



INFLUENCE OF BRANDING AND ADVERTISING ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE DECISION OF INTER-CITY TRANSPORT SERVICE IN ACCRA, GHANA: A CASE OF STATE TRANSPORT COMPANY

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Abstract:

The study examines the influence of branding and advertising on consumers' purchase decision of inter-city transport service in Accra, Ghana. Data were collected using questionnaire administered through personal interviews to 300 customers of State Transport Company in Accra, Ghana, and data analyses carried out using SPSS version 20. The findings of the study revealed that brand image is significantly influencing consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company's services in Accra, Ghana. Again, the study showed that brand awareness is positively influencing consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company services in Accra, Ghana. On the bases of these findings, it was recommended that the State Transport Company should build strong brand beliefs to enable consumers hold unique mental picture of the brand. More so, the brand should be built in such a way that consumers can recognize and recall it in any given situations.

JEL: M30; M37; R40

Keywords: branding, brand image, brand awareness, brand association, advertising, consumer purchase decision, Accra, STC

1. Introduction

The heightened competition in today's business environment coupled with the sophistication needs of consumers has jolted organizations into the realization of the

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importance of branding as a significant marketing strategic tool. It is difficult to think about buying a product without paying attention to a brand's name. Angus & Oppenheim (2004) define a brand as "*a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competitors*". According to Hankinson (2012), branding plays a vital role in the success of a business. Kerr (2006) is of the view that branding has become a matter of great concern to organizations due to the sophisticated nature of the present market conditions. 'Brand' dates back to Old Norse, the ancient North Germanic language from which modern Scandinavian languages derived. Brand in those days was simply referred to as a piece of burning wood. By the seventeenth century, it referred to a mark of ownership made by branding. However, according to Franzen & Moriarty (2008), branding has evolved over the centuries and its importance has seen a significant boost during the past several decades. Many authors and researchers have attributed this to varied reasons. For instance, Kotler & Keller (2009) opined that organizations engage in branding because they want to make their products different from branded and non-branded products to make it easy for consumers' identification. Malhotra (2012) asseverates that the reason behind branding is to enhance the image of a product that can be recalled by customers. Romaniuk (2003) linked brand image, brand awareness and brand association to the symbolic attributes of a brand and posits that the more symbolic attributes a brand possesses, the more likely it is that it will be considered favourably in a given purchase situation.

Trehan & Trehan (2009) identified advertising as an essential element during brand promotion. The authors posit that advertising helps to bring the attention of potential and current customers to the brand. It reinforces consumers' attachment to the brand by depicting satisfaction, strong imagery, pride and positive experience. As a result, organizations spend huge sums of money on advertising to promote their brands. According to Krämer (2007), in 2013, McDonalds spent a staggering amount of \$998 million on their brand advertising. He posits further that big brands such as Nike, Apple, KFC, Coca-Cola etc. spend millions of dollars on their brands advertising even though their brands are already the talk of the town.

In view of the significance attached to branding and advertising, firms in the inter-city transport service in Accra, Ghana, as a result of strenuous competition in recent times, have adopted branding and advertising to influence consumers' purchase decisions. The firms in the transport industry have acquired new and modern fleets of buses in an attempt to use image re-branding to survive the competition. The Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) which is the major shareholder of the State Transport Company in a bid to re-vamp and re-brand the company, has also acquired modern and state-of-the-art buses to connect major towns and cities in Ghana. This has resulted in a heightened competition in the industry. Tremendous research has gone into the influence of branding (Holt & Holt, 2004; Schmit, 2012; Tolbert, 2014; Yoo & Donthu, 2014) and also advertising (Barroso, 2008; Boyland & Halford, 2013; Broussard, 2000; Dens & De Pelmacker, 2010) on consumers' purchase decision. However, most of these

studies were carried out in the industrialized countries on different sectors of the economy. A study done by Damoah (2018) in Ghana looked at the Public-Private Partnership for Improved Service Delivery in the transportation sector. Clearly, it appears there is very little or no studies carried out to determine the influence of branding and advertising on consumers' purchase decision in this area. Therefore, the study aims at filling in the gap, and also contributing to existing literature.

2. Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the researcher in the conduct of the study.

- 1) brand image does not significantly influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana;
- 2) brand awareness does not positively influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana;
- 3) brand association does not positively influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana;
- 4) advertising does not significantly influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Concept of Branding

The perception of branding holds great significance since many years; it is the explanation to distinguish the goods and services from one to another. As Van Den Heever said the word brand comes from the old German word *brandr* which means to burn (Lombard, 2008). A Brand is a symbolic embodiment of all the information connected to the product and serves to create associations and expectations around it (Kalakumari & Sekar, 2012). The traditional American definition of brand is, a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them, which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Lee *et al.*, 2000). Wijaya (2011) defined brand as a mark left on the minds and hearts of consumers, which creates a specific sense of meaning and feeling. According to Bulotaite (2003), a brand is "*nothing more than the total impression of images, emotions, experiences, and facts that an organization has created in the public mind*". Malhotra (2012) defines branding as, a "*process of utilizing marketing strategies to enhance products or service's image so that it is more readily recollected by the customer*". A product or service is called brand only when its dimensions differentiate from others, but satisfy the same need.

3.2 Brand Image

Brand image is the set of associations, organized in meaningful groups or clusters, which reflect consumers' perception on a brand (Keller, 1993). According to Aaker *et al.* (2004),

consumers may retrieve these associations and use them to evaluate the brand in three different perspectives; seeing the brand as a product (value), the brand as a person (brand personality) or the brand as an organization (organizational associations. Kotler & Armstrong (2013) suggested the notion of brand image as "*the set of belief held about a particular brand*". In essence, a set of beliefs about a brand is called a brand image. Brand image is simply how a brand is perceived by consumers. It would not be wrong to state that brand image describes consumers' thoughts and feelings towards a given product. Therefore, brand image is unique mental picture of a brand and it summarizes its uniqueness compared to other existing brands.

3.3 Brand Awareness

Aaker (1996) describes brand awareness as "*the ability of a consumer to recognize and recall a brand in different situations*". Brand awareness consists of brand recall and brand recognition. Brand recall simply refers to the situation where consumers can recall a brand name exactly when they come into contact with them. On the other hand, it refers to consumers' ability to retrieve the brand from memory when given the product category. Brand recognition on the other hand gives consumers the ability to identify a brand when there is a brand cue. In essence, brand recognition allows consumers to tell a brand correctly if they ever saw or heard it. When consumers are aware about the brand name then that particular brand name comes in consumer evoked set.

3.4 Brand Association

Keller (1993) defines brand associations as the thoughts and ideas consumers hold in memory for a particular good or service. According to Shocker *et al.* (1994), the association comes in different forms and states such as tangible, functional, intangible and experiential. He proposed that brand associations can be classified as attributes, benefits, or attitudes. Attributes are categorized as product-related or non-product-related. Product-related attributes are defined as the ingredients necessary for performing the product function sought by consumers. Non-product-related attributes are defined as external aspects of a good or service that relate to its purchase or consumption. Benefits represent the meaning and value consumers attach to the product and can be further distinguished into three categories according to the underlying motivations to which they relate (Park *et al.*, 1986): functional, experiential, and symbolic. Keller (1993) posits that attitudes are defined in terms of consumers' overall evaluation of a brand and often depend upon the strength and favorability of the attributes and benefits provided by the brand.

3.5 Consumer Purchase Decision

The consumer decision-making process portrays the level of consumers' commitment towards purchasing a product or service. Marketers use the five-stage model of consumers buying decision to understand consumers' action in a better way (Kotler & Keller, 2006). According to Comegys *et al.* (2006), the five stages consumers' purchase

decision model starts with need recognition, followed by information research, then evaluation of alternative, purchase decision and finally post purchase decision.

