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EFFECT OF BRAND EQUITY ON NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF MEDIUM-SIZED RESTAURANT ENTERPRISES IN KISUMU CITY, KENYA

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to analyze the effect of brand equity on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurants in Kisumu City, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to examine the effects of brand association, perceived brand quality, and brand awareness on non-financial performance. The study was anchored by Aaker brand equity theory and adopted a correlation study design. The study obtained a sample of 52 respondents, from a population of 60 registered restaurants using a saturated sampling technique. Pilot results from N=8 showed the 33-item instrument reliability of Cronbach's alpha of (α=0.963, α=0.973 and α=0.914) for brand awareness, perceived brand quality, and brand association respectively. Construct validity was tested using factor analysis where all values of the factor scores correlation matrix *were less than 0.7 ($r < 0.7$) an indication of ascertained validity. Results revealed that brand awareness (β=.060, p=0.000); perceived brand quality (β=.031, p=0.000), and brand association (β=.561, p=0.000) meaning all brand equity dimensions have a statistically and significant positive effect on the non-financial performance of restaurant enterprises in Kisumu city. The study concluded that all brand equity dimensions combined were significant predictors of the non-financial performance of restaurants; R^2=0.579; $\Delta F(3,48)$=22.042, $p<0.000$. The study recommended that firms should consistently improve brand equity through the creation of brand awareness, enhance perceived brand quality among restaurant customers, and provide strong brand associations to bring passionate attachment and lasting brand feelings among prospective customers. The academic community, businesses, government authorities, and the general public will find the study's findings useful.*

Keywords: Brand Equity, Brand Awareness, Perceived Brand Quality, Brand Association, and Non-Financial performance

INTRODUCTION

SMEs account for around 90% of all enterprises, 50% globally, in emerging nations, up to 40% of the GDP and employment (World Bank 2022). 98% of businesses are Medium-sized and smaller businesses (SMEs), 30% of all jobs, and 3% of Kenya's GDP (Kenya Association of Manufacturers, 2022). Despite the crucial role that SMEs play in promoting economic growth, 400,000 micro, small, and medium-sized firms (SMEs) do not survive into their second year of operations raising concerns about the sector's viability (KNBS 2018).

The majority of Kenyan restaurants frequently lose business to rivals (Tukamushaba, Musinguzi, Katongle, & Honggen, 2012). According to Tukamushaba et al. (2012), customers give these restaurants low ratings, which may help to explain why restaurant failures are so common. Restaurants are now forced to look for ways to get a competitive edge. Knowing how to draw in and keep consumers is one way to obtain a competitive advantage. According to numerous marketing writers (e.g., Baumann, Elliott, & Burton, 2012; Clark & Wood, 1999; Ha & Jang, 2012; Jones & Taylor, 2007; Oliver, 1999; Oliver, 1997; Ryu, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003), brand equity is, in fact, the most commonly mentioned result of the marketing process. Despite this, brand equity continues to be a paradox (See Uncles et al., 2003; Jones & Taylor, 2007; Ogba & Tan, 2009). In general, Kotler and Keller (2016) claim that brand equity is the extra value clients receive when they buy products and services. Different conceptualizations of brand equity have resulted from this, leading to a multitude of kinds of brand equity, including employee-, financial-, and consumer-based brand equity (Kuikka & Laukkanen, 2012).

The Aaker brand equity hypothesis (1991), which contains five elements brand awareness, perceived brand quality, brand association, brand loyalty, and other intellectual assets is where the word "brand equity" originates. As stated by Aaker's brand equity hypothesis from 1991, businesses with strong brands can benefit from their market exposure to draw in more clients and boost revenues. In light of the current environment's characteristics, Aaker's brand equity theory was used to guide the relationship between brand equity and non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurants.

Aaker (1992) developed the brand equity model as a tool for evaluating organizational performance. Brand awareness, perceived brand quality, brand association, brand loyalty, and brand assets are the next five components (Aaker, 1992). The study alters the model by eliminating the two dimensions of brand equity that is brand loyalty and brand proprietary assets. Because brand loyalty and brand assets are benefits obtained from the influence of the three dimensions of brand equity retained by the study. Therefore, brand association, perceived brand quality, and brand awareness were the three components of the framework. The dependent variable, the organization's non-financial performance, should be influenced by brand awareness, perceived brand quality, and brand association.

