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Relationship between perceived quality of branded bottled water and consumer choice of selected institutional consumers in Kericho town, Kenya

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**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED QUALITY OF BRANDED BOTTLED
WATER AND CONSUMER CHOICE OF SELECTED INSTITUTIONAL CONSUMERS
IN KERICHO TOWN,
KENYA**

MERCY KAARI BII

**A Thesis Submitted to the Board of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirement for the Conferment of the Degree of Master of Business Administration
(Marketing) of the University of Kabianga.**

UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA

OCTOBER, 2019

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

Declaration

This declare this thesisresearchis myoriginal work and has not been presented for the conferment of a degree or for the award of a diploma in this or any other University:

Signature

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis research to my dearhusband Festus and my treasured children Shalom, Serene and Prince.

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I acknowledge Almighty God for strength and sound health throughout this period. I am indebted to my supervisors Dr. Helen W. Sang and Dr. Lydia Langat for their immense support, guidance, commitment in supervising my work. Special thanks to friends who helped me in one way or the other to make sure this work was completed on time, God richly reward you. Special acknowledgement to the school of business and economics at the University of Kabianga for mentorship, and moral support they gave me. Least but not last to Advalinks Management Consultants Ltd for their continued support.

ABSTRACT

Bottled water is becoming one of the fastest growing markets in the beverage industry globally. Most people perceive bottled water as safe, of better quality and as an alternative to other packaged beverages. This perception has seen an increase in demand for bottled water, a situation which has resulted in cut-throat competition, infiltration of sub-standard and smuggled goods into the market and non-disclosure of water sources, among other challenges. This dilemma is further confounded by lack of clarity on what determines consumer preferences. The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between perceived quality of branded bottled water and consumer choice amongst institutional consumers in Kericho town. The study sought to achieve three objectives: to determine the relationship between brand and consumer choice of bottled water, to establish the relationship between customers' expectation and consumer choice of bottled water, and to assess the relationship between price and consumer choice of bottled water. The study was informed by consumer behaviour theory, theory of planned behaviour, benefit theory, self-perception theory, Gronroos model and black box model. The location of the study was Kericho town. The study adopted correlational survey research design and utilized quantitative data. The target population for the study was 74 selected institutions with 237 respondents. Purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used to sample the institutions and respondents respectively. Sample size of 146 respondents was calculated using Krejcie formula. Questionnaires were administered by the researcher since it was deemed suitable instrument for the study. The validity and reliability of the instrument was determined by expert opinion of my supervisors and through pilot testing that was done to respondents in a different town that were not part of the respondents in this study. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with aid of SPSS and findings presented using frequency tables, bar charts and pie charts. The findings of the study were; brand has positive significant relationship with consumer choice ($P < 0.05$). Customer expectation has positive significant relationship with consumer choice ($P < 0.05$). It was also found that price has positive significant relationship with consumer choice ($P < 0.05$). Among the independent variables investigated price had the highest effect on consumer choice followed by customer expectation and brand respectively. The findings further revealed that there was significant strong relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice ($P < 0.05$). Brand, customer expectation and price were all significantly related with consumer choice ($P < 0.05$). The study concluded that brand recalling, brand awareness and brand loyalty should be considered while branding since it contributes to consumer choice. Consumer expectation based on standard and satisfaction had considerable influence on the choice of branded bottled water. Finally, consumers are price sensitive when choosing products therefore affecting consumer choice of branded bottled water significantly. The study recommended that, manufacturers of bottled water should be more consumer oriented through conducting consumer survey in order to enable them to brand bottled water based on customer expectation and consider setting affordable prices for all players in the market while making the bottled water products. The study may be significant to entrepreneurs of bottled water, government agencies and research community.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ISO	International Standardization of Organization
KEBS	Kenya Bureau of Standards
NACOSTI	National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation
SPSS	Statistics Package of Social Science
U.K.	United Kingdom
U.S.A	United States of America

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Brand	It is a symbol, a term, or a logo that is used to differentiate company's product from those of other competitors
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ConsumerChoice	Involves decisions that consumer has to make in regards to products and services, it deals with how consumers decides which product to purchase or to consume overtime
Consumerperception	This is seen ashow people selects, organizes and interprets information to get a meaning out of the input.
CustomerExpectation	In the study this is the total perceived value that a customer expects from product after making choice.
Institutional Consumer	These are shoppers who buy goods for processing, reselling and distribution to the final consumer's. In this study institutional consumers buy bottled water to resell to final the consumer.
Perceived quality	It is the overall quality or superiority of a product or service in respect to its intended purpose among alternatives brands.
Price of the product	Amount of money paid by customer for a product or services consumed.
Quality	It is the degree to which a product or services meets or exceeds customer expectation, and adhering to set standards. It is understood as the summary of symbols and characteristics of a product or service which could satisfy consumer needs.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter provides the background of the study, problem statement and research purpose. It further presents the significance as well as scope and limitations of the study. It also consists of assumption of the study and justification.

1.2 Background of the Study

Choice is like a classical illustration of a person walking down the road who hesitates before deciding on which path to take (Saylor, 2009). The consumer choice combines the three aspects: there must be two or more alternatives to choose from, the choice alternatives must arouse certain amount of conflicts, and cognitive process that occurs should aim at reducing the conflict. Consumers make their choices based on the brand presentations, based on value of product or services, the expected benefits drawn from the product and also the quality of the products (Growl and Levy, 2008).

Consumers are overwhelmed with a vast array of choices in today's retail marketing environment. This is especially because they are exposed to so many items in the market. Consumers make quick decisions based on the needs and the disposable income. The decision the consumers make determines the item they select and eventually buy. The manufacturers, on their part, have to be innovative and creative to ensure that customers pick their items in order to remain competitive in the market. Branding of their items is one the strategies that companies such as supermarkets may adopt to attract consumers to their goods and to ensure these goods get picked and re-picked. Consumers however, must go through a buying process before making any

purchase decisions, consumer goods like bottled water are hard to choose from when there are many alternatives. Consumers in this case will base choice on cues such as price, brand experience and competitors' products (McClure, Bialker, Neff, Williams, and Karduna, 2004; Shah and Oppenheimer, 2008).

Consumer choice has many unexpected dimensions because human mind contains many interacting neurons. How they make choice from various alternatives of products is based on a number of factors (Kotler, 2002). Consumers choose product or services with an informed mind about the products performance expected. They usually have to go through process of purchase decisions that captures need recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase decision, actual purchase and post purchase decisions (Saylor, 2009). The evaluation stage could occur as the consumer checks on features of the product based on their income, the brand, the quality parameters of the product and the expected benefits (Agway and Carter, 2014).

Some studies like the one done by Saranda and Rishidi (2018), further reveal that some consumers readily spend large amounts of money to purchase certain brands of bottled water, therefore raising questions on the driving force behind their purchase decisions – could it be because of perceived quality, brand name, safety, price or any other attribute? It is against this backdrop that the study was undertaken to investigate the relationship between perceived quality of bottled water and consumer choice.

Related studies from literature indicate that many consumers make choice of product under the influence of brand name, family, availability of the product, taste and preference or on their past experience. However consumers would make choice of product because they have perceived the product to be of good quality and with minimum satisfaction (Quansah, 2015). Dolnicar and

Schaffer, (2010) reveal that consumer perceive bottled water as safe and of good quality compared to tap water. For example, second hands clothes commonly referred to as 'mitumba' are not sold in their original form but still many people prefer to choose the best out of the available. An implication that perception is what guides consumer when making choice among alternative brands of products in the market. The Consumer perception on 'mitumba' items is that though not new they are of quality and last longer as compared to new selections. Bottled water dealers have currently increased in numbers compared to few years ago and this has posed stiff competition in the market. However, some consumers hold in esteem some brands of bottled water than others, it's all about perception (Njuguna, 2014).

Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman,(1993)developed a perceived quality construct with quality instruments which define the difference between perceptions and expectations. Perception is the "process by which an individual receives selects and interprets stimuli to form a meaningful and coherent picture of the world" (Schiffman and Kanuk 2007).In customer satisfaction and service quality dimensions, perceptions are defined as the consumer's judgment of the service organization's performance. In the industry of tangible products perceived quality stands as the subjective judgment of the product not as the actual quality. However, it gives consumer reason to choose a product among various brands available in the market (Muathe, 2014). It has also been found that perceptions differ due to physical environment of the service settings (Limaye, 2000). These indicate that a clear understanding of how perceptions are formed is critical to any service business as it facilitates formulation of strategies to manage customer perceptions of service performance. However, the discussion is centred on service approach and the current study approach was based on perception of product of product specifically bottled water.

The evaluation of the quality and performance of a service can take place only after experiencing or consuming because customers have limited tangible pre-choice cues. The perceptions formed during this evaluative process are key indicators of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Saylor, 2009). Consumers if satisfied with the choice of products they will make repeated choice, if not satisfied as well they will relay post purchase behaviour commonly known as cognitive dissonance (Bernini and Goreville,2012).

Perceived quality is important because it gauges profitability of a company in terms of revenue generated and also increases market share. Perceived quality brings value to the organization and it gives customer reason to buy, building corporate image of the company (Schiff man, Kanuk and Wisenblint, 2010).Therefore, it is important that all firms dealing with manufacturing products as well as service providers emphasis on quality putting customer at the center. Although quality is hard to attain in its objective form, consumer belief a product that offers the expected satisfaction is of good quality. Quality is not what the producer does to the product but what he places in the mind of the customer .Therefore perceived quality is filtered by the customer through perception (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010).

Bottled water is becoming one of the fastest emergent markets in the beverage industry globally. The fastest growth has been witnessed in the U.S.A., Asia and South America, with U.S.A having the highest number of consumers of bottled water (The Business Research Company, 2008). Most people perceive bottled water as safe, of better taste and quality compared to other sources such as tap, distilled or boiled (Okoe, 2015). Some consumers also perceive bottled water as a healthy alternative to other beverages such as soft drinks which might contain chemical additives; while others opt for it in their pursuit of food security against the backdrop of food scandals in industrialized countries and waterborne diseases in the developing world (ibid)

Bottled water business started in the UK in response to the need for water therapy in European and American countries (Zach, 2016). The first water bottling was done by Holy Well in 1621 in the UK. In America, the first commercial distribution was done in 1767 by Jackson's Spa in Boston, and those who drank it back then perceived it to contain therapeutic properties that could treat common ailments. By mid-19th Century the most popular bottlers in America was Saratoga Springs which produced more than seven million bottles annually. Today, U.S.A is the most popular producer of commercial beverages with water and beverage dispensers located outside all leading supermarkets .

In Africa, Ghana is purported to be the leading producer of the soft drinks with Bonaqua as the leading brand. Bonaqua, which is a product of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Ghana Limited was introduced in the market in 1999 and has made its mark in the Ghanaian industry . In Kenya, bottled water business started in 1992 with few water companies; however, over the years many more companies have emerged. At the moment, some of the leading bottled water companies include: Keringet, Dasani, Grange Park, Kilimanjaro, Passina, Highlands, Aquamist, Bamboo, Maisha water and Honesty among others. Initially bottled water in Kenya was seen as a symbol of prestige in most work places, hotels and homes but it has now become a health necessity (Massese, 2012). Growth in the water industry in Kenya has also been spurred by constant outbreak of water borne diseases such as dysentery, typhoid, Cholera and bilharzia. In their study done at Ghana Korankye, Asante, Asirifi-Danquah and Okyere revealed that, consumer choice is based on family influence, packaging, purity, availability, brand image, taste and advertisement of product (*ibid*). Findings further reveal that most consumers were found to be loyal to Bonaqua water brand and that Bonaqua had a bigger market share than its competitors because it was perceived to be a superior brand and therefore of higher quality than

other brands. However, the study did not focus on perceived quality and consumer choice hence need for the current study.

Perceived quality is seen as an important element that influences consumer choices Mohan (2014) argues that perceived quality builds a firm's reputation and it is a main aspect that helps many firms gain competitive advantage in the industry. It has also been argued that perceived quality is not only the actual quality of products but rather the judgment of consumers on the overall excellence of the product (Schiffman, Kanuk & Wisenblit (2010). Quality holds direct influence on consumers' choice decision and projects their loyalty, especially when they have little or no information at all concerning the product they need to purchase (Kolter and Armstrong, 2014). Strizhakova, Coulter, and Price (2011) revealed that consumers have divergent views pertaining quality and brand. They further argued that consumers in developing and developed nations view international brands to be of high quality than local brands. This may suggest that consumers use external cues (like brand image, brand name, price, reputation of the company, retail store image, manufacturer's image and origin country) to judge quality as opposed to intrinsic cues which are concerned with products' physical features (conformance, durability, reliability, performance).

There are studies which have explored different attributes of quality. Zeithaml (1988) and Stojanov (2012) discussed two attributes of quality: affective and cognitive. Affective attributes represent the experience that consumers have had in their past encounter with the product or service, whereas cognitive attributes represent products which can be measured relatively better before purchase.

Growl and Levy (2008) found out that a big percentage of the French population preferred bottled water based on three attributes: purity, source and portability. Kopalle and Lindsey (2003)

are of the view that most consumers evaluate product quality using intrinsic cues because they are unable to justify their choices rationally. From the foregoing discussions, it is evident players in the manufacturing companies should familiarize themselves with cues which influence consumers' purchase decisions and choices.