3.6 Need Recognition

The buying process is initiated when consumers recognize unsatisfied need. There are two kinds of needs, namely functional needs and psychological needs. Functional needs are related to the performance of the product whereas psychological needs are intrinsically obtained when customers feel contented with shopping or owning a product which they long for (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006). Although there are many different ways to characterize needs, the most widely known is Maslow's hierarchy which specifies five need categories arranged in a sequence from basic lower-level needs to higher-level needs. Thus, the five needs are classified as: physiological, safety and security, social, ego, and self-actualization. Products can fill all these needs, and they become increasingly important (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2004).

3.7 Information Search

Information search begins when consumers perceive a need that might be satisfied by the purchase and consumption of a product. The recollection of past experiences might provide the consumer with adequate information to make the present choice. On the other hand, when consumers have had no prior experience, they may have to engage in a search for information (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014). According to the authors, consumers can obtain information from several sources such as; personal sources (family, friends, neighbors etc.), commercial sources (advertising, salespeople, retailers, dealers, packaging, point-of-sale displays), public sources (newspapers, radio, television, consumer organizations; specialist magazines) and experiential sources (handling, examining, using the product).

3.8 Evaluation of Alternatives

During the evaluation stage, consumers compare between different products and brands to make a purchasing decision. At this stage, consumers pay particular attention to the attributes which are most relevant to their needs. Attributes like quantity, size, quality and price are commonly used to judge a brand by customers (Blackwell *et al.*, 2011). When evaluating potential alternatives, consumers tend to use two types of information; a list of brands from which they plan to make their selection and the criteria they will use to evaluate each brand. Making a selection from a sample of all possible brands is a human characteristic that helps simplify the decision-making process (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014). Evoked set is the handful of choices that come into mind at the time of making a specific buying decision. To purchase services, consumers visit establishment that almost always offers only a single "brand" for sale. The criteria consumers use to evaluate alternative products that constitute evoked sets usually are expressed in terms of important product attributes (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014).

3.9 Purchase Decision

Purchase decisions are made by the consumers only after evaluating the offers from different sources. This is made by judging which source to buy after investigating the attributes from the previous stage whereas in-store selection is affected by the selling skills of salesperson, visual displays inside the shops, as well as point-of-purchase advertising (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006). Consumers make three types of purchases: trial purchases, repeat purchases and long-term commitment purchases. When consumers purchase products for the first time and buy a smaller quantity than usual, this purchase would be considered a trial. Thus, a trial is the exploratory phase of purchase behavior in which consumers attempt to evaluate a product through direct use. Consumers can also be encouraged to try a new product through such promotional tactics as free samples coupons and sale prices. Repeat purchase behavior is closely related to the concept of brand loyalty, which most firms try to encourage because it contributes to greater stability in the marketplace. A repeat purchase signifies that the product meets with the consumer's needs.

3.9.1 Post-purchase Evaluation

The final stage is the post-purchase evaluation of the decision. It is common for customers to experience concerns after making a purchase decision. This arises from a concept that is known as "cognitive dissonance". The customer, having bought a product, may feel that an alternative would have been preferable. This circumstance does not allow consumers to repurchase immediately.

3.9.2 Relationship between Brand Image and Consumers' Purchase Decision

Previous studies have proved that brand image does have some positive effects on consumer purchasing decision (Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Yoo *et al.*, 2000). Familiarity with the brand's image has also shown to increase attitude towards the brand, customer confidence and purchase decision (Weitz & Wensley, 2000). According to Aaker (1991), consumers often buy products that have famous brand because they feel more comfortable with such products since they are already known. A study by Zulastari & Aditya (2016) showed that brand image has a significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions. Shah *et al.* (2012) also found brand image to have a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions. However, Golder (2000) cited in (Weitz & Wensley, 2000) posit that brand image cannot sustain the positive affects infinitely. He found that many leading brands lost their leadership over a period of 76 years.