Existing literature shows that a recommendable but mixed relationship exists between brand equity and nonfinancial performance. In Kenya's banking industry, Kilei (2016) found out that brand equity has a significant and positive influence financial performance of banking institutions in Kenya. Adeoye (2021) carried out a study to look at the effect of brand association on the financial performance of Nigerian flour milling firms in other parts of Nigeria and compared their findings to those of Kilei (2016). On the other hand, Chien-Hsiung (2011) reported a study that examined the connection between brand equity and non-financial performance in the catering business and discovered a bad correlation between the two. Results from Ribeiro (2019), Vera (2015), Akoglu (2022), Moslehpour (2014), Ali (2013), Erlangga (2021), Lacap (2021), Nath (2011), and Calvo-Porral (2017) favourably compared to those from Letting (2015) and Jraisat (2015). However, Qiao, 2022; Aktas, 2016; Novansa, 2017; Malik, 2013; Ambolau, 2015; Asif, 2015; Khrisnanda, 2021). In contrast, the studies mentioned above had distinct points of view and were conducted in various regions and industries. While Novansa (2017) focused his study on SMEs in Indonesia, Aktas (2016) studied young children in Turkey aged 3 to 5 years old. Perera (2013) explored foreign cosmetics in Sri Lanka, Malik (2013) examined apparel and textiles in Pakistan, Ambolau (2015) investigated aqua customers in Indonesia, and Khrisnanda (2021) investigated Oppo mobile users in Indonesia.

These studies, however, are not without limitations for instance; Kilei (2016) used a cross-sectional research design which is not fit for reporting a particular behavior over a long period. Moreover, (Adeoye, 2021; Bhaya, 2017; Susanti, 2019; Seo, 2022; Wijaksono, 2019) studies used descriptive statistics and smaller sample sizes making them unfit for generalization as well as studying causal relationship that exists between independent variables and dependent variable. In addition, (Neupane, 2015; and Bhaya, 2017; Wijaksono, 2019) used convenience and random sampling techniques to draw the sample frame from an accessible population therefore not enough representative of the salience characteristic of the entire population. Still and all, Douka (2008) studied different brand association dimensions like; recognition, management, symbol, escape, virtual success, memory, ego, and emotion and not the generally known brand association dimensions from Aaker's model. This therefore limits conceptualization and dimensionality of the study. Finally, these studies were constrained to different sectors and different economies making their results limited.

The research surveys of (Lesmana, 2020; Alkhawaldeh, 2017; Aktas, 2016; Novansa, 2017) made use of a small sample size, rendering the findings unsuitable for generalization. As opposed to that, Malik (2013) used the convenience sampling technique which only caters to the available subject of the accessible population to the researcher and does not offer a comprehensive representation of the entire population therefore unfit for generalization. Moreover, (Ambolau, 2015; & Asif, 2015) used a cross-sectional survey design which does not reveal the long-standing behavior of a subject of the study. Finally, (Khrisnanda., 2021; Ambolau, 2015; Perera, 2013) Nevertheless concentrated on Oppo mobile in Indonesia, aqua consumers in Indonesia, and cosmetics in Sri Lanka, constraining their findings in one sector, hence inappropriate for generalization.

Some studies nevertheless were presented as similar constructs or as synonymous terms therefore reporting an incomplete effect of brand equity on performance. While the majority of research has been conducted in developed countries only a few have been conducted in Africa and Kisumu, Kenya in particular. Inevitably, it is unknown how brand equity affects the nonfinancial performance of medium-sized restaurants in Kisumu City, Kenya.