There are also studies that have focused on effect of brand on consumer purchase decisions. In Kenya, Njuguna (2014) who did a study in Nairobi's Central Business District on factors which influence consumer choice on bottled water brands found out that quality assurance, taste, and flavour were the key pillars of brand name; and that most consumers were influenced by perceived quality of bottled water rather than brand image. The foregoing discussion has revealed the driving force behind the growth and need for bottled water spanning over four centuries. While a number of studies have been done in this field, few if any have tried to exhaustively explore the relationship between perceived quality of water and consumer choice.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Bottled water is becoming one of the fastest growing markets in the beverage industry globally posing competition in the market that in the end affect consumer perception on quality of bottled water and their choice as well. Most people perceive bottled water to be safe and of better quality compared to water from other sources. It is also seen as a better alternative to other packaged beverages which may contain sugar, caffeine and chemical additives (Dolnicar and Schaffer, 2010). This perception has seen an increase in demand for bottled water and growth in water companies, a situation which has led to cut-throat competition in the market and possible compromise of quality of product. A number of studies done on consumer perceptions of bottled water choice reveal that most consumers make choice of bottled water based on brand name, the quality, the company of make, family influence, taste and preference among other reasons.

Similarly, studies done on consumer purchase decisions reveal that, packaging, perceived value, advertisement and family influence consumer choice on which bottled water brands to purchase. However, although most consumers of bottled water perceive it as safe and of better quality, the cut-throat competition in the manufacturing industry especially in the beverage sector, infiltration of sub-standard and smuggled goods into the market, and non-disclosure of sources of bottled water, among other reasons, have raised questions on the reliability and hygienic standards of bottled water hence, affecting consumer choice on the brand. Though quality is not what the producer does to the product but what he places in the mind of the customer, therefore, perceived quality is filtered by the customer through perception and it is how consumer perceives a product that enhance the choice they make (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). Therefore, question on the driving force behind consumer decision remains, could it be because of perceived quality, brand name, safety or any other attribute? It is against this backdrop that the study was undertaken to investigate the relationship between perceived quality of bottled water and consumer choice.

1.4 General Objective

To establish the relationship between perceived quality of branded bottled water and consumer choice among selected institutional consumers in Kericho town, Kenya.

1.5 Specific Objectives

The objectives were as follows;

- i) To determine the relationship between the brand of bottled water and consumer choice among institutional consumers.

ii) To establish the relationship between customer expectations of bottled water and consumer choices among institutional consumers.

iii) To determine the relationship between price of bottled water and consumer choice among institutional consumers.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested;

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between the brand of bottled water and consumer choice among institutional consumers.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between customer's expectation of bottled water and consumer among institutional consumers.

H₀3: There is no significant relationship between the price of bottled water and consumer choice among institutional consumer choice.

1.7 Justification of Study

There has been a raging debate in the manufacturing industry dealing with consumable products, especially food stuffs. The debate centers on infiltration of counterfeit and sub-standards goods into the market; and the laxity and complacency of those charged with ensuring that quality and safety standards are adhered to. This situation has further been complicated by varied views on what should matter when making purchase decisions of processed foods. Bottled water has not been spared. It is against this backdrop that this study was conducted to unearth quality attributes that should inform consumers when making purchase decisions of processed goods especially and more specifically bottled water.

1.8 Significance of Study

Findings of this study will be significant in a number of ways.

One, findings will be significant to entrepreneurs dealing with bottled water by revealing to them vital information pertaining consumer preferences and perception of quality. Such may inform their processing and marketing strategies.

Second, findings will be useful to government agencies such as Kenya Bureau of Standards which are charged with monitoring and upholding quality standards of processed goods. Findings on perceived quality of bottled water will make it easier for them to ascertain the level of ascribed quality by each brand of bottled water.

Finally, findings from this study will be useful to the research community by not only revealing factors that influence consumer's choice of bottled water, but also methodological issues which should be put into consideration when investigating a problem of this nature.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The study sought to investigate the relationship between perceived quality of branded bottled water and consumer choice in Kericho town. The target population in the study were selected institutional consumers who are involved in purchase decisions on behalf of the final consumer. Kericho town was considered suitable for study because it is the centre of business within the county and therefore assumed to host most institutional consumers of bottled water. The study was guided by three objectives which includes; to determine the relationship between the brand of bottled water and consumer choice among institutional consumers, to establish the relationship between customer expectations of bottled water and consumer choices among institutional consumers, to assess the relationship between price of bottled water and consumer

choice among institutional consumers. Kericho town is located in south western part of Kenya, within the highlands west of the Great Rift Valley, at 022°0.001' S, 3516'880' E and about 2096m above sea level. The study was done from April to September 2019.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited in selecting institution consumers that should participate. The researcher ensured that institutions consumers involved were purposefully selected especially in purchasing decision. The study also anticipated limitation of respondents not willing to freely participate in the study; most of the respondents who were approached were not willing to provide the information that was needed. The limitation was addressed by explaining to the respondents the purpose of the study and ensuring confidentiality.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on a number of assumptions. One, that there are many brands of bottled water consumed in Kericho town. Two, that consumer perceptions of quality influence their choice of bottled water. Three, the respondents consume or have ever consumed bottled water.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section presents the review of related literature as per the objectives of the study.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

The study reviewed related literature on brand, price, customer expectation and consumer choice.

2.2.1 Perceived quality

Perceived quality is customer's perception of quality of a product or service faced by alternatives brands (Sinchaisri, 2016). Perceived quality is one of the most important factors behind consumer purchase decisions. Consumers assume higher priced products to be of good quality. It is believed that, the use of proper production methods determines the reaction in the market place causing an effect on sales and profitability of an organization. Therefore, organizations old or upcoming cannot afford to ignore issues of quality. Perceived quality is a key determinant in building customer loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009). Perceived brand equity has been identified as a driver of financial performance, strategic thrust of business and it has been found to derive other aspect on how brand is perceived. Moreover, perception is everything and it affects all aspect of company operations including its success as well as consumer choice of products and services offering (ibid).

Masika (2013) avers that perceived quality is the perception of how superior a brand stands out when there are alternatives. Perceived quality also gives consumers value and a reason to choose one brand among many alternatives. It is therefore believed that consumers will make purchase decisions based on the perceptions they have built concerning the quality of a brand over time.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010) long established brands have consistently performed well with most trusted brand status. Perceived quality is set by customers who will soon let the manufacturers know when their brands are accepted or rejected. Therefore, there must be a constant dialogue between producers and consumers. Many manufacturing companies have to

recall failures they have gone through because of defect which are realised by consumers. There are many cases of motor vehicles, batteries, mobile phones, etc. recalled from marketing due to low quality, similarly bottled water firms report released by (KEBS) in May 11th 2018 water companies were closed due to non-conformance to quality (Kwamboka, 2018). This reveals how important quality policy is to the manufacturers; usually low quality goods affect price and the reputation of the company.

Shamsuddoha, Almgir, Nasir, and Nedelea, (2010) argues that people often purchase branded cars because of the information they have had on brand performance. Their study was on influence of brand consumer purchase decisions. They opined that market information that a firm has is used to position brand in the market place and in the mind of customers. However, consumer must go through a buying process before making any purchase decisions. Convenient products such as bottled water are hard to choose when there are many alternative, but based on cues such as price, brand experience and competitors 'comparison consumers are able to make choices that meet their expectations. (McClure, Bialker, Neff, Williams, and Karduna, 2004; Shah and Oppenheimer, 2008).

Understanding consumer's perception of drinking water can contribute to improvement of bottled water companies as well as consumer satisfaction. Consumers prefer high priced goods over low priced because they perceive high price goods to be of high quality (Sarand and Rishid, 2018). Consumer preferences differ, based on demographics, behavioural, and psychographic variables Korankye *etal*, (2015). But the general attitude is people want the best though it may sell expensive and therefore quality has 'pulling power' convincing power to buy and this attracts more sales.

Dolnicar and Schaffer, (2010) reveal that consumer's perception towards bottled water is that it is of good quality and safer for their health. For example, second hands clothes commonly referred to as 'mitumba' are not sold in their original form but still many people prefer to choose the best out of the available. An implication that perception is what guides consumer when making choice among alternative brands of products in the market. The Consumer perception on 'mitumba' items is that though not new they are of quality and last longer as compared to new selections (Swinker and Hines, 2005). Bottled water dealers have currently increased in numbers compared to few years ago and this has posed stiff competition in the market. However, some consumers hold in esteem some brands of bottled water than others, it's all about perception (Njuguna, 2014)

2.2.2 Brand and consumer choice

This study relates Brand name with logo, symbol, and a term that identifies one company's products or service from others in the market. It is the value consumer attaches to brand that is unique from all other brands available in the market. This value is determined by consumer perception and experiences with the brand. If people think highly of a brand it has a positive equity. When brand consistently under-delivers and disappoints, consumers perceive it negatively (Shopify, 2019). Brand is seen as the way the customer thinks, feels, perceives the product along with its price and market position, brand image is very important to the consumer when making purchase decisions (Legese and Mulugeta, 2018).

Stiff competition in the business environment has exposed consumers to variety of products in the market. As a result, organizations are trying harder to increase their brand preferences to retain customers and avoid being edged out by the competitors (Legese and Mulugeta 2018). Bottled water companies are not left out among the organizations that are

branding their products for customer recognition. Since consumption of bottled water has increased rapidly it is necessary that companies strategizes on branding and consider consumer needs rather than just supply.

In their study Saranda and Rishidi, (2018) on consumer factors in selection of bottled water brands in Kosovo opined that consumer choice is influenced by quality, perception, preference, marketing and price. The study adopted quantitative method, total population in the study was 940743 consumers in Kosovo according to agency statistics (2017), sample size of 400 was obtained by Yamane formula. The study however did not address perceived quality and consumer choice parameters hence the need for the current study.

Legese and Mulugeta, (2018) alluded that consumers make choice basing their judgment on brand name, brand image, packaging and price. In their study on factors affecting brand choice of bottled water, they found out other factors such as brand availability, product quality and advertisement had effect on consumer choice. However, brand image, brand name, packing and price were the major factors that significantly affected consumer choice of bottled water. Bottled water companies should develop brand equity, provide attractive package and set affordable prices to the consumer. The study however did not consider perceived quality when making choice. It is from this point that the researcher investigated on the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of branded bottled water.

Abugu and Nwafor, (2018) conducted a study on determinants of consumers of brands of bottled water in Enugu Nigeria. They used survey method for longitudinal research design, covering 2013-2018. Target population was 343 consumers and 210 sellers of bottled water in Enugu Nigeria. The findings revealed that choice of brand of bottled water was significantly influenced

by company of make, consumer's purchasing power and quality. The study recommended that firms dealing with bottled water should make customer tailor made goods to enhance loyalty, and also consider different social class and the consumer income. The study investigated the determinants that are key when consumers are making choice of bottled water brands in Nigeria laying emphasis on country of make, quality and purchase power of the consumer (income). The current study investigated on perceived quality and consumer choice with brand, price and customer expectation.

Jibu, (2017) analyzed brand image effect on consumer preference in Bengaluru City. He is of the opinion that brand image is crucial in enhancing consumer choice of products, the reason for the consumer choice of branded products is satisfaction, status, peace of mind, quality and long lasting loyalty. The study used descriptive research design, simple random method and sample size of 53 consumers of bottled water.

Njeru, (2016) investigated on factors that influence customer choice of bottled water brands in Nairobi. The results reveal that odor, taste and quality assurance were pillars of brand name that influenced choice of bottled water. Further the study reveal that price of bottled water preferred by customers was fair and they would choose brand that was affordable, again the results reveal that packaging influenced the purchase decision of the consumer. Also advertising was seen as a factor that triggers purchase decisions. The study concluded that most predominant factors affecting consumer choice of bottled water were; customer taste, odor and quality assurance. However, the study emphasized on brand name components to establish customer choice of bottled water brands neglecting other factors. The current study therefore investigated on perceived quality and consumer choice to establish if there exists any relationship.

Related study done by Njuguna, (2014) in Nairobi on factors that influence consumer choice of bottled water brands, argued that key pillars influencing consumer choice were quality assurance, taste and flavour. The study focused much on the components of brand equity which are brand loyalty, brand association and brand loyalty and the least variable analysed in the study was perceived quality parameters like brand recognition, brand familiarity and brand past experience among others. Consumers perceive quality of a brand with their past experience they have had after purchasing the brand and how often they remember it. Thus the study sought to establish the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of bottled water with price, brand and customer expectation as the independent variables.

Korankye, Asante, Asirif and Okyere (2015) did a study in consumer perception of product quality; the results indicated that, consumer choice is based on family influence, packaging, purity, availability, brand image, taste and advertisement. Most consumers were found to be loyal to a specific brand of water, though there were many brands available in the Ghanaian market. The brand also commanded bigger market share than its competitors. The study spells out the importance of brand building in the mind of the consumer who eventually is faced with choice to make. The study focused on perception of consumer emphasizing on a specific brand of bottled water. Thus the current study was conducted to establish the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of branded bottled water in general.