3.10 Relationship between Brand Awareness and Consumers' Purchase Decision

Contemporary consumers have little time in making purchase decisions. More so, they are already overwhelmed with a multitude of advertisements and other attention seeking endeavors of marketers. Macdonald & Sharp (2004) argued that in most cases, they try to minimize the costs of decision making in terms of time spent, and cognitive effort, by employing simple rules of thumb, such as 'buy the brand I've heard of'. Therefore, Keller

(1997) averred that brand awareness plays a very crucial role as it influences consumer decisions making by affecting the strength of the brand associations in their mind. Brand awareness plays a significant role in consumers' purchase decision in that according to Macdonald & Sharp (2000) and Keller (1993), consumers tend to buy a familiar and well-known product. Brand awareness has a great influence on selections and can be a prior consideration base in a product category (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). Brand awareness also acts as a critical factor in the consumer purchase intention, and certain brands will accumulate in consumers' mind to influence consumer purchase decision. Lin (2006) and Grewal *et al.* (1998) maintained that products with high level of brand awareness will receive higher consumer preferences because it has higher market share and quality evaluation.

3.11 Relationship between Brand Association and Consumers' Purchase Decision

Brand association is an element that helps a brand to be remembered (Aaker, 1991). According to Keller (2008), brand association has a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision when the association is strong, favourable and unique in the minds of consumers. Heding *et al.* (2015) stressed that consumers pay attention and recall faster products they have strong associations with. A favourable associations assures consumers that the brand possesses just what they need and want. Unique brand associations refer to the brand's unique selling abilities. A study done by Atilgan *et al.* (2005) and Yoo *et al.* (2000) discovered that if customers have more positive association toward a brand, they would be more loyalty toward a brand and the other way round. Choi *et al.* (2000) stressed that brand association positively influence a purchase decision since such an association is viewed by consumers as "*a sign of quality and commitment*". According to Aaker (1991), brand associations provide great value since they represent bases for consumers' purchasing decisions as well as their level of brand loyalty.

3.12 Advertising Defined

Advertising is the most important weapon to market any product or service. It is a type of communication designed to convince an audience (viewers, readers or listeners) to buy or take several actions upon goods, ideas, or services. Richard & Curran (2002) defined advertisement as "*a paid, mediated, form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action, now or in the future*". Heath *et al.* (2006) posit that advertising helps to grip consumers' attention, create and increase brand awareness and persuasion. Prithvi & Dash (2013) considered advertising as a mass communication medium that aims at bring information to consumers, attract consumers' attention, create awareness and finally influence their buying behavior and purchase decision as advertising has the ability to change people's attitude and habits. Farooq & Latif (2011) define it as "*a promotional strategy used in creating product awareness in the minds of consumer to take purchasing decision*". Bel-Molokwu (2000) defined advertising in terms of characteristics of what it does which include; attracting attention to a product, getting the target audience to actually accept the product, getting the target audience to actually

acquire the product, sustaining the positive dispositions and constant acquisition of the product, evaluating and reviewing the advertising activities so as to remain abreast with performance. Therefore, Agbonifoh *et al.* (2007) inferring from the definition above, intimated that, the major aim of advertising is to inform, educate and persuade a consumer about an organization's products services or image.

3.13 Relationship between Advertising and Consumer Purchase Decision

Marketers advertise with the sole aim of getting access to potential consumers in a bid to influence their purchasing decision with the goods and services produced (Adelaar *et al.*, 2003). In the view of Katke (2007), advertising has a leading impact on viewers mind than the other communication mix elements since its greater exposure. According to Pieters *et al.* (2002), advertising is able to influence consumers' purchasing decision in that it is able to attract attention from the public. According to the authors, while attention increases towards a product, consumers will have a certain perception and will build belief on that particular product. If the belief and the perception were positive, consumers are likely to solicit more information and adopt the product. However, Agwu *et al.* (2014) proposed that advertisements have less impact on consumers purchase decision comparing to the roles of quality and price that affect consumers purchase decision.

