mean computation, frequency distribution and, simple percentages. The inferential statistics used is the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The statistical analysis was done via SPSS Ver. 24 software.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of one hundred and sixty five (165) questionnaires were distributed; while, the number returned was one hundred and twenty four (124). This represents approximately a seventy-five percent (75%) success rate.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

S/No	Category		Frequency N=124	Percent (%)
1	Gender	Male	89	71.8%
		Female	35	28.2%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100%</b>
2	Highest academic qualification	Primary	10	8.06%
		Secondary	26	20.97%
		Tertiary	88	70.97%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100%</b>
3	No of years of Dangote cement usage	<5years		
		5-10years	11	8.87%
		>10years	40	32.26%
		<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>58.87%</b>
		<b>124</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Field Survey, 2019

### Reliability Test

The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ), which measures the internal consistency of a scale.

**Table 2: Reliability statistics**

	N	Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Emotional loyalty	4	.721
Behavioural loyalty	4	.735
Consumer Purchase Intention [CPI] 4		.711

Source: SPSS Ver. 24

Acceptable ranges of alpha value estimates are from 0.7 above; with some studies recommending as low as 0.6. The questionnaire consisted of three subscales, emotional loyalty subscale consisted of 4 items ( $\alpha = .721$ ), the behavioural loyalty

subscale consisted of 4 items ( $\alpha = .735$ ), and, the Consumer Purchase Intention subscale consisted of 4 items ( $\alpha = .711$ ).

### Descriptive Statistics

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Summated Scale**

Factors	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Emotional loyalty	124	3.422	.2888
Behavioural loyalty	124	3.332	.0192
Consumer purchase intention	124	3.423	.1974

Source: SPSS Ver. 24

### Test of Hypotheses

#### Test of Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention of Dangote cement.

**Table 4: Pearson correlation result between emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention**

	Correlation coefficient
Emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention:	.746
Sig.	.000
N	124

Source: SPSS Ver. 24

The table above shows that the degree of relationship between emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention is a moderate uphill (positive) relationship. Thus, emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention are significantly positively correlated,  $r = .746, p < .05$ . Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate accepted, 'there is a significant relationship between emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention of Dangote cement'.

#### Test of Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention of Dangote cement.

**Table 5: Pearson correlation result between behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention**

	Correlation coefficient
Behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention:	.855
Sig.	.000
N	124

Source: SPSS Ver. 24

The table above shows that the degree of relationship between behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention is a moderate uphill (positive) relationship. Thus, behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention are significantly positively correlated,  $r = .855, p < .05$ . Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate accepted, 'there is a significant relationship between behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention of Dangote cement'.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The first hypothesis showed that emotional loyalty had a positive statistically significant relationship with consumer purchase intention. This relationship is expected because such loyalty derives from when a customer feels that a brand corresponds with their value, ideas, and passion (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). The result is also consistent with the study by Ndubisi and Nwankwo (2019) using a sample of bank staff and customers in the five South-Eastern states revealed a significant relationship between customers' feelings of banks services meeting their expectations and banks financial services acceptability. Soltanmoradi, Poor, and Nazari (2013) in Iran showed evidence of a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and trust, commitment. However, in contrast the study by Kumari and Patyal (2017) using a sample of 300 patients of Government District Hospital Udhampur J&K (North India) and a structured questionnaire showed evidence that the patients had a low emotional loyalty to the public health care.

The second hypothesis showed that behavioural loyalty had a positive statistically significant relationship with consumer purchase intention. This explains the tremendous sales recorded by the company; because, behavioural loyalty often reflects as repeat purchase behaviour (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). The result is also consistent with the study by Obasan, Ariyo, and Hassan (2015) which used both primary and secondary data and showed that brand loyalty positively correlates with organizational profitability. Another study by Soltanmoradi, Poor, and Nazari (2013) in Iran using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) also found a positive relationship between customer loyalty and firm performance.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study was undertaken to examine the relationship between customers' loyalty and sales performance of Dangote Cement in Awka, Anambra State. The Dangote Group is a key player in Nigeria's economy contributing significantly to her GDP and workforce. The study focuses on a subsidiary of the Group, the Dangote Cement to analyse the effect of emotional loyalty and behavioural loyalty have driven consumer purchase intention for the past years. The study utilised the survey research design and questionnaires distributed to a cross section of consumers of the product. The empirical results confirm presence of a positive significant relationship between emotional loyalty and consumer purchase intention; and, a positive

significant relationship between behavioural loyalty and consumer purchase intention. Based on this, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. Strategies that boost emotional loyalty: Manufacturing companies should strive to maintain customer trust via quality product or service delivery. Product adverts should always strive to be in line with product functionality; and, sales people should always be encouraged to base arguments on actual product functions not fictitious claims. Manufacturing companies are also advised to further use loyalty programs as strategies for rewarding customers;
2. To further enhance behavioural loyalty, manufacturing companies are advised to engage in periodic customer satisfaction survey. An approach which is lacking in most developing countries in Africa in obtaining customer feedback. Also, pricing strategy of the manufacturing firm should be constantly reviewed to not scare customers from purchase

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