Quansah, (2015) investigated on factors that affect consumer purchase decisions of bottled water in Ghana. The study employed survey research design, targeted 240 consumers of bottled water as sample of respondents who answered questionnaire. They analysed data using ANOVA and correlation test, the results revealed that age, income, education level and bottled choice had a significant relationship. Further the study revealed relationship between perception and beliefs of

consumers on bottled water consumption. They also opined that brand, price, quality, package and availability influenced consumers' choice of bottled water. This study was done in Ghana to establish the factors that consumers consider when making choice of bottled water, they addressed most of the variables under investigation by the current study however, the study of this nature are very rare in Kericho hence the novelty.

Ngugi, (2014) in his study on the effect of country of origin and consumer behaviour towards foreign clothing brands opined that country of origin, consumer characteristics, and attitudes positively influence consumer choice on brand. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design, the study targeted 384 consumers of foreign clothing brands in Nairobi County and used primary data collected using questionnaires. The study found that country-of-origin greatly influenced consumer buying behaviour towards foreign brands and the two had a positive significant relationship. The findings also indicate that there was a significant positive relationship between consumer characteristics and consumer behaviour. Further study indicated that consumer attitudes strongly mediate the relationship between country-of-origin and consumer behaviour towards foreign clothing brands. However, from various related studies that have been reviewed selection of variables under investigation put more emphasis on brand name, brand image, price, and brand loyalty without much consideration on country of origin when consumer is making purchase decision. Ngugi in his study did not look at other factors that may influence consumer behaviour toward buying decision. Therefore, the study focused on investigating the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of branded bottled water in Kericho town, Kenya.

In their study on relationship between brand equity and consumer choice of branded bottled water (Njuguna and Muathe, 2014) opined that consumers are aware of the brand and they take

time to scrutinize the manufactures brand of bottled water, and they can distinguish well one brand of bottled water from another. Repeated advertising on certain brand helps the consumer to recognise and select the brand. They also found that brand loyalty had the least influence when consumer is making choice of bottled water while perceived quality significantly affected choice of bottled water. Therefore, need for more investigation by the current study.

Brand is the tool that easily changes consumers' perception on a product or service change buyer's buying decision (Baba, 2014). Today people are more careful and conscious about the brand than in the past few decades (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). It is assumed that long established brands have consistently performed well with most trusted brand status. Toyota model cars are well trusted by many users, because they have strong brand association, display dimensions of perceived quality such as performance, service ability and fitness for the purpose (Kotler and Keller, 2009).

Consumer choice can be influenced by brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand familiarity, brand recognition and the image of the company manufacturing the products (Njuguna, 2014). Company's tries to keep customers informed of the brand through repeated advertising and meeting the expectations for repeat sales (Aymar and Joseph, 2019). However, many consumers have more knowledge on perceived quality offered by brand and they always prefer one brand over alternative in the market. Brand image is very important when consumers are making choice for the first time, also family and friends are other factors that are found by other researchers to affect the purchase decision (Baba, 2014).

Dolnicar and Schäfer, (2014) did a study in Australia to understand the reasons why people buy bottled water rather than other water delivered through a central supply. Their findings relate to perceptions surrounding the relative safety of the water source, healthiness, taste and preference,

with some people substituting bottled water for soft drinks and other beverages. Other factors found to influence consumer decisions were demographics, perceived quality of the tap water source, and trust in water companies. Additionally, he found that, while most respondents did not perceive a health risk associated with their supply, those that did were very likely to change their source of drinking water. Their findings have some similarities with the study done in Ghana by Korankye (2015) and the one done in Nairobi by Njuguna (2016) on some variables that were seen affecting consumer choice. However, the studies did not consider perceived quality and consumer choice as standalone hence reason for this study.

Ogbuji, Anywanwu and Onah, (2011) conducted an empirical study on impact of branding and consumer choice. The study adopted experimental research design with population of (5787) and a sample size of 387 senior tertiary institutions in southeast Nigeria. They found out that company of make and packaging plays an important role in consumer choice of bottled water, also findings reveal that brand name, brand mark influence consumer choice of bottled water to a great extent. However, bottled water consumption studies vary by both country and the author, several authors gave concern on health, safety and taste to be the most frequent causes of consuming bottled water. The main deduction from the empirical literature is that, consumers generally value bottled water and are prepared to pay as high as they can to consume what they see to be a “safe”, “healthy”, “tasty” or “convenient” product. This study sought to establish the relationship between perception of quality and consumer choice of bottled water based on three variables which are price, brand and customer expectation.

Angasa and Kinoti (2011) investigated consumer perception on Kenyan manufactured laundry detergents in East African country, their study used descriptive research design, populations in the study was all consumers of laundry detergents. A convenience sampling technique was used

and sample size of 250 from each country. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse data which was collected using semi structured questionnaires. The findings revealed that the five countries used laundry detergents. Omo was the leading brand that consumer perceive to be of quality and affordable followed by Sunlight brand. Further the study found that consumers' perception on price, quality and country of origin varied where most of the respondents preferred Kenyan made brands as they trusted them in terms of availability, quality and other attributes as compared to those of other East African countries. This study investigated perception of the consumer on laundry detergents looking at price, quality and country of origin as the only factors, the current study investigated the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of branded bottled water in Kericho town, Kenya.

Mbagaya and Mbato (2011) conducted a study on factors influencing consumption standards of bottled water in Nairobi adopting cross sectional research design, sample size of 120 respondents from supermarkets and water bottling companies. The study used stratified and systematic sampling technique and SPSS to analyse data to establish the relationship between variables. They found out that most consumers who take bottled water considered; taste, convenience, fashion, safety and health benefits associated with it. Further they found that brand choice was influenced by price, advertisements and availability. Also findings indicate that perceived quality matched company description of quality by the consumer. The study however, had less to reveal in relation to perceived quality and consumer choice hence a backdrop for the current study.

Khasawneh and Hasonah (2010) noted modern age brand has an important role of boosting the economy of a country. When consumers are loyal to a certain brand the brand definitely will sell well and fetch more sales for the organization. Consumers are more careful and conscious about the brand than in the past and they will give priority and favour to the products or services that

are branded (Jibu,2017). Consumers' recalls brand while in their buying process decisions, and prefers goods with high prices because they think that branded products have high value (Jibu, 2017). The aspect of perceived quality largely contributes to brand equity realization.

Shamsuddoha, Almgir, Nasir, and Nedelea, (2010) argues that people often purchase branded cars because of the information they have on brand performance. The market information that a firm has is used to position brand in the market place and in the mind of customers. Most customers think brand is a guarantee of quality and play a major role in consumer's choice. Consumer must go through a buying process before making any purchase decisions, consumer goods are hard to choose when there are many alternative, but based on cues such as price, brand experience and competitors' comparison stands to be the best criteria to help customer meet their expectations (McClure, Bialker, Neff, Williams, and Karduna, 2004; Shah and Oppenheimer, 2008).

Growl and Levy, (2008) argues, that consumer familiarity with the brand makes it easier in decision making process. Products that are bought without much involvement like bread, sugar brand awareness may not be necessary. However, brand awareness is very important for the infrequently bought products, if consumers recognize brand and the attribute that makes it valuable they will make repeated purchase. For-example those who have never purchased a Toyota, for instance just being aware of the brand can help facilitate a purchase decision.

2.2.3 Customer expectation and consumer choice

Expectations are based on prior experience with the product, word-of-mouth, past experience or an encounter with service or product (Laufer, 2002). The reason for purchasing particular item

could be presumed superior functional performance or any other reason; in the end consumer have level of expectation in their mind, which may range from low to quite high.

Expectation is a belief based on product or service (Olson and Dover, 1979). Where there is no information prior. However, Customer has various sources of information that eventually help realize expected benefits after an encounter with a particular company's product. The information can be from sources like, word of mouth, past experience with service or product, expert opinion, publicity, and communication, price and, personal selling, and prior exposure to competitive services (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1993). In the pre-purchase stage consumer expectation affects their purchase decisions on which brand / type of product or service to buy. During consumption consumer attitude can be affected by service provider, personnel, and other customer comments. In the post purchase stage, expectation from the basis of evaluations of satisfaction or dissatisfaction can occur

Previous literature indicates that consumers can use different types of expectation to evaluate their satisfaction (Tse and Wilton, 1988) expectation can be either predictive or normative. Consumers use them to judge the satisfaction they derive from the product chosen or service offer (Churchill and Suprenant, 1982). Consumer's perception at any given time is what determines the reaction after every choice they make. It is therefore necessary for policy makers and companies who deal with products and also services to engage in consumer survey to gauge their perceptions towards the brands.

Samaana (2014) did a study at Syria Damascus about customer expectation and perceived quality on satisfaction he found out that customer expectation had significant positive impact on satisfaction after choice has been made to consume a product or a service. Further he found that

perceived quality had significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. He concluded it is important for marketers to be aware of their customers' expectations in advance to be able to meet or exceed their expectation leading to satisfaction. Failure can lead to customer dissatisfaction (dissonance cognitive behavior). Sometimes customers may have well-formed expectations, especially when they have had past experience with a particular brand of product or service offering. Expectations may be realized especially in service industry by asking customers to state what they expect from the service provider. This might help the organization to formulate and reduce the gap between customer expectation and performance. In addition, organizations should build customers' confidence and pay attention to customer while solving problems they may encounter to reach a level of satisfaction. In the marketing perspective meeting customer's expectation means loyalty and customer retention. However, the study focused on service industry while the current study investigated on perceived quality and consumer choice of tangible product that is branded bottled water.

Wangari (2014) did a study on factors affecting customer expectation on service delivery in an organization at the Nairobi. The study adopted a descriptive research design with a target population of 150 respondents and used stratified random sampling technique to draw a sample size from each stratum. The tools for data collection were open and closed ended questionnaires, and data analysis was done using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The study found that the music house employees did not consider customer needs as important when delivering services in prompt manner as expected. The study also revealed that customers were given less attention hence lack of good, reliable and convenient service delivery. She recommended that the employees in the organization should develop interests with the client to help meet expected satisfaction in services, and finally implement marketing strategies by

recommending the organization services through word of mouth to others. However, the study focus was on service Provider Company. The current study focused on customer expectation on choice of product in this case bottled water it was done in Kericho town, Kenya to establish the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of bottled water.

Schiffman and Kanuk (1997) argue that consumers buy satisfaction, not just parts. Therefore, marketing managers should be constantly concerned with product quality so as to satisfy the customer. From a marketing perspective, consumers perceive quality of product has the ability of the product to satisfy a customer's needs or requirements (Masika 2013). A product with more features is not a high quality if the features are not what the target market wants (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1997). Since consumers rank brands according to their perception of quality, firms should endeavour to be customer focused. Marketing managers should spend most of their time in research and development to find out what consumers require in every market segmentation and also segment the market based on variables like demographic, social factors, physiological factors and behaviour (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010).

2.2.4 Price and consumer choice

Price is the value paid by customers to get product or services, broadly price is all what customers give up so as to gain benefit of using the products or service (Kotler, 2010). Price is the most flexible and revenue generating marketing mix element to the firm, (Agwu and Carter, 2014). Kwanho, Lee and Lichtenstein (2012) have divided price into two parts, that is the perceived price which represents individual belief on quality of the product and the objective price that represents actual price. Consumer perception in respect to price varies from one consumer to another. Some may associate high price with high quality of the product and eventually this

affects the consumer choice of the product or services. However, the income of the consumer dictates their purchase decision (Abugu and Nwafor 2018).

Agwu and Carter (2014) view price as an income generator element compared to other marketing mix elements. Price has value when attached to product Baker (1996) revealed that price is a mechanism that causes the two forces of demand and supply equilibrium. Ezeudu (2005) sees price as the exchange value for goods and services. Lovelock (1996) suggested price is an element of the marketing mix that generates revenue, the rest of the elements have related expenses. For convenient goods which have small prices paid at once sometimes do not require pricing strategy and this eases purchase decision of the consumer. However, for shopping products such as appliances will require proper pricing strategies to avoid complex decision making. Bertini and Gourville, (2012) addressed the issue of business organization going beyond pricing mechanisms of fixing prices that suits them rather than estimating cost of production for a product to generate profit. Although to some organization still it is not relevant how they sufficiently recognize, harmonize revenue generation and open new avenues. The study had two purposes which are to assess the effect of pricing strategies on the purchase of consumer goods and how the advent of online pricing interferes with consumer choice. This study therefore sought to establish relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of bottled looking at price as one of the variables.

According to Hoch and Banerji (1993) economic recession affects consumer choice, when income of the consumers decreases they become price conscious and shift their preferences to the low priced product though from unknown brands. Other consumer's associate low price with low quality products, price is perceived by consumers through advertisement and brand association having influence power on consumer choice. When consumer is not aware of the

price they use other cues like packaging, brand name to make purchase decision (Zeithaml, 1998). Historically price has been seen as a major factor affecting consumer choice, the only element generating revenue and most flexible of all others (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). Price is the second most important marketing mix element after the product. Pricing criteria can easily alter consumer behaviour towards purchasing a particular product (Kottler, 2010). The prices that managers or organisation sets must be based on customer perceptions value because in the end it is the customer who decides if price is right depending on the value he /she attaches to the product or service. Customer oriented pricing reveals the value consumers' place on product and the benefit they receive, prices are set in line with the demand in the market and also considering customers' perception of the product to avoid high or low prices for the target market (Farese, Kimbrell and Woloszk, 1991). Therefore, price setting should capture this value.