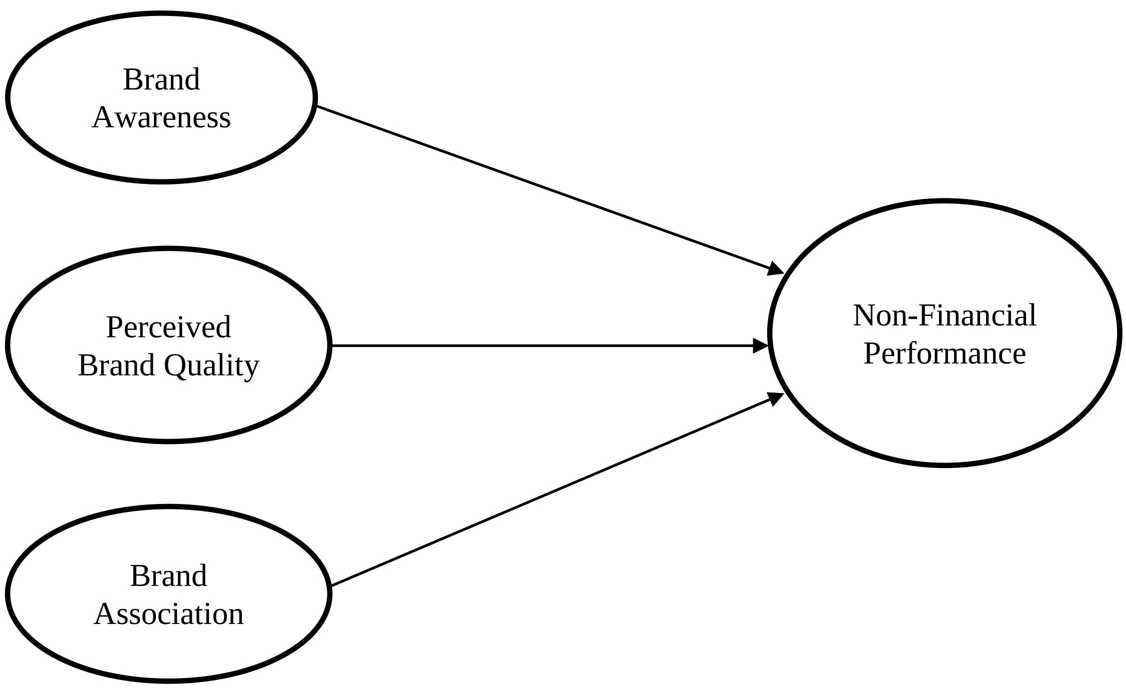
Examining the effect of brand equity on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu, Kenya, is the main objective of this study.

The specific objective of the study is to:

i. To analyze the effect of brand awareness on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya.
ii. To establish the effect of perceived brand quality on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya.
iii. To analyze the effect of brand association on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya.

Research Hypotheses

i. H_o: β_i=0 Brand awareness has no significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya.
ii. H_o: β_i=0 Perceived brand quality has no significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya.
iii. H_o: β_i=0 Brand association has no significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya.



Source: (adapted from Aaker 1992, 1996 page 270)

METHODOLOGY

The current study adopts a correlational research design together with a descriptive research design. The link between two or more variables is investigated in a correlational study design (Orodho, 2012). The study was carried out in the city of Kisumu, within Kisumu County of

Kenya, the city lies along the shores of Lake Victoria). For data collection, one of the owners or managers or the supervisors was chosen at random. Saturated sampling was used to choose a sample size of 52 respondents from a target population of 60 restaurants. The remaining 8 respondents which is equivalent to 13% of the total population from 8 restaurants were used for a pilot study.

The researcher used self-administered structured questionnaires to gather initial data from sampled respondents. Brand awareness, perceived brand quality, and brand association questionnaires were created using multiple-item scales and summated ratings (Likert Scale) to determine how well respondents understand the study's variables. Very low extent (1), low extent (2), moderate extent (3), high extent (4), and very high extent (5). Pilot results of the reliability test for all items yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of between 0.901 to 0.973. Construct validity was tested using factor analysis where all values of the factor scores correlation matrix were less than 0.7 ($r < 0.7$) an indication of ascertained validity. Following that, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The statistical software that the researcher used to explain the data was SPSS version 27 and Excel for calculating mean values. The standard deviation and mean score were examined using the Likert scale. The study used a multivariate regression analysis to examine the association between brand equity and non-financial performance to test the hypothesis. Through the use of regression, one can determine which linear equation's coefficients involving one or more independent variables best predict the value of the dependent variable. The data was analyzed by the researcher using linear regression analysis. The following was the regression model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \varepsilon_i$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The main research data were collected through self-complete questionnaires, of which 52 of the 52 questionnaires were completed, this was a 100% response rate. According to Sekaran (2008), a response rate of 60% is considered sufficient when analyzing social science research data.

Effect of Brand Equity on Non-Financial Performance

To achieve the objectives of the study, a regression analysis between brand awareness, perceived brand quality, and brand association on the performance of medium restaurants was conducted. The overall effect of each brand equity dimension also provides a summary of the regression model. The model is acceptable because the F-statistic is significant and suggests that the independent variables jointly affect the dependent variable (brand equity dimensions jointly affect the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurants). Regression model summary results from Table 1 show a strong positive correlation between brand equity and non-financial performance of restaurants (R=.761). It also shows that 57.9% of the variance in the non-financial performance of restaurants is explained by the brand equity dimensions (R^2=.579, p<.000). While the remaining variation in non-financial performance of 42.1% was explained by other external factors outside the current model of the study. The different between R^2=.579 and adjusted R^2=.553 is .026 indicating that the model generalizes quite well since adjusted R^2 is closer to R^2. The shrinkage of less than 0.5 shows the validity of the model Field (2005).