4. Empirical Review

Tariq *et al.* (2013) carried out a study to test the influence of brand image on consumers' purchase intention and showed a significant relationship between these variables. Divolf (2005) states that there is more likely that high brand awareness lead to high brand association in the minds of customers Results of Hernández & Küster (2012) also suggest that attitude toward brand has a significant impact on their purchase intention. Kawa *et al.* (2013) in their study showed that brand name has a significant impact on the purchase decision of customers. Also, a study carried out by Farooq & Latif (2011) found out that advertising can influence the attitude of individual behavior, life style in the long run as well as the culture of the country. Ackerberg (2001) found out that informative advertisements about products can influence potential customers and actual users.

4.1 Proposed Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study was illustrated in Figure 1 where all the variables (independent and dependent) of the constructs will be carried out in the hypothesized testing

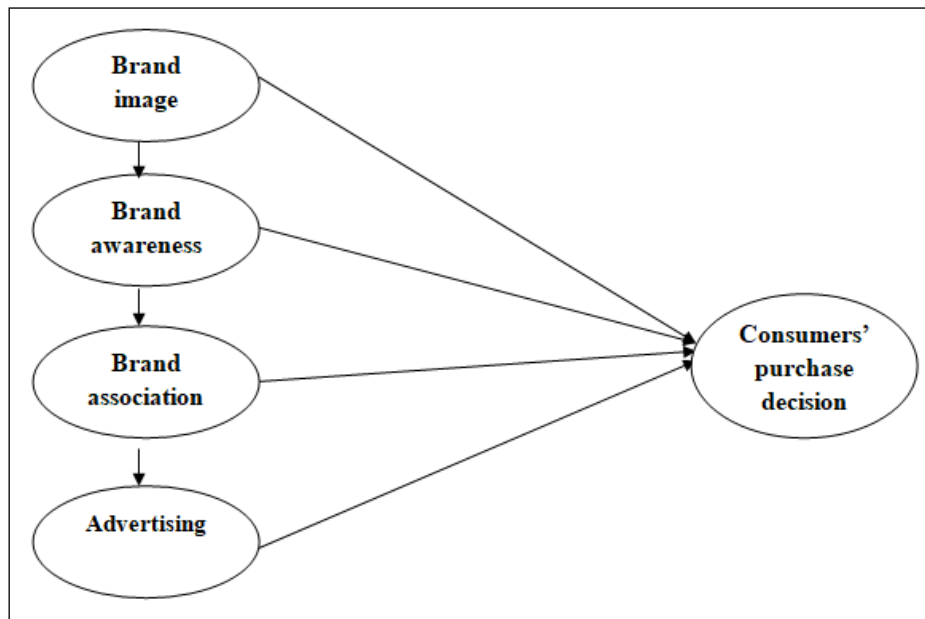


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

5. Methodology

5.1 Research design

According to Bryman & Bell (2007), a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. It deals with issues as techniques for data collocation, sampling technique as well as time and cost constrain. The research design for this study is descriptive in nature. According to Orodha (2003), descriptive design is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Since the instrument used in soliciting responses from respondents were mainly interviews and questionnaires, the chosen research was appropriate

5.2 Population of the Study

The population for the study consists of all the customers of State Transport Company in Accra, Ghana.

5.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

5.3.1 Sampling Technique

Kothari (2004) defines sampling as that part of statistical practice concerned with the selection of individual observations intended to yield some knowledge about a population of a concern, especially for the purposes of statistical inference. As a result, a convenient sampling technique was employed for the study.

5.3.2 Sample Size

Kothari (2004) defines sample size as the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. Since it would be difficult to interview and

administer questionnaire to the entire customers of State Transport Corporation in Accra, 300 respondents were selected.

5.3.3 Sources of Data

Field survey was employed as the main source of data collection. The use of questionnaires and interviews were the main instrument employed during the survey.

5.3.4 Distribution of the Questionnaire

It has taken approximately 25 days in the questionnaire administration and the conducting of interviews. On average, each respondent spent about 12 minutes to respond to the questionnaire.