Dudu and Agwu (2014) investigated on effect of pricing strategies on purchase decision of consumer goods. The study utilized descriptive research design data used was majorly from secondary sources. The results reveal that consumer perception of value is reflected in prices of a firm's products, also it revealed that competitor's prices affects consumer purchase decisions choice. The study recommended that firms should watch competitor's effects on purchase decisions rather than communicate product price value to customer only. Since price generates value and consumer income predicts their purchase decision it interested the researcher to include price as one of the variables in the study to establish how it affects the consumer choice of a product. The study was carried out in Nigeria focusing on effect of internet (online) pricing and purchase decisions. The current study viewed price in line with product choice particularly bottled water brand. It sought to establish the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice inclusive of price as one of the independent variable.

The price set for the product or services has a very significant effect on how the consumer behaves. If the consumer believes that the prices charged by companies are lower than competitors, it could cause a negative perception and a major spike in sales. But if the price set is significantly higher than expected, the response can be disappointing. In either case the changes in prices can produce unexpected results when it comes to consumer buying behaviour (Dudu and Agwu 2014). Hiked prices turn off the customers especially if customers have choice of getting the same products at a lower price from your competitors. On the other hand, raising prices could not have any effect at all if the product is of high quality and the demand is high .

Bett (2019) researched on pricing strategy and customer satisfaction based on an assessment of loyalty and retention of customer in commercial banks. Financial sector is a competitive segment that has affected profitability of financial institutions. Hence financial organization has adopted pricing strategy in order to retain customers. This study was conducted using multistage sampling techniques on 148 employees of commercial banks in Kericho County. Price was found to have significantly influence on customer loyalty and retention. The pricing strategies was also found to be important to part of market mix component in ensuring that customer are satisfied in commercial banks. It recommended that price strategies should be improve to ensure customer satisfaction and hence customer loyalty and retention. The current study sought to establish the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of branded bottled water.

Lowering or initially setting a lower price than expected can have a different set of effects on consumer choice. Consumers can become conscious over prices and also suspicious of the low price and assume it means product is of lower quality (ibid). It is therefore important to set the right price of product or service from the start. Managers or companies are encouraged to set prices that consumers are comfortable with, there are different types of pricing method in the

market based on the objective of the organization they include: premium pricing, penetration pricing, skimming price, economy pricing, psychological pricing, captive product pricing, bundling pricing and promotional pricing strategy (Legese and Mulugeta).

2.2.5 Consumer choice

Choice is like a classical illustration of a person walking down the road who hesitates before deciding on which path to take, (Saylor, 2009). The consumer choice combines the three aspects: there must be two or more choice alternatives to choose from, the choice alternatives must arouse certain amount of conflicts, and cognitive process that occurs should aim at reducing the conflict. Consumers make their choices based on the brand presentations, based on value of product or services, the expected benefits drawn from the product and also the quality of the products (Growth and Levy, 2008). However, others make choice under the influence of family, friends, and the social class as well as education level (Okoe 2015). Also others use cues such as frequency of advertisements, promotions messages and slogans associated with the brand. However, consumer products are hard to choose from since they are low involving. Consumers use cues like price comparison competitors offering and expectations (Shah and Oppenheimer, 2008).

According to Kotler (2010), buying process involves many players who have different roles. They include; initiators, users, the influencers, deciders, buyers, who have the authority to buy product from selected suppliers and the last role is played by gatekeepers who may hinder buying process.

According to Saylor (2009) there are six stages buying process that consumer goes through before making choice. The consumer behavior involves; need recognition of need or services and takes a step to fill in the need (Bruner 1988) marketers should note customers' needs and take

action to meet those needs. Consumer searches the information from internal and external sources. Then consumer evaluates information and perception he/she has on brand image to get desirable characteristics of a product, this leads to 'evoked set'. That is the set of brand that has the probability of being chosen by consumer among the alternatives (Van Rollin and Thorpe, 2001).

Consumers then evaluate among alternatives brand available as they narrow down their choices (Agway and Carter, 2014). Evaluation criteria are based on some features that consumer thinks are important to him such as price, color, size. Once the evaluation is complete consumer picks or chooses brand that seems most appropriate and proceed to actual purchase itself. Marketing professionals use informative advertisement to convince the customers on the benefit of the products (Bearden *et al.*, 2004). Consumer depends on the information on the product features and his previous selection of the brand. For example, a consumer committed to the idea of buying a stereo of a well-known brand could change his decision if he has unpleasant experience with sellers in the store. While a promotion in a supermarket for bottled water brand could tip the scale for this brand in the consumer's mind who was hesitating between three brands of his evoked set.

The consumer in the post-purchase stage, questions his decision, on whether the satisfaction expected has been attained by the product (Bernini and Goreville, 2012). When product has not met the expectation consumer suffers post-purchase dissonance where he regrets purchase decisions, on most occasions he spreads word of mouth to others about the experience. If the product has broad satisfaction to the consumer, he will minimize stages of information such as alternative evaluation for the next purchase in order to buy the same brand which may produce customer loyalty. A satisfied customer is very likely to become a loyal and regular of a brand

especially for low level involvement- fast moving consumer goods or consumer packed good (Saylor 2009).

2.2.6 Government policy

In a bid to ensure standards are adhered to in relations to bottled water, the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) today held a meeting with over 350 players in the water sector and took them through the requirements in bottling water. KEBS Managing Director, Charles Ongwae, assured Kenyans that its key role is to facilitate trade, protect consumers from harmful substandard products and also protect the environment.

Other environmental concern has been the plastics bottles waste that has pollution effect on environment. The recent debate and policies on plastic packaging material has steered the bottled water companies to consider other packaging material. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) agreed on a Plastics bottle take back scheme involving collecting the waste bottles and selling them for recycling. Hence, the government plays a role mostly in environmental, health and quality policies as watchdog in bottled water industry to ensure the consumer rights are well protected affecting consumer choice.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the following theories: consumer Decision model/theory, Theory of planned Behaviour, self-perception theory, benefit perception theory, Gronroos model and black box model.

2.3.1 Consumer decision theory

The study adopted the consumer decision model (Engel-Blackwell- Model) developed in 1968 by Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell. The model presents the seven steps of buying decision process that consumer has to go through which are: need recognition, information search from both external and internal sources, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, post- purchase evaluation and divestment. The purchased decisions are influenced by stimuli reception and processing of consumer memory coupled with the past experience with the product or services (Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel, 2001). The model has a relationship with the study on consumer choice of product or services because it all starts with need recognition that has to be filled, choice cannot be made before the need is realized, consumer will acknowledge a need between his current state and desirable alternative, after need recognition, he will embark on information search both internally and externally through the memory of the past experiences with the brand (Loudon and Della, 1993).

Loudon and Della (1993) noted that, evaluation of alternative is based on the establishment of attitudes, beliefs, and purchase intentions. The process is influenced by both environmental and individual variables, purchase follows after the consumer has evaluated from the alternatives brands of products that he is exposed to, post consumption evaluations is used to give the feedback for future external search and belief formation. The consumer expresses their satisfaction or dissatisfaction after consuming products or service. A satisfied customer will make repeated purchase decision of the same brand while the unsatisfied customer will not repeat the choice (Samaan 2014). Therefore, the theory was relevant to the study because it explained how consumer make their choice on purchasing a product or services after going

through the consumer buying decision process which comprises of evaluation from the alternative brands available in the market, price comparison and expected perceived benefits.

2.3.2 Theory of planned behavior

The theory was introduced by Fishbone and Janzen in 1975. It posits that the collections of some behaviour have better predictions of attitudes and traits than simple analysis of perceived control only. It addresses the motivational factors in a unique way to explain execution of a specific behaviour . This theory has been recommended as the best model to predict consumer purchase intentions. It is one of the most researched models by social psychologists for predicting behaviour intentions. According Javadi, Dolatabadi, Nourbakhsh, Poursaeedi, and Asadollahi, (2012) the theory of planned behaviour is used to evaluate attitudes towards choice of products. Attitude is known to be an interaction in memory of object and evaluation of that object by the consumer.

The theory assumes that, intentions capture motivational factors influencing behaviour of a consumer towards choice. Attitudes that a consumer holds play a role in accepting or rejecting a specific brand, attitudes is positively expected to influence consumer. Several studies have suggested that increased awareness and interest are indicators of sustainable consumption. However, studies that have used theory of planned behaviour did not focus on perceived quality and consumer choice. The theory has been used by other researchers like Meacham in Taiwan to investigate the consumers purchase intentions of Green plants among the Thai consumers. It concluded that positives attitudes of consumers strongly facilitated consumers' choice of Green plant products. Therefore, the theory was relevant to the study because it explained how consumer attitudes play an important role in accepting or rejecting the product. The consumer

hold attitude based on the past experience with the brand and the perceived benefit they get on consuming the product.

2.3.3 Self- perception theory

This theory was developed by social psychologists Daryl in late 1960s. It posits that, people use attitudes and preference to interpret their own behavior meaning. The theory shows how individuals understand the motivation of their own behaviour, it relates to motive which drives customer decision. A study done at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst addressed how self-perception shaped consumers buying behaviour. They found that perception has impact on decision to purchase or not. Social environment of the consumer places more weight on issues that relates to their present surrounding and this has impact when making purchase decisions. Therefore, the theory is relevant to the study because it depicts that consumers make choice based on their self- perception.

2.3.4 Benefit perception theory

This theory posits that whenever consumer purchases a product they expect satisfaction as the key benefits. When consumers are unsatisfied they express cognitive dissonance behaviour (Durden, 2018). Researchers from Marquette University, Louisiana state University in their survey on customer's perception on nutrition associated with food value, found out that, consumers reject the general claims that are not supported. They also theorized that consumers would scrutinize the benefit that consumers get from purchasing product. Consumers want specific information about products they purchase and the expected benefit. Positive perception of the expected benefits of a company's products leads to large market share. Therefore, the theory is relevant to the study because it explains how consumers make choices of product or

services when they have expectations of satisfaction benefits from the value attached to product. The consumers' attachés the expected benefits to brand of their choice, the value of their money as they make varied choices.

2.3.4 Gronroos model

The model was developed by Gronroos in 1982 and further developed in 1984. The model is based on perceived service quality which explains that perceived service quality is contributed by technical quality and function quality. Rust and Oliver in 1994 developed this model by adding more dimension to Gronroos' model which focused on two dimensions that involves the service product that is technical quality and the service delivery which is the function quality (Rust and Oliver, 1994). The overall output of the model is image of the product that leads to perceived service quality as shown in Figure 2.1.

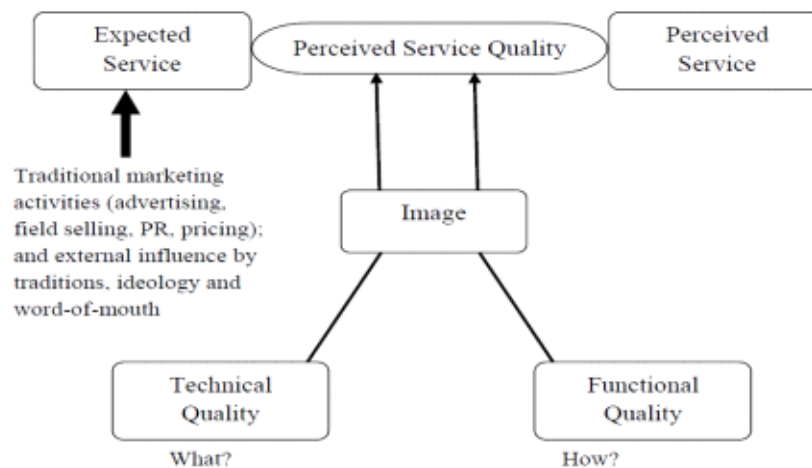


Figure 2.1: Gronroos model

This model is related to perceived quality which explains its component but does not explain its relationship with consumer choice. This means there is gap that needs to be investigated which relates the perceived quality with consumer choice.

2.3.6 Black box model

Black box model was developed by Kotler in 2004. The model is based on consumer behavior and identifies the stimuli responsible for buyer behavior (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong, 2004). The stimulus can be obtained through advertisement and other forms of promotion about the product which is presented to the consumer by the marketer and the environment is dealt with by the buyer's black box. The buyer's black box, comprises two sub components which are the buyer's characteristics and the buyer decision process.

The black box theory is a fairly popular method to describe psychology. It is not possible to open the human mind to look inside; we can only do something to the mind. The black box theory is of mental consciousness, which states that the mind is fully understood once the inputs and outputs are well defined, and binds this with a radical skepticism regarding the possibility of ever successfully describing the underlying structure, mechanism, and dynamics of the mind.