Table 1: Model Summary of Brand Equity on Non-financial Performance

					Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.761[a]	.579	.553	.47447	.579	22.042	3	48	.000	2.061

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand_Association, Perceived_Brand_Quality, Brand_Awareness

b. Dependent Variable: Restaurants_Performance

Table 2 displays the results of the computed model using an ANOVA. F (3, 48) =22.042, p< 0.000, which was the outcome of the data test, the results confirm that the overall regression model is significant or fits the study data well. The researcher can therefore draw the conclusion that the performance of medium-sized restaurants in Kisumu city is accounted for by all independent variables, or brand equity aspects, taken combined.

Table 2: ANOVA Results on the relationship between Brand equity and non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurants in Kisumu City, Kenya

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.886	3	4.962	22.042	.000[b]
	Residual	10.806	48	.225		
	Total	25.692	51			

a. Dependent Variable: Restaurants_Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand_Association, Perceived_Brand_Quality, Brand_Awareness

The regression equation was in the form of $Y=\beta_0+\beta_1X_{1i}+\beta_2X_{2i}+\beta_3X_{3i}+\varepsilon_{i,}$ therefore by adding regression coefficients as shown in Table 3 below it later culminates into:

$Y = 1.307 + 0.60X_{1i} + 0.031X_{2i} + 0.560X_{3i}$

R^2= 0.579 (57.9%)

Table 3: Estimated Regression Coefficients of brand equity dimensions on restaurants performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics VIF
1	(Constant)	1.307	.333		3.920	.000		
	Brand_Awareness	.060	.140	.073	.428	.000	.301	3.328
	Perceived_Brand_Quality	.031	.073	.057	.434	.000	.516	1.939
	Brand_Association	.560	.147	.660	3.820	.000	.293	3.410

The first objective of the study was to analyze the effect of brand awareness on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya. In this regard, from the estimated regression coefficients of study variables captured in Table 3; brand awareness was found to have a statistically significant and positive effect on the non-financial performance of restaurants in Kisumu city (β=.060, p=0.000) thereby rejecting the null hypothesis Ho: βi=0 which state that Brand awareness has no significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu city. This means that a unit change in brand awareness causes a .060 -unit change in non-financial performance and the change is statistically significant. This implies that brand awareness is a significant determinant of non-financial performance restaurants in Kisumu city.

The second objective of the study was to establish the effect of perceived brand quality on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City. In this regard, perceived brand quality was found to have a significant positive effect on performance (β=.031, p=0.000) thereby rejecting the second null hypothesis H_o: β_i=0 which stated that Perceived brand quality has no significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu city, Kenya.

This means that a unit change in perceived brand quality will cause a .031-unit change in non-financial performance and the change is significant. This implies that perceived brand quality is a significant predictor of performance in the context of the study areas. However, it is worth noting that perceived brand quality exerts the least amount of influence on the non-financial performance of restaurants when compared to the other brand equity dimensions like brand awareness and brand association. Nonetheless, it is still a significant predictor of the non-financial performance of restaurants in Kisumu Kenya.

The third objective of the study was to analyze the effect of brand association on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City. In this regard, brand associations were found to have a significant positive effect on non-financial performance (β=.561, p=.000) thereby rejecting the third null hypothesis H_o: $\beta_i = 0$ which states that Brand association has no significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu city, Kenya. This means that a unit change in brand association will cause a .561-unit change in non-financial performance and the change is significant. This implies that brand association is indeed a significant determinant of the performance of medium-sized restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City. It further suggests that compared to the other two facets of brand equity, the brand association was the brand equity dimension that exerted the greatest significant influence on the non-financial performance of medium restaurants in Kisumu city as was shown by the high value of bivariate statistics of r=.758 while brand awareness and perceived brand quality closely followed by r=.654, r=.547 respectively.