5.4 Data Analysis

A simple regression analysis was carried out to ascertain the relationship between the variables (dependent and independent) with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The data was expressed in tables of frequencies and percentages which were computed for each item with concise comments. Cronbach's alpha coefficient analysis was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the response.

5.4.1 Validity and Reliability

According to Cooper & Schndler (2003), validity is the extent to which a test measures what we actually want to measure. To ensure that the study measures what it is intended to measure, the questionnaires were piloted with respondents whose characteristics are similar to the study. The pilot brought to the fore some discrepancy and was corrected accordingly. To check for the reliability, a Cronbach's alpha (α) was employed to ascertain the internal consistency of the responses.

5.5 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues have been a major concern in research. One of the ethical issues faced in this study was voluntary participation. To abide by ethics, the respondents were thoroughly briefed about the purpose of the study and were made to understand participation is voluntary and not under duress. Also, issue of confidentiality was observed.

6. Overview of State Transport Company (STC)

The State Transport Company (STC) of Ghana is owned by Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) which has majority shares after taking over from VANEF and the Government of Ghana who is the minority shareholder. Intercity STC plies mostly regional capitals in [Ghana](#) including, [Kumasi](#), [Sunyani](#), [Takoradi](#), [Cape Coast](#), [Bolgatanga](#) and some few major towns or district capitals like [Paga](#), [Dormaa Ahenkro](#) and [Tarkwa](#). It also operates International services to some major cities in neighboring

countries like [Ouagadougou](#) in [Burkina Faso](#), [Abidjan](#) in [Ivory Coast](#) and [Lomé](#) in [Togo](#). Plans were also in place to extend services to [Niamey](#) in [Niger](#).

7. Demographic Analysis of Respondents

In analyzing the demographic characteristics of respondents regarding gender, the male (120) accounted for 40.0% and female (60) accounted for 180%. The analysis clearly revealed that State Transport Company has more female customers than male.

The age group 60 and above were (95) representing 31.7% being slightly majority, followed by age group 50-59 (28.3%). The group 40-49 followed next (23.3%), age group 30-39 followed (15.0%) and the last age group being 20-29 (1.7%). It was apparent that the aged was more concerned with safety than the rest of the age groups.

It was revealed that respondents with bachelor degree (60) 20.0% were the least. Respondents with other qualifications (150) 50.0% were the majority followed by master's degree holders (90) 30.0%. The findings showed that almost all the respondents were educated, however, the level of attained varies.

7.1 Reliability Statistics

A well-known approach to measure reliability is the use of Cronbach alpha. According to Cavana *et al.* (2001), reliability test can be used as a measure to ascertain consistency and stability of the instruments used in the survey when repeated measurements are made. Cavana *et al.* (2001) posits that, the value of Cronbach alpha of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable. The responses received from all the variables ranged from 0.824 to 0.924. This means that the variables have high internal consistency. The result is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Reliability of variables

SN	Variables	Alpha
1	Brand Image	0.924
2	Brand Awareness	0.864
3	Brand Association	0.847
4	Advertising	0.824

Source: Researcher's Field Work, May, 2020.

Hypothesis 1: Brand image does not significantly influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana.

It can be observed from the regression analysis that a positive relationship exists between brand image and consumers' purchase decision. The statistics showed a significant relationship between the independent variable (brand image) and the dependent variable (consumers' purchase decision). The findings showed R value of .568 and .522 variance (Adjusted R). By implication, the value of the variance .522 means that (52.2%) variation in consumers' purchase decision is influenced by brand image while the remaining, which is equal to 47.8% is influenced by other variables. The statistics,

therefore, demonstrates that the independent variable (brand image) is significantly influencing the dependent variable (consumers' purchase decision) of State Transport Corporation services. The result is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
	.488 ^a	.586	522	.81562	.586	454.434	1	664	.000

a. (Constant) (brand image)