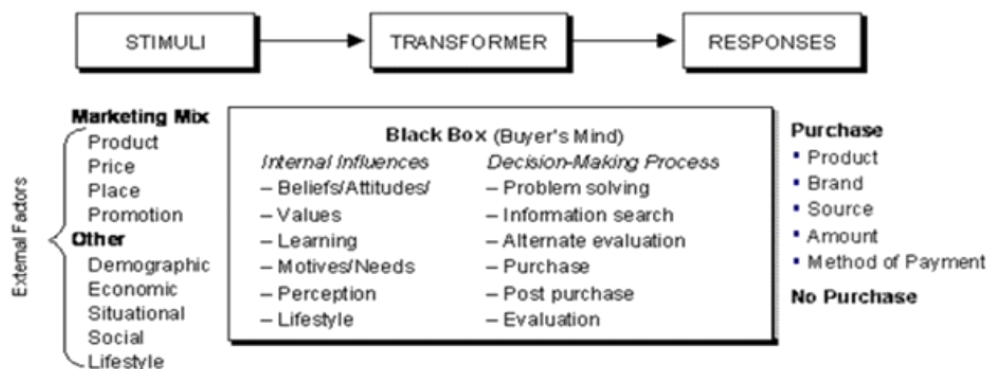


Figure 2.2: Black box model

Therefore, the model is does not support perceive quality but explain the response of the buyer behavior while making a purchase decision. This then associates brand as one of the factor that affect the consumer choice as explained by the black box which is the mind of the consumer.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

According to Orodho, (2013) conceptual framework is a type of model that illustrates the relationship between independent and the dependent variables. Kombo and Tromp (2006) conceptual framework provides the clear link from the literature to the research goals and questions, contributing to the formulation of research design, providing reference points for discussions, methodology and data analysis hence trustworthiness in conceptualizing the problem and providing a means to link idea and data to reveal connection This study sought to establish the relationship between the price and consumer choice , brand and consumer choice and customer expectation and choice of branded bottled water. The consumer choice depends on the trust they have on brand, the price of the products and expected benefits they get from consuming a products or services.

Figure 2.3: Conceptual framework of relationship perceived quality and consumer choice

Source: Researcher (2019)

Figure 2.3 presents the relationship between aspects of perceived quality of branded bottled water and consumer choice which will be tested to establish their influence in the study. Dependent variable was given by consumer choice while the independent variable was given by brand, customer expectation and price. Intervening variable was Government policy since the government are regulating and offer consumer protection against counterfeit and smuggled consumable goods.

The dependent variable (consumer choice) was regressed against explanatory variables which are (Brand, price, and customer expectation) to establish the relationship they have in the study. Brand was measured using the following indicators brand loyalty, recalling and awareness. The study used customer satisfaction, performance and reliability as indicators for customer

expectation and finally price was determined using consumer sensitivity, pricing strategies and consumer income as indicators.

2.5 Identification of Knowledge Gap

Bett (2019) researched on pricing strategy and customer satisfaction based on an assessment of loyalty and retention of customer in commercial banks. This study was conducted using multistage sampling techniques on 148 employees of commercial banks in Kericho County. In the current study the perceived quality on the consumer choice of branded bottled water was researched on and in Kericho town. Saranda and Rishidi (2018) investigated on consumer factors in selection of bottled water brands in Kosovo. The study used quantitative method and the total population was 940743 consumers in Kosovo according to agency statistics (2017). Where sample size of 400 respondents was obtained by Yamane formula. The current study adopted survey research design, with a target population of 74 institutions 237 consumers. The current study was conducted in Kenya with aim of establishing the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of branded bottled water.

Quansah (2015) investigated on factors affecting consumer purchasing decisions of bottled water in Ghana. The study adopted survey design with a sample size of 240 consumers of bottled water. The current study utilized correlation research design 147 as sample size. Mentari, Mutiara, and Suresh, (2014) investigated on factors that influence buying decision on bottled drinking water. The study used questionnaires that were administered to 300 undergraduates in President University in Cikarang, Indonesia. Current research used institution consumers with sample of 146 in Kenya. Abugu and Nwafor, (2018) conducted a study on determinants of consumers of brands of bottled water in Enugu Nigeria. They used survey method for longitudinal research design, covering 2013-2018 target population of 343 consumers and 210

sellers of bottled water in Enugu Nigeria. The current study targeted 74 institutions and 237 consumers of bottled water in Kenya. It also used cross-section research design.

Dudu and Agwu (2014) investigated on effect of pricing strategies on purchase decision of consumer goods. The study utilized descriptive research design; data was majorly from secondary sources. The research was done in Nigeria focusing on effect of internet (online) pricing and purchase decisions. The current study viewed price in line with product choice particularly bottled water brand in Kenya. Mbagaya and Mbato, (2011) conducted a study on factors influencing consumption standards of bottled water in Nairobi. This current study focused on perceived quality and consumer of branded bottled water in Kenya. Njuguna (2014) did a study on brand equity effect on consumer choice in Nairobi targeting all supermarkets. Thus the researcher conducted the study to establish the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of branded bottled water in Kericho town, where brand is one of the variables.

Samaana, (2014) did a study on customer expectation and perceived quality on satisfaction driven from service delivery. The study addressed customer expectation in the service industry, adopted different methodology, and was done in Sri Lanka while the current study was done in Kenya. Another study by Perera and Dissanayake (2013) conducted a study on the impact of brand awareness, brand association and perceived quality on female purchase decision of foreign makeup brands in Sri Lanka. The study investigated the relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice purely on branded bottled water in Kenya. Angasa and Kinoti, (2013) investigated consumer perception on Kenyan manufactured laundry detergents in East Africa country, their study used descriptive research design, and population in the study was all consumers of laundry detergents. While the current study was conducted in Kericho using correlation survey research design where perceived quality is the independent variable.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses blue print on how to collect, organize, analyse and present information from the findings. It encompasses of study design, target population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection tools, data collection procedure and data analysis. It also ensures that data collected are valid and reliable as per the objective of the study. The respondents are also safeguarded through ethical considerations as the data is collected hence it shows ethical issues that was considered while conducting the study.

3.2 Research Design

This study used correlational survey method. Survey is a technique of collecting data by administering questionnaires or interviewing to a sample of respondents (Orodho in Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Survey study allows the researcher to describe the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and other personal attributes of the subjects under study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Survey method was preferred in this study because it is deemed suitable for researching a large population, gives an opportunity to respondents to a 'self-report' on bottled water and provides for analyzing quantifiable data. Correlation method of analysis was used. Correlation method describes in quantitative terms the degree to which variables are related. Correlation research involves collecting data to determine whether and to what extent a relationship exists between

two or more quantifiable variables. The degree of relationship is expressed as a correlation coefficient (r) (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). This study sought to establish the relationship between perceived quality of bottled water and consumer choice.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was done in Kericho town which is positioned in south western part of Kenya within the highlands west of the Great Rift Valley Kericho County 022°0.001” S, 3516°880” E and about 2096m above sea level. The population of Kericho town from census report done in 2009 was 150, 0000. Kericho town is the headquarters of Kericho County. Kericho town was preferred because it has a vibrant economy and many institutions therefore more likely to have many consumers of bottled water and also because of its proximity by the researcher. The study targeted selected institutional consumers of branded bottled water.

3.4 Target Population

A population refers to an entire collection of objects, events or individuals having a shared observable feature. In this study, the population includes all institutional consumers of bottled water in Kericho town. The target population in the study included selected institutional consumers of bottled in Kericho town which were 74 institutions and 237 individuals. Those institutions comprised of hotels, super markets, and institutions of higher learning, hospitals, county government and county assembly. Institutional consumers were preferred to other consumers because they are registered populations and therefore easy to access and sample.

Table 3.1

Target population

Types of Institutions	Target Population	Individuals involved in Purchase Decisions
Hotel	40	113
Super markets	8	26
Institutions of higher learning	12	31
Hospitals	12	23
County Government of Kericho	1	29
County Assembly of Kericho	1	15
Total	74	237

Source: Kenya Revenue Office Records (2019)

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

Sampling is the process of selecting a representative sample of a total population (Kothari, 2011). It is a process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from where they were selected.

3.5.1 Sample Size

Sample size is the sub-population that is obtained from target population as representative for the purpose of inferences to the study. Sample size is affected by population size which is the target population, the number of variables in the data gathering instrument, requirements for statistical analysis and the degree of confidence required from the findings (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Whereas it would have been ideal to involve the entire population of institutional consumers of bottled water, it is not humanly possible because of the extensive size of data which was generated, as well as anticipated constraints of time and finances. For these reasons, the researcher calculated the sample size of individual involved in purchase decision of bottled water using Krejcie (1970) formula as shown in the ensuing paragraph.

N=the target population

n=desired sample size

p=population proportion

d =marginal error that can be tolerated in fluctuation of size of the population

X^2 =chi-square where degrees of freedom are taken at 1 ($X^2 = 3.841$ at 95% confidence level).

Table 3.2

Sample size

Types of Institutions	Target Population	Individuals involved in Purchase Decisions	Sample Respondents
Hotels	40	113	70
Super markets	8	26	16
Institutions of higher learning	12	31	19
Hospitals	12	23	14
County Government of Kericho	1	29	18
County Assembly of Kericho	1	15	9
Total	74	237	146

Source: Calculated data (Kenya Revenue Office Records, 2019)

3.5.2 Sampling procedures

Mixed sampling design was used where purposive sampling was used to select targeted institutions and random stratified sampling to select respondents who participated in the

study. All the targeted institutions were purposively sampled. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to use own preferences and previous knowledge of the target population to select a sample believed to possess relevant information required in the study. Prior to the study, the researcher had visited the sampled institutions to ascertain their usage of bottled water; and to obtain lists of people who are directly involved in purchase decisions. Those persons included managers, procurement officers and supervisors. Stratified sampling technique assisted to group the institution into stratus and from each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select the number of participants from each institution. This procedure was preferred because it ensured representativeness of the sample and enabled all characteristics of the sample to be taken care of.

3.6 Data Collections Instruments

The study used primary data which was collected using questionnaires as seemed appropriate. A questionnaire is a list of questions answered by the subject so that information sought is collected. Questionnaires contain highly structured and closed-ended questions which yield quantifiable data. It is a common preferred tool of data collection in a survey which is deemed an efficient way of generating large amounts of data and reaches out large population with ease (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The questionnaire method was used to collect data from institutional consumers of bottled water. The questionnaires contained closed response items which were arranged in the order of research objectives. Instructions were given in the questionnaire on how to respond to the issues. The respondents were to respond to the questions on a five-point Likert scale with the following descriptors (SD)-1, (D)-2, (N)-3, (A)-4, (ST)-5. The more positive the feedback is, the larger the value it is assigned.

3.6.1 Validity of research instruments

Validity is concerned with how-well the research instrument measures what it purports to measure (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It is the degree of accuracy of the results analysed from the phenomenon under study. The researcher consulted with the supervisors and the research experts in field marketing to determine how well the instrument met the standards, through triangulation of data and by using the right sample so as to improve the accuracy of the research instrument. Face validity was obtained through review of the question if it reflected the intended objectives. Content and construct validity was reviewed by supervisor through ensuring the content are well measured in the conceptual framework.

3.6.2 Reliability of research instruments

Reliability of an instrument test the ability of an instrument to yield same results after frequent use hence it ensures that the instrument is consistent (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). In this study reliability was ascertained by conducting a pilot study in a different town with different group of respondents who did not contribute in the actual study. Litein town was preferred for piloting because it has similar characteristics with the target population. Data from the pilot study was analysed using Cronbach alpha coefficient that is from 0 to 1. The coefficient value of 0.8 or more indicated that there was a high degree of reliability (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2005).

Table 3.3

Reliability Cronbach's results

Items	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
-------	----------------	-----------------

Brand	0.865	9
Customer Expectation	0.810	8
Price	0.808	7
Customer Choice	0.801	5
Average	0.821	

Source: Research Data (2019)

The results from research data was 0.821 which prompted the researcher to continue with the research. Therefore, the average Cronbach Alpha indicates a mean above 0.8 which showed that the data was reliable(Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2005).

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaires were piloted before collecting data in the field. Once the reliability and validity was ascertained the researcher was cleared to collect data. Relevant permission was sought from the institution head managers before conducting the research. The researcher used drop and pick method whereby the researcher physically distributed questionnaires to relevant individuals in each institution with the intention of collecting them after three days. The respondents were assured that all information would be kept confidential. Research assistants were engaged to help to distribute questionnaires to the sampled institutions.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis is a crucial task that involves organizing, calculation and presenting summary both using graphs and tables based on the research questions (Bryman and Cramer, 1997). Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using means and standard deviation. Multiple linear regression models were considered appropriate as inferential tool that established the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent

variable. Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) was used in data analysis. Presentation was done using bar graphs, pie charts and frequency tables.

The linear regression model shown below was adopted;

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

Where

Y = Consumer Choice (Dependent Variable)

β_0 = Constant Term

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Beta coefficients

X_1 = Brand

X_2 = Customer Expectation

X_3 = Price

e = Error Term

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher got clearance letter from Board of Graduate Studies, University of Kabianga to collect data. The letter was used to apply for permit from National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Ethical standards pertaining the respondents and conduct of research was adhered to throughout the research process. No respondent was coerced or lured to participate in the research. Their consent was sought by revealing the purpose of the study, what the study entails, and foreseen benefits. Their identity was protected by using codes instead of names in the research instrument. The researcher assured the respondents on the

confidentiality of the study and confirmed that information provided was purely for academic purposes only.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the research findings of the study and discussions. The presentation is as follows; response rate, findings for each of the three objectives based on the descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.2 Response rate

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) argue that the threshold that is sufficient for research should be above 80% which is excellent for conducting research.

Table 4.1

Response rate

Response Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	135	92.5%
Unreturned	11	7.5%
Total	146	100%

Source: Research Data (2019)

The number of questionnaires that were distributed to the respondents were 146. A total of 135 questionnaires were returned which is 92.5%. According to Babbie (2002) the response rate of 60% is good, 70% is very good and 50% is adequate for analysis, therefore the response rate of 92.5% was very good.

4.3 Background Information

This section presents the demographic characteristics in the study such as; age, gender, marital status and level of education. The results of biodata are presented in frequency tables and graphs as shown below.

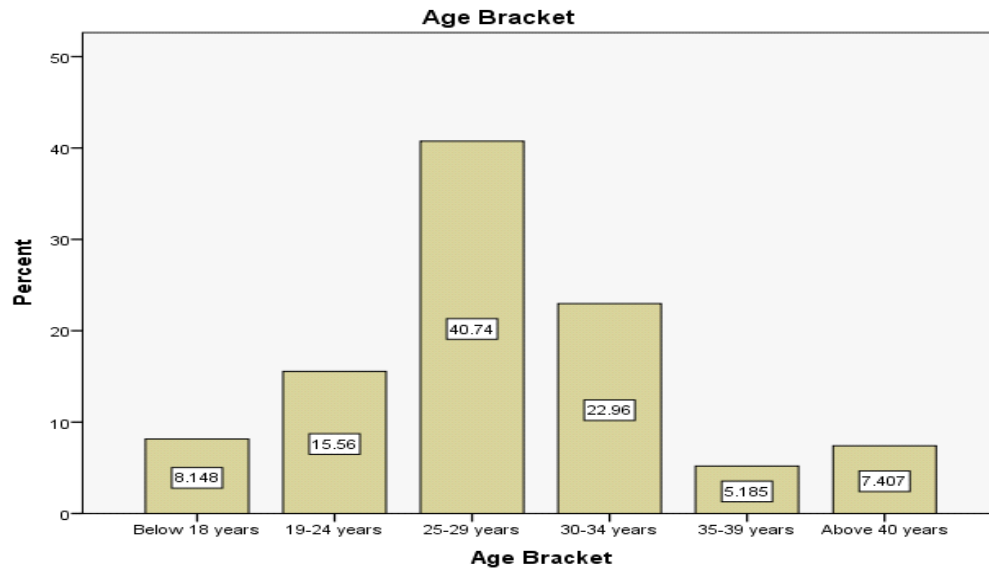


Figure 4.1: Age of the respondents

Source: Research Data (2019)

Figure 4.1 shows results in relation to age of the respondents which indicated that there were 11(8.1%) respondents below 18 years, 21(15.6%) within 19 to 24 years, 55(40.7%) within the age of 25-29 years, 31(23.0%) within 30-34 years, 7(5.2%) within the age of 35-39 years and 10(7.4%) who are above 40 years. Therefore, most of the people who take bottled water within institution are within the age of 25-29 years. It is followed by 30-34 years and 19-24 years respectively. The results indicate that, bottled water consumption is associated with younger generation representing 87.4% as compared to the elderly generation who represented 12.6%. According to Jibu, (2017) more youth groups representing 41.5% were affected by brand image on consumer preference which shows similarity with current study. Also the results are in line with Mbagaya and Mbato, (2011) who their study on factors influencing bottled water standards opined that majority of respondents who drink bottled water were in the age bracket of 19-24 years, this ascertain bottled water consumption to young generation. Also results further aver with Okoe (2015) who revealed that majority of the respondents (43.3%) were between 15-

25 years, followed by 34.6%) 26-34), (14.65) age 35-44 years and 7.55% representing above 45 years and Njeru (2016) whose results reveal that majority of respondents were between the age of 18-24(52%) followed by 25-34 with (25%) and 32-38 years representing 23% respectively. However, the study results contradict with Njuguna and Muathe, (2014) findings which revealed that age 26-40 years representing 51.2% (middle age) were the highest group of bottled water consumers. The general conclusion of age and consumption of bottled water being associated with young generation could be as a result of prestige, and association.

Table 4.2

Marital status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	61	45.2	45.2	45.2
	Married	74	54.8	54.8	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research (2019)

Table 4.2 indicates that single persons who responded were 61 out of 135 representing 45.2% and those who were married are represented by 74(54.8%). Therefore, majority of bottled water consumers were married respondents as compared to single respondents. The proportion of married respondents is relatively larger as compared to those who were single, though the marginal difference between the marital statuses is not significant. The findings disagree with Njuguna and Muathe(2014) who concluded that more single persons consume bottled water representing 52.4% and 47.6% respectively representing the married men and women. This result is significant in demographic segmentation of market.

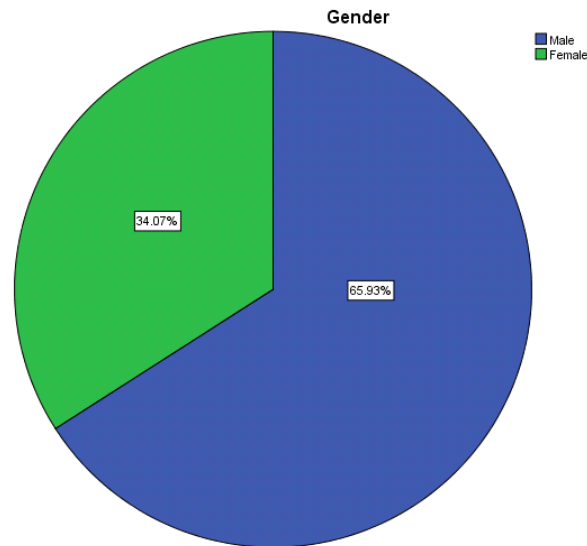


Figure 4.2: Gender

Source: Research Data (2019)

Figure 4.2 shows gender results where male respondents were 89 (65.9%) and female respondents were 46 (34.1%) respectively. This infers that there are more males who take bottled water than females. Hence there is significant difference between male and female consumption of bottled water. In similar study done by Jibu, (2017) revealed that there were more male than female who were of the opinion on choice of bottled water, based on brand image and consumer preference to youth in Bengaluru City presentation in the International Conference. Similarly, Mbagaya and Mbato, (2011) found that more males consumed bottled water with 57.5% male and female 42.5% respectively. Njeru (2016) results agree with the current findings, he found that majority of bottled water consumers were males presenting 51.7% as compared to female with 48.3%. However, the findings are contrary to Okoe (2015) who found that more females take bottled water representing (61.2%) of respondents compared to male (38.8%). Generally from the findings branded bottled water is associated to male consumers as opposed to female, the reason could be males prefer bottled water because it is portable, available and affordable.

Table 4.3**Education level**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	14	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Secondary	14	10.4	10.4	20.7
	Certificate	18	13.3	13.3	34.1
	Diploma	34	25.2	25.2	59.3
	Undergraduate	51	37.8	37.8	97.0
	Masters	4	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.3 Shows that the level of education plays an important role in consumer choice of bottled water. Majority of respondents were degree holders(37.8%) followed Diploma(25.2%),(13.3%) secondary level, (10.4%) and primary level (10.4%) level. This indicates that level of education is important in consumer purchase decision and it has high level of association with bottled water consumption where the highest number of people using bottled water was undergraduates compared to other educational level. Further those who take bottled water increases as the level of education increases. The findings concurs with Legesa and Mulugeta, (2018) which found that 33.9% people with bachelor degree preferred bottled water, though the study findings on primary and secondary level of education were contrary to this study where more primary school respondents consumed more bottled water as compared to secondary school respondents. Further the results agree with Okoe (2015) who in terms of education found, (50.8%) who drink bottled water were undergraduates followed by secondary level and primary level respectively. The rationale behind this could be level of education indicate that consumers have a positive perception and stable income hence; they can afford buy bottled water often.

4.4 Descriptive Results on Perceived Quality and Consumer Choice

Descriptive statistics results were obtained using frequency, percentage that were presented using mean as the average measure. The results were discussed as per the objectives of the study which includes; brand and consumer choice, customer expectation and consumer choice and price and consumer choice.

4.4.1 Brand and consumer choice

The relationship of brand and consumer choice was investigated using a Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. These produced the following mean for describing the phenomenal as indicated in the table below.

Table 4.4

Brand and consumer choice

Brand	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Brand recalling affect the choice of bottled water	19, 14.1%	47, 34.8%	37, 27.4%	12, 8.9%	20, 14.8%	3.244
The brand awareness through advertisement has influenced the choice brand of bottled water thatI buy.	22, 16.3%	35, 25.9%	42, 31.1%	19, 14.1%	17, 12.6%	3.193
Brand loyalty to only a specific brand of water based on the quality.	16, 11.9%	29, 21.5%	47, 34.8%	32, 23.7%	11, 8.1%	3.052
Consumer will take any bottled water available in the shelves despite the brand.	26, 19.3%	46, 34.1%	24, 17.8%	21, 15.6%	18, 13.3%	3.304
Brand of bottled water is important to the consumer choice	39, 28.9%	33, 24.4%	39, 28.9%	13, 9.6%	11, 8.1%	3.563

Source: Research Data (2019)

In response to brand and consumer choice in table 4.4, majority of the respondents 66(48.9%) agreed that brand recalling influenced consumer choice of bottled water. 32(23.7%) of the respondents on brand recalling disagreed that brand recalling affects the choice of bottled water

that they consume while 37(27.45%) were neutral in their response. Hence it was concluded that brand recalling affects the choice of bottled water to a greater extent with value mean of 3.244. The findings agree with Perera and Dissanayake (2013) who found that brand recalling was significantly related with consumer decision of foreign makeup brands in female consumers with a mean value of 3.63 which is slightly higher than the current results.

It was found that brand awareness through advertisement somewhat influenced the choice of bottled water bought by the consumers' where 57(42.2%) of the respondents agreed that brand awareness through advertising influences their choice of bottled water, 36(26.7%) out of 135 respondents disagreed that brand awareness has any influence on choice and 42(31.1%) out of 135 respondents remained neutral. This implies that consumers take their time to scrutinize manufacturers of bottled water brand and they distinguish different brands of water, available in the market. Thus repeated advertisement on certain brands helps them to make purchase decision. Therefore, brand awareness has significant relationship with consumer choice of a product (mean of 3.193). The results concur with Perera and Dissanayake (2013) who found that brand awareness significantly affected purchase decision with correlation values of 0.918 which was the highest among brand variable investigated which included brand awareness, brand association and brand perceived quality in female consumers' buying decision of foreign makeup products. The current study did not concentrate on brand awareness as a variable which differs from Perera and Dissanayake (2013) who investigated on brand awareness using brand knowledge, recognition, recalling and familiarity with mean results of 3.31, 3.64, 3.63 and 3.55 respectively. Also the results agree with Njuguna and Muathe (2014) which indicated that brand awareness had a positive significant with mean of 4.14.

The response on brand loyalty had majority 47(34.8%) of the respondents remained neutral while responding if they are loyal to a specific brand of bottled water. 45(32.4%) agreed that brand loyalty influenced consumer choice of bottled water while 43(35.5%) disagreed that brand loyalty had influence on consumer choice of bottled water. Somehow to a moderate extent brand loyalty to specific brand of water was related to quality with value mean of 3.052). Njuguna and Mathew(2014) also discovered that brand loyalty influenced consumer choice of bottled water to some extent with a mean of 3.51 respectively meaning that consumers were indifferent concerning brand loyalty.

Majority of respondents 72(53.4%) out of 135 agreed that consumer can take any bottled water available in the shelves irrespective of the brand while 39(28.9% out of 135 respondents disagreed that consumers can take any bottled water, 24(17%) out of 135 respondents remained neutral in responding to this question. Therefore, some consumer takes bottled water that was available in the shelves despite the brand (mean value of 3.304. This differ with Koranyke, Asante, Asirifi-Danquah and Okyere (2015) who argue customer cannot choose any water by pointing out that bottled water is affected by packaging, availability, brand image, taste and advertisement with 91%, 85%, 94%, 93% and 92% agreed respectively.

In response to importance of brand in consumer choice majority of the respondents 78(57.8%) agreed that brand is very important in making choice. Those who disagreed were 24 (17.7%) out of 135 while those who were neutral were 39(28.9%) out of 135 respectively. This concurs with the findings with those of Korankyeet, al, (2015) who found that consumer choice is based on brand loyalty, since the current study found bottled water brand was important to the consumer choice (mean of 3.563). The findings further aver with Abugu and Nwafor (2018) who found that brand choice of bottled water was important based on quality and ability of the consumer to

purchase with mean value of 4.04. Consumers and brand loyalty are inseparable; they will choose brand based on the trust they have built over time.

Table 4.5

Brand of beverage competing with water

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Soft Drinks	84	62.2	62.2	62.2
	Beverages	51	37.8	36.3	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.5 results on brand of beverage competing with water indicated soft drinks were leading with 84 representing 62.2% of entire respondents. It was followed closely by beverages which were 51 representing 37.8% of the respondents. Water's highest competitors are soft drinks based on functionality of water as opposed to beverages. The results indicate soft drinks were highly consumed followed by beverage as substitute product of water. There are as twice as many soft drinks than beverages that compete with bottled water.

Table 4.6

Favourite brand of water

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dasani	33	24.4	24.4	24.4
	Keringet	31	23.0	23.0	47.4
	Kerimist	22	16.3	16.3	63.7
	Maisha	20	14.8	14.8	78.5
	Grange Park	17	12.6	12.6	91.1
	Mobi	12	8.9	8.9	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.6 In response of consumer favourite brand, results indicate that consumers favoured brand of water according to preference, the brands that received high attention in terms selection Keringet, Kerimist, Maisha, Grange Park and Mobi representing the following percentages respectively 33(24.4%), 31(23.0%), 22(16.3%), 20(14.8%), 17(12.6%) and 12(8.9%). These results do not show larger variation between the brands. In a similar study by Mbagaya and Mbato, (2011) on bottled water consumption in Nairobi, Kenya. Dasani was the most favoured brand, followed by Keringet. Dasani was leading by 58.1% and Keringet was 16.2%. The results further aver with Njeru (2016) who also found that most of consumers preferred Dasani brand with 58.5%, followed by Keringet 13.6%, Aquamist with 7.6% and others taking 10.2%. This indicates that Dasani is highly preferred brand by most consumers followed by Keringet based on three studies done.

Table 4.7

Frequency of using the brand of water

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Daily	35	25.9	25.9	25.9
	Twice a week	67	49.6	49.6	75.6
	Thrice a week	33	24.4	24.4	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (2019)

According to table 4.7 the favourite brand of bottled water is taken by most respondents twice a week representing 67(49.6%). Those who take bottled water daily were 35(25.9%) and those who take thrice a week were 33(24.4%). Hence the results indicate that bottled water is one of the first moving consumer goods and it is consumed frequently. The finding concurs with (Legese and Mulugeta 2018) who found 37% of the respondents consumed bottled water more than once. Further results agree with Okoe (2015) who found that more respondents drink bottled water once a week or more with (57.1%). Bottled water consumption trend has increased immensely.

Table 4.8

Features that attracts consumers to brand of water

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Function it serves	17	12.6	12.6	12.6
	Satisfaction it gives	56	41.5	41.5	54.1
	Flavour it has	26	19.3	19.3	73.3
	Association with success	36	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.8 features that attracts consumers to brand of bottled water included; the function it serves with 17(12.6%) respondents, satisfaction it gives with 56(41.5%) respondents, flavour it has 26(19.3%) respondents and finally association with success with 36(26.7%) respectively. According to the findings most respondents preferred the brand based on satisfaction it gives with 41.5% of the respondents. Other factors that were close are the association with success of the brand while flavour and function of the brand were rated the lowest. Hence there is higher proportion of satisfaction and brand association with success having a significant relationship on consumer choice of the bottled water. Flavour and function were the factors that were rated low

as affecting consumer choice of branded bottled water. The findings agree with Okoe (2015) who found that satisfaction and brand association influence consumer choice to a great extent.

4.4.2 Customer expectation and consumer choice

Customer expectation results based on the research data used Likert Scale from strongly disagree as 1= strongly agree, Disagree, =2, Neutral,=3, Agree=4 and 5=Strongly agree. This assisted to obtain mean values that were used in descriptive interpretation of data.

Table 4.9

Customer expectation and consumer choice

Customer Expectation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
The bottled water is reliable and with right expected content.	21, 15.6%	43, 31.9%	40, 29.6%	21, 15.6%	10, 7.4%	3.326
Am satisfied with bottle water that I take	25, 18.5%	32, 23.7%	37, 27.4%	32, 23.7%	9, 6.7%	3.237
The bottled water is highly used in the market that is why I choose it.	23, 17.0%	32, 23.7%	47, 34.8%	6, 4.4%	27, 20.0%	3.133
Bottled water is of standard	23, 17.0%	38, 28.1%	33, 24.4%	36, 26.7%	5, 3.7%	3.282
Customer expectation is important in selecting the choice of water.	32, 23.7%	31, 23.0%	31, 23.0%	29, 21.5%	12, 8.9%	3.311

Source: Research Data (2019)

According to table 4.9, it was found those who agreed that bottled water was reliable were 64(47.5%). On the contrary those who disagreed were 31(23.0%) out of 135 while those who were neutral were 40(29.6%). The findings indicated that bottled water was reliable and with right expected content for customer since the mean were 3.326 above 3(neutral).

Customers who were satisfied with bottled water were 57(42.2%) while those dissatisfied were 41(30.4%). There were 37 (27.4%) respondents who remained neutral on satisfaction. Consequently, most customers were satisfied with bottled water that they consumed (mean of

3.237). According to Wangari, (2014) customer satisfaction affected customer expectation on service delivery. Though the research was done in service industry consumer choice in the current research is affected by customer expectation.

Majority of customers 55(40.7%) agreed that bottled water was highly used in the market and was the reason for their choice, 33(24.4%) were contrary to the opinion that choice of bottled water is linked with high usage in the market. Those who were neutral were 47(34.8%). Henceforth, bottled water was highly used in the market that is why the consumers somehow preferred the brand of bottled water (mean of 3.113).

In regards to if the bottled water was of standard those who agreed were 61(45.1%). Those who remained neutral were 33(24.4%) and those who disagreed were 41(30.4%) out of 135 respondents. From that findings most bottled water were of standard (mean of 3.282).

Results further revealed that customer expectation was important in selecting bottled water with 63(46.7%) agreeing, 41(44.5%) disagreed while 31(30.4%) out of 135 respondents were neutral. It implies that customer expectation was significantly important in selecting the choice of water (mean of 3.311). Samaana (2014) argument on customer expectation was important in consumer choice which is in agreement with the current study.

Table 4.10

Level of satisfaction of the brand of bottled water

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Satisfactory	14	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Fairly Satisfactory	20	14.8	14.8	25.2
	Satisfactory	69	51.1	51.1	76.3
	Very Satisfactory	32	23.7	23.7	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.10 represented level of satisfaction of the brand of bottled water where not satisfactory, fairly satisfactory, satisfactory, very satisfactory were 14(10.4%), 20(14.8%), 69(51.1%) and 32(23.7%) respectively. Hence most brands selected by the customers were satisfactory.

Table 4.11

Important of perceived quality on choice of bottled water

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Brand familiarity of bottled water is very important	49	36.3	36.3	36.3
	Brand recognition of bottled water is important	44	32.6	32.6	68.9
	Brand loyalty of bottled water is somewhat important	28	20.7	20.7	89.6
	Brand awareness of bottled water is Not very important	3	2.2	2.2	91.9
	Brand association of bottled water is not important at all	11	8.1	8.1	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.11 results indicated that brand familiarity of bottled water was represented by 49(36.3%), brand recognition of bottled water was represented by 44(32.6%) an indication that consumers make choice based on how well they recognise the brand available in the market. The findings are in agreement with the findings of Obguja, Anywanwu and Onah (2011) who also concluded that brand name recognition influenced consumer choice of bottled water with 36.42% agreeing. Perera and Dissanayake (2013) study indicate that 14% respondents strongly agreed that brand association influenced their choice of foreign makeup brands with mean value of (3.33). From the findings it can be concluded that brand association generally has considerable impact on consumer purchase decision on branded products.

Brand loyalty of bottled water was 28(20.7%), brand association was 11(8.1%) and finally brand awareness of the bottled was the lowest with 3(2.2%). Therefore, brand familiarity, recognition and loyalty emerged to be the elements of branding that were important while making choice of branded bottled water which agrees with results from Legese and Mulugeta, (2018) who revealed that brand image, brand name, packaging and price were the major factors that affected consumer choice. The results further agree with Perera et al, (2013), Njuguna and Muathe (2014) and Korankye et al, (2015) whose findings reveal that brand loyalty influences consumer choice.

Table 4.12

Brand description match the customer expectation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	93	68.9	68.9	68.9
	No	42	31.1	31.1	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (2019)

According to table 4.12 there were 93(68.9%) respondents who agreed and 42(31.1%) disagreed that brand description match the customer expectation. Hence brand description is important since the customer expectation is associated with it.

4.4.3 Price and consumer choice of bottled water

Price was investigated on consumer choice using frequency table below which utilized Likert scales where 1= is strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5 strongly agree producing mean that was used to explain the relationship.

Table 4.13

Price and consumer choice

Price	Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly	Mean
-------	----------	-------	---------	----------	----------	------

	Agree				Disagree	
Consumers are sensitive to pricing method used and it affect their choice of bottled water	38, 28.1%	35, 25.9%	21, 15.6%	21, 15.6%	20, 14.8%	3.319
The consumer income determines the type of bottled water	22, 16.3%	54, 40.0%	29, 21.5%	12, 8.9%	18, 13.3%	3.370
The pricing policy has affected my consumption of bottled water.	18, 13.3%	37, 27.4%	42, 31.1%	20, 14.8%	18, 13.3%	3.370
Price strategy used affects what kind of bottle water	14, 10.4%	31, 23.0%	47, 34.8%	37, 27.4%	6, 3.7%	3.126
Price affects consumer attitude of bottle water.	31, 23.0%	57, 42.2%	27, 20.0%	15, 11.1%	5, 3.7%	3.874
Price is important to the consumer in choosing bottled water	39, 28.9%	32, 23.7%	35, 25.9%	17, 12.6%	12, 8.9%	3.511

Source: Research Data (2019)

The results from table 4.13 indicated that consumers are sensitive to pricing method used which somehow affect their choice of bottled water where most respondents agreed 73(54.0%) out of 135. Apparently there were 41(30.4%) who disagreed and 21(15.6%) who were neutral that consumers were sensitive with pricing methods used. In general, most consumers were sensitive to price while making choice (mean of 3.319).This concurs with Legese and Mulugeta (2018) which found price as key in consumer choice of branded bottled water with a mean value of 0.94. Furthers results agrees with Angasa and Kinoti (2013)who found that price affected consumer perception on Kenyan detergents products with 83% responding on their perception of price in making choice of a product. Thus price has significant relationship with consumer choice of a product.

The number of respondents who agreed that consumer income determined the type of bottled water chosen were 76(56.3%), while, 29(21.5%) disagreed and 30(22.2%) were neutral. This implies that consumer income determines the type of bottled water to some extent with(mean value of 3.370). Njeru (2016) concurs with the current study that affordability affects the choice

of bottled water where 72% agreed against 8% who disagreed. Also the findings concur with (Abugu and Nwafor 2018) who had respondents rate on price highest among other factors representing 58% with mean value of 3.78. They further opined that increase in price alters consumer choice of bottled water of which the current study agrees with. Conclusively Hoch and Banerji (1993) argued that economic ability affects consumer choice, since low income of the consumer can easily alter the choice of the product based on the price.

A significant number 55 (40.7%) agreed that pricing policy had effect on consumption of bottled water while those who disagreed were 38 (28.1%) and who were neutral 42 (31.1%). The pricing policy somewhat affected consumption of bottled water (mean of 3.370). In relation to price policy Bett (2019) found that it was based on the types of services offered and to was found to affect customer retention (mean of 3.757), though pricing policies are different from water industry.

It is further noted that those who agreed that price strategy used affected the kind of bottled water consumed were 45 (33.4%), 47 (34.8%) were neutral and 43 (31.1%) disagreed. Price strategy used affected the kind of bottled water that was consumed by the customer (mean of 3.126). The findings concur with Bett (2019) who found that price strategies were considered to increase customer satisfaction with mean of 4.493. The results further revealed that differentiation through price enabled customer to be retained. Even though Bett (2019) research was based on banking sector which is service industry, there exists a link between customer satisfaction and consumer choice of bottled water.

According to the results 88(65.2%) agreed, 27(20.0%) neutral and 20(14.8%) disagreed that price affects consumer attitude of bottled water. This indicated that price affects consumer attitude of bottled water (mean of 3.874).

Price was found to be crucial in choosing bottled water where 71(52.6%) agreed, 35(25.9%) neutral and 29(21.5%) disagreed. Hence price was found to be the highest factor in choice of branded bottled water with (mean of 3.511). This finding concurs with Legese and Mulugeta (2018) who found that price was the highest determinant of consumer choice of branded bottled water among other variables investigated. Price based on brand perceived quality research done by Perera and Dissanayake (2013) obtained a mean value of 3.32 and was found to have effect on purchasing decision of foreign makeup brands of female consumers'

Table 4.14

Consumption of bottled water of high price and perceived to be of low quality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	81	60.0	60.0	60.0
	No	54	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.14 investigates if the customer has ever consumed bottled water of high price which you perceive to be of low quality. The results indicated that most customer 81(60.0%) have and 54(40.0%) have not. The reason given by many to have contributed to the consumption of high priced bottled water with low quality was presence of counterfeit products in the market.

4.4.4 Perceived quality and consumer choice

Perceived quality and consumer choice were strongly disagreed, 2=Disagreed, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=strongly agreed. The mean was obtained from the Likert scale with the results table 4.15.

Table 4.15

Perceived quality and consumer choice

Perceived Quality	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Quality of bottled water is key in consumer choice	58, 43.0%	27, 20.0%	26, 19.3%	15, 11.1%	9, 6.7%	3.815
Taste and preference of the bottled affects choice	33, 24.4%	30, 22.2%	25, 18.5%	39, 28.9%	8, 5.9%	3.304
Perception of flavour of bottled water has great influence on consumer choice	26, 19.3%	47, 34.8%	29, 21.5%	24, 17.8%	9, 6.7%	3.422
Size and type of package affect choice of bottled water	17, 12.6%	43, 31.9%	40, 29.6%	23, 17.0%	12, 8.9%	3.222
Brand, price and Customer expectation on choice is very important	26, 19.3%	32, 23.7%	37, 27.4%	30, 22.2%	10, 7.4%	3.252

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.15 revealed that the quality of bottled water was key in consumer choice where 75 (63.0%) agreed, 26 (19.3%) were neutral and 24 (17.8%) disagreed out of 135. It implied that consumers are conscious on the quality when making choice of products among many brands available in the market and more so bottled water with mean value of (3.815). This concurs with findings of Angasa and Kinoti (2013) which revealed that quality of product is key where 80% of respondents and 19% agreed products were of quality, available and other attributes with mean value of 3.92 though the study was on laundry detergents as opposed to the current study on branded bottled water. Further the results are in line with Abugu and Nwafor (2018) who found out that quality of product was rated high by the respondents as influencing choice with 51.9% agreeing and a value of mean of 4.04, followed by easy to dispose with mean of 3.8, information

of label 3.42 and packing style 3.42. In another study by Kajtazi and Reshidi (2018) showed that quality based on source of water, packing design, packing volume and product advertisement significantly affected the choice of water and was found to have cross link in factor analysis done. Quality of product therefore is key in choice and especially in bottled water supported by Sredl and Soukup (2011) who stated that quality of a product plays a major role in customer decision making within a highly competitive market.

According to the results those who agreed that taste and preference of the bottled water affects choice were 63(46.6%) which were far more than those who disagreed who were 47(34.8%) and those remained neutral were 25(18.5%). It implied that most agreed that taste and preference of the bottled water affected the choice (mean of 3.304). (Okoe 2015) found that majority (49.4%) of respondents perceive the taste of bottled water to be better than the taste of tap water, where 65% agree also that drinking bottled water is more refreshing. The implication is that, when respondents' perception for bottled water increases the rate and frequency of bottled water consumption also increases. Njeru (2016) in results were investigated quality assurance, taste and odor as key pillars of brand name he found that both had a strong correlation $r=0.502$.

It was found that 73(54.1%) agreed, 29(21.5%) neutral and 33(24.5%) disagreed that perception of flavor of bottled water had a great influence on consumer choice. The results indicate that most respondents pointed out that perception of flavor of bottled water has influence on consumer choice (mean of 3.422). The results agree with Masika, (2013) who noted perception is how consumer views superiority of brand faced by alternative.

In regards to size and type of packaging most respondents agreed 60 (45.5%) that packaging influenced their choice of bottled water. Despite 35(25.9%) who disagreed and 40(29.6%) who

were neutral. The results of the findings concurs with those of Ogbuji et al, (2011) who analyzed consumer attitude on bottled water package and discovered that 73.13% agreed package affected their choice of bottled water. Abugu and Nwafor (2018) exhilarate that packaging style had significant influence on choice of brands of bottled water with a mean value of 3.42. Generally, the findings indicated that size and type of package used by the company has a significant relationship with choice of bottled water (mean of 3.222).

It was finally found that brand, price and customer expectation affected consumer choice, since most of the respondents agreed 58(43.0%) in larger extent, while 37 (27.4%) were neutral and 40(29.6%) disagreed. Hence there exist significant relationship between brand, price, customer expectation and consumer choice (mean of 3.252). Price and quantity were crossed linked according to Kajtazi and Reshidi, (2018) who found that price affected purchase decision using factor analysis therefore similarity with the current study. According to Mentari, Mutiara, and Suresh (2014) research on brand and consumer choice showed similar results where brand affected consumer choice of bottled water among students in President University in Cikarang. The study was based on brand, quality and packaging which were all significant with ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$, $P = 0.004 < 0.05$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) respectively.

4.5 Inferential Statistics on Perceived Quality and Consumer Choice

The inferential statistics on perceived quality and consumer choice was given by correlation coefficient, ANOVA and regression variables.

Table 4.16

Correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination

R	R	Adjusted	Std.	Change Statistics	DurbinWatson
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	Square	R Square	Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
	.818 ^a	.669	.70645	.669	88.205	3	131	.000	2.152

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.16 correlation coefficient of 0.818 indicated that there is strong relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice ($R = 0.818$). This shows that increase of perceived quality has an increase in consumer ability to choose the product. The coefficient of determination indicated that 66.9% of variation of consumer choice was explained by perceived quality while 33.1% is explained by other factors ($R \text{ Square} = 0.669$). It implies that perceived quality variable price, customer expectation and brand explain 66.9%, while the remaining 33.1% is due to other factors affecting consumer choice that were not investigated in the research.

Table 4.17

ANOVA for perceived quality and consumer choice

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	132.060	3	44.020	88.205	.000 ^b
	Residual	65.378	131	.499		
	Total	197.437	134			
a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Choice						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand, Customer Expectation, Price						

Source: Research Data (2019)

The ANOVA results on table 4.17 indicates that there exists a significant relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$), where significant value $P = 0.000$ against the recommended significant level of $0.05 = 5\%$.

Table 4.18**Regression coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.157	.223		-.702	.484		
	Brand	.307	.054	.312	5.727	.000	.853	1.172
	Customer expectation	.332	.062	.353	5.359	.000	.584	1.713
	Price	.346	.065	.363	5.357	.000	.550	1.819
a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Choice								

Source: Research Data (2019)

Table 4.18 indicated the regression model was given by

$$Y = -0.157 + 0.307X_1 + 0.332X_2 + 0.346X_3$$

Where, Y = Consumer Choice (Dependent Variable),

X_1 = Brand,

X_2 = Customer Expectation,

X_3 = Price.

It shows if brand (X_1) is increased by one unit it results to 0.307-unit increase in consumer choice. If customer expectation (X_2) increased by one unit leads to 0.332-unit increase in consumer choice and finally if price(X_3) is increased by one unit leads to 0.346-unit increase in consumer choice. Hence price has the highest effect on consumer choice followed by customer expectation and brand respectively.

According to the result; H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the brand of bottled water and consumer choice among institutional consumers. The null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis were accepted. Hence, brand significantly affected consumer choice ($P < 0.05$).

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between customer's expectation of bottled water and consumer among institutional consumers. The null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis were accepted. Therefore, customer's expectation significantly affected consumer choice ($P < 0.05$).

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the price of bottled water and consumer choice among institutional consumer choice. The null hypothesis was reject and hence price significantly influenced consumer choice ($P < 0.05$).

Further, the results indicated that brand, customer expectation and price which represent perceived quality were significant on consumer choice ($P < 0.05$), which tally with the strong correlation between perceived quality and consumer choice. Brand, customer expectation and price have positive significant relationship with consumer choices. This was verified by the positive relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice. Hence brand results had positive significant relationship with consumer choice which concurs with Legese and Mulugeta, (2014) and Njuguna and Muathe (2014). Saamana (2014) found a customer expectation had positive significant impact on customer satisfaction which is concurring with the current study. Hence research findings show that brand, customer expectation and price influence consumer choice. However, price has the highest influence followed by customer expectation and brand as the least influence on consumer choice with the following beta values 0.363, 0.353 and 0.312

respectively. Bett, (2019) researched on price strategies on customer satisfaction though the research had significant positive relationship between the price strategies and customer satisfaction. Despite of this focusing on customer satisfaction rather than consumer choice their satisfaction led to consumer making repetitive choice of bottled water.

Njuguna, Muathe, and Kerre, (2014) regression results concurs that perceived quality significantly influenced consumer choice, though the independent variables were gender, age, brand awareness, brand loyalty, proprietary brand and perceived quality. Perceived quality, income and brand awareness were found to significantly affect the purchasing decision of consumer on bottled water.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations as per the study objectives.

5.2 Summary

Demographic results indicate that most of youths consume more bottled water than the older generation where youth below 35 years were 87.41% of the total respondents as compared to 12.59% who were older. It was also clear that there was significant difference on marital status on consumption of bottled water where more married men and woman representing 74(54.8%) consumed bottled water than single persons representing 61(45.2%). There were twice as many

male taking branded bottled water as compared to female with represented 34.07% and 65.93% respectively. Also there exists significant difference in the literacy level on consumption of bottled water with most undergraduate consuming bottled water representing 51(37.8%).

5.2.1 Brand and consumer choice

The results on brand and consumer choice indicated that brand recalling, brand awareness, brand loyalty affected the consumer choices on bottled water (mean of 3.244, 3.193 and 3.052 respective). The results indicated that consumers would take any available choice to a very small extent (mean of 3.304). Brand was considered to be very important aspect while making a choice (mean of 3.563). Soft drinks followed by beverages were considered to be substitute products competing in the same market segment with bottled water represented by 62.2% and 37.8% respectively. The most preferred brands were Dasani, Keringet, Kerimist, Maisha, Grange Park and Mobi in that respective order. The finding in three Kenyan studies revealed that the leading brands are based on the company reputation. Most consumers took water within a span of one week where twice a week was the highest. The research result further indicated that most customers made a choice based on satisfaction of the brand followed by brand association with success while flavor and function were lowest factors considered. Therefore, brand was significantly affected customer choice ($P < 0.05$). The regression results indicated brand as third in significance relationship on consumer choice after price and customer expectation. The regression model also showed that brand had β_1 coefficient of 0.307 which means that it contributes to 30.7% increase in consumer choice.

5.2.2 Customer expectation and consumer choice

Customer expectation was considered on consumer choice. Bottled water was found to be reliable and with the right expected content (mean of 3.326). Bottled water was of standard and satisfactory (mean of 3.237 and 3.282 respectively). It was also found that bottled water is highly used in the market (mean of 3.133). Customer expectation was important in selection of bottled water (mean of 3.311). There is high satisfactory level of bottled water based on the selected brand. It was then found that brand familiarity, recognition, loyalty, association and awareness contributed in that order on perceived quality and choice of bottled water. Brand description also influenced the perceived quality to some extent. Therefore, customer expectation has significant relationship with consumer choice of bottled water ($P < 0.05$). Customer expectation had β_2 coefficient value of 0.332 which implied that it contributed to 33.2% increase in consumer choice.

5.2.3 Price and consumer choice

On price the results indicated that consumers were sensitive to pricing method that company uses and out of this consumers can easily result in choosing products that are affordable (mean of 3.319). It was found that consumer income determined type of bottled water, an increase in consumers' income means more purchase power and vice versa (mean of 3.370). Pricing strategies such as psychological pricing, penetration pricing or skimming pricing strategy can be adopted depending on the level of the product in the market (mean of 3.126). It was found that price affected consumer attitude of bottle water (mean of 3.874). Conclusively pricing strategies adopted by bottled water should be consumer oriented since bottled water is a product that consumed on daily basis. Price was found to be important to the consumer in choosing bottle water (mean of 3.511). Hence price affected significantly the consumer choice ($P < 0.05$). The

results further reveal that price was significant related to consumer choice where price had β_3 coefficient value of 0.346 which implied that it contributed to 34.6% increase in consumer choice.

Generally, perceived quality was addressed significantly by brand, customer expectation and price had significant relationship with customer choice ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$). The results further revealed that there was a strong correlation between perceived quality and consumer choice ($R = 0.818$). Hence R value of 0.669 indicated that 66.9% of variation of consumer choice was due to brand, customer expectation and price while 33.1% was due to other factors that were not investigated.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 Brand and consumer choice

The study concluded that brand recalling, brand awareness and brand loyalty contributed to brand which affected the customer choice. Consumers make purchase decisions if they recall the past experience they had with the brand, when they are aware that certain brand exists in the market and they can access information on the brand delivery through advertisements. Further consumers purchase product based on the brand loyalty they have built over time to specific products. It was also found that soft drinks are the highest competitors of branded bottled water. Consequently, many consumers made choice based on satisfaction they get from consuming the product or service as well as the brand association. Therefore, brand has significant relationship with consumer choice.

5.3.2 Consumer expectation and consumer choice

The study concluded that reliability and with right expected content of bottled water played a significant role on making choice. Most customer are satisfied with bottled they taken. Customer expectation was important in selecting the choice of water. Brand familiarity, recognition, loyalty, association and awareness were associated to customer expectation which contributed to consumer choice of bottled water. Organizations should build customers 'confidence and pay attention to customer while solving problems they may encounter to reach a level of satisfaction. In the marketing perspective meeting customer's expectation means loyalty and customer retention. Customer expectation was significant relationship with consumer choice.

5.3.3 Price and consumer choice

Price was found an important factor that significantly influenced consumer choice of bottled water, most of the respondents believed that pricing method, consumer income, pricing strategy and price policy influenced choice of bottled water. The results further indicated that consumers were sensitive to pricing method that company uses and out of this consumers can easily result in choosing products that are affordable. It was found that consumer income determined type of bottled water, as consumer income increases they naturally tend make more purchase even if the products are expensive. Price policy was found to affect consumer choice of bottled this is as results of variations in pricing setting of common goods that are used by consumers on daily basis such as convenience goods. The survey results showed that price affected consumer choice based on method used, consumer income and pricing strategies. It was found that Price was the highest predictor that affected the consumer choice. Therefore, price was significantly related