The findings show that brand equity has exerted a significant positive influence on organizational performance and has received some support from theoretical literature as well as past empirical studies. For instance, the current finding has concurred with that of (Sastika, 2016; Chi 2009; Pratama, 2017; Alkhawaldeh 2017; Aktas, 2016; Novansa, 2017; Malik, 2013; Ambolau, 2015; Asif, 2015; Khrisnanda, 2021, Lesmana; 2020 Perera, 2013 Leting, 2015 & Jraisat, 2015) compared favorably with that of (Ribeiro, 2019; Vera, 2015; Akoglu, 2022; Akoglu, 2022; Moslehpour, 2014, Ali, 2013; Erlangga, 2021; Lacap, 2021; Nath, 2011; Calvo-Porral, 2017) who conducted a study that sought to investigate the effect of brand equity on nonfinancial performance of various business entities. On the contrary, Qiao (2022) reported a negative relationship between brand equity and the nonfinancial performance of branded products in China.

However, (Chien-Hsiung, 2011; Adeoye, 2021; & Kilei, 2016) studies were based on different service sectors and, therefore, not fit for drawing deductions. Adeoye (2021) focused on milling firms, and Kilei (2016), focused on the banking sector. Notably, studies of (Bhaya, 2017; Phong, 2020; Neupane, 2015; Seo, 2022; Douka, 2008; and Wijaksono, 2019) all found that brand equity has a strong positive correlation with nonfinancial performance. However, these studies were focused on different sectors like, SMEs, health clubs, public libraries, catering businesses, retail supermarkets, chemical firms, online retail industry, and mobile phone industry. Therefore, their findings are only limited to that particular sector and region.

This current study, however, has made an enormous contribution to new knowledge in terms of hypothesizing, empirically testing, and establishing the link between brand association and performance that hitherto remained unexplored, especially in the context of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City.

CONCLUSIONS

The first objective of the study was to analyze the effect of brand awareness on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya. The null hypothesis was that Brand awareness has no significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City Kenya. The study findings revealed that brand awareness was found to have a significant positive influence on the performance of medium restaurants in Kisumu City. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. In this regard, brand awareness was found to have a significant positive influence on the performance of medium restaurants in Kisumu City.

The second objective of the study was to establish the effect of perceived brand quality on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya. The null hypothesis was that Perceived brand quality has no significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City Kenya. The study findings revealed that Perceived brand quality was found to have a significant positive influence on the performance of medium restaurants in Kisumu City. Therefore, the null hypothesis. In this regard, perceived brand quality was found to have a significant positive influence on the performance of medium restaurants in Kisumu City.

The third objective of the study was to establish the effect of the analyzed effect of brand association on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya. The null hypothesis was that Brand association has no significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City Kenya, while, the corresponding alternative hypothesis was that Brand association has a significant effect on the non-financial performance of medium restaurant enterprises in Kisumu City, Kenya. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. In this regard, the brand association was found to have a significant positive influence on the performance of medium restaurants in Kisumu City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions the study therefore recommends the following:

First of all, since a significant positive relationship exists between brand awareness and performance, the management or owners of restaurants should lay more emphasis on the implementation of brand awareness strategies to a greater extent as it was found to positively affect the non-financial performance of restaurants. So that customer can continuously attach their personal values to restaurant products, Customers to consider a given restaurant product among competing brands, to make customers more familiar with and like the products, and lastly to commit customers to the products. Currently, brand awareness programs are being implemented only to a moderate extent.

Secondly, because perceived brand quality exerts a positive significant effect on non-financial performance, more effort and resources should be focused on improving the product quality and differentiating the features of the products that will enhance organizational performance.

Thirdly, since the study revealed that brand association exerts the greatest significant positive influence on the performance of medium restaurants in Kisumu city, the management or owners of restaurants should focus their attention on the creation of a strong message appeal to a brand association that will positive feelings towards the products, easy retrieval of information about the products, differentiation from competing brands and associate the brand with their personal value.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research offers insights into how brand equity dimensions affect the performance of medium restaurants in Kisumu City, Kenya. The current study focused majorly on one of the brand equity theories ignoring other brand equity theories like; Keller's Model of Brand Equity, making the study's findings only limited to a particular theory. The study eliminated two major dimensions of Aaker brand equity which could be vital contributors to organizational performance. In addition, the study only picked medium-sized restaurants which is only a small fragment of SMEs. Moreover, the correlation research design is deployed in the study which may tend to be biased since it predicts only the presumed relationship by the researcher. Furthermore, the sample size was limited due to time and cost constraints but this weakness was remedied by a thorough literature review to compensate for the inadequacy that was caused by data limitations.

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