The statistics from the regression analysis demonstrates a substantial strength with (F=487.864) and β coefficient = (0.542) with p value being highly significant. The findings show a significant positive relationship between both variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study *H0: brand image does not significantly influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana*, was rejected whist we conclude that brand image is significantly influencing consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana. The result of the study is in consonance with the work of Malik *et al.* (2013) who found out that a significant positive relationship exists between brand image and consumers' purchasing decision. Also, the work of DjatmiNoak & Pradanab (2016) found brand image to have a significant impact on purchase intentions. The result is presented in table 3 and 4.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	188.655	1	162.664	487.864	.000 ^a
Residual	628.154	742	.518		
Total	816.809	743			

a. Predictor (Constant) (brand image)

b. Dependent: Consumers' purchase decision

Table 4: Coefficients

Model	Unsolicited Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Constant	1.426	.060		43.624	.000
Brand image	.468	.26	.542	14.082	

Dependent Variable: Consumers' purchase decision

Hypothesis 2: Brand awareness does not positively influence consumers' purchase behaviour of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana.

From the regression analysis, a positive relationship exists between brand awareness and consumers' purchase decision. The statistics showed a significant relationship between the independent variable (brand awareness) and the dependent variable (consumers' purchase decision). The findings showed R value of .524 and .482 variance (Adjusted R). By implication, the value of the variance .482 means (48.2%) variation in consumers' purchase decision is influenced by brand awareness while the

remaining, which is equal to 51.8% is influenced by other variables. The statistics, therefore, demonstrates a positive influence of brand awareness on consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Corporation services. The result is presented in table 5.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
	.426 ^a	.524	482	.80424	.524	643.444	1	464	.000

a. (Constant) (brand image)

The regression analysis demonstrates a substantial strength with (F=424.284) and β coefficient = (0.488) with p value being highly significant. The findings show a significant positive relationship between the variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study *H0: brand awareness does not positively influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana*, was rejected whilst we conclude that brand awareness is positively influencing consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana. The result of the study espouses the work of Perera & Dissanayake (2013) which showed that brand awareness has a higher impact on consumer purchase decision. It is also in parallel with the work of Alimen & Cerit (2010) who stressed that brand awareness positively influence consumer's purchase decision in that a higher level of brand awareness leads to a higher level of perceived quality among consumers. The result is presented in table 6 and 7.

Table 6: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	148.267	1	148.246	424.284	.000 ^a
Residual	546.122	727	.417		
Total	694.389	728			

a. Predictor (Constant) (brand awareness)

b. Dependent: Consumers' purchase decision

Table 7: Coefficients

Model	Unsolicited Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Constant	1.247	.050		28.822	.000
Brand image	.422	.28	.488	12.046	

Dependent Variable: Consumers' purchase decision.

Hypothesis 3: Brand association does not positively influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana.

There exists a positive relationship between brand association and consumers' purchase decision as shows by the regression analysis. The relationship has showed to be significant between the two variables. The findings showed R value of .467 and .448 variance (Adjusted R). By implication, the value of the variance .448 means (44.8%) variation in consumers' purchase decision is influenced by brand association while the

remaining, which is equal to 55.2% is influenced by other variables. The statistics demonstrates the existence of a positive relationship between brand association and consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company services in Ghana. The result is presented in table 8.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
	.478 ^a	.567	448	.78668	.467	764.682	1	664	.000

a. (Constant) (brand association)

The regression analysis demonstrates a moderate strength with (F=386.886) and β coefficient = (0.376) with p value being significant. Albeit the moderate relationship, statistically, the relationship is positive and significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study *H0: brand association does not positively influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana* was rejected whilst we conclude that brand association is positively influencing consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana. The result of the study is in line with the work of Jalilvand *et al.* (2011) who posits that brand awareness has direct significant influence on consumers' purchase intentions. The result is presented in table 9 and 10.

Table 9: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	126.416	1	126.442	386.886	.000 ^a
Residual	482.662	689	.414		
Total	609.079	690			

a. Predictor (Constant) (brand association)

b. Dependent: Consumers' purchase decision

Table 10: Coefficients

Model	Unsolicited Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Constant	1.408	.080		22.644	.000
Brand image	.426	.24	.376	12.268	

Dependent Variable: Consumers' purchase decision

Hypothesis 4: Advertising does not significantly influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana.

The statistics of the regression analysis shows a moderate relationship between advertising and consumers' purchase decision. The moderate relationship between the variables has shown to be significant statistically. The findings showed R value of .446 and .384 variance (Adjusted R). By implication, the value of the variance .384 means (38.4%) variation in consumers' purchasing decision is influenced by advertising while the remaining, which is equal to 61.6% is influenced by other variables. The statistics, therefore, demonstrates that advertising is influencing consumers' purchase decision of

State Transport Corporation services and the relationship is statistically significant. The result is presented in table 11.

Table 11: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
	.526 ^a	.446	384	.72882	.446	566.364	1	444	.000

a. (Constant) (advertising)

The regression analysis demonstrates a moderate strength with ($F=386.486$) and β coefficient = (0.428) with p value being significant. Although the findings have shown a moderate strength between the independent variable (advertising) and the dependent variable (consumers' purchase decision), the strength is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study H_0 : *advertising does not significantly influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana* was rejected whilst we conclude that advertising is significantly influence consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana. The result of the study is in line with the work of Latif & Abideen (2011) who found out that advertising influence the attitude of individual behavior and life style in the long run as well as the culture of the country. The result is presented in table 12 and 13.

Table 12: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	154.566	1	146.462	386.886	.000 ^a
Residual	563.162	678	.416		
Total	717.728	679			

a. Predictor (Constant) (advertising)

b. Dependent: Consumers' purchase decision

Table 13: Coefficients

Model	Unsolicited Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Constant	1.268	.040		42.248	.000
Brand image	.388	.28	.428	12.064	

Dependent Variable: Consumers' purchase decision

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusion

It can be concluded that State Transport Company has more female customers (60%) than males (40.0%).

The results of the study showed that the aged rely more on State Transport Company services for inter-city shuttles. This might probably be due to safety concerns.

This evidence is seen as: age group 50-59 (28.3%) age group 60 and above (31.7%), age group 40-49 (23.3%), age group 30-39 (15.0%) and age group 20-29 (1.7%).

The results revealed that State Transport Company customers with bachelor degree (20.0%) were the least. Customers with other qualifications (50.0%) were the majority followed by master's degree holders (30.0%).

The statistics of the study showed that brand image is significantly influencing consumers' purchase decision of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana with R value of .568 and .522 (52.2%) variance (Adjusted R).

Analysis of the data showed a positive influence of the independent variable (brand awareness) on the dependent variable (consumers' purchase decision) with R value of .524 and .482 (48.2%) variance (Adjusted R).

The findings demonstrated a moderate but significant positive relationship between the independent variable (brand association) and dependent variable (consumers' purchase decision) of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana with R value of .467 and .448 (44.8%).variance (Adjusted R).

The study found a moderate relationship between the independent variable (advertising) and the dependent variable (consumers' purchase decision) of State Transport Company (STC) services in Accra, Ghana with R value of .446 and .384 (38.4%) variance (Adjusted R). Statistically, such relationship can be described as significant.

8.2 Recommendation

1. The study recommends that the State Transport Company should build strong brand beliefs to enable consumers hold unique mental picture of the brand.
2. It is recommended that State Transport Company (STC) as a brand should be built in such a way that consumers can recognize and recall it in any given situations.
3. Also, advertising must be seen as an important marketing communication tool by State Transport Company (STC) during brand promotion

8.3 Future Studies

The study focused on three brand symbolic attributes and one communication mix element (advertising) with a sample of 300 respondents in Accra. Further studies could be carried out to include more of the communication mix elements to examine their influence on purchase decision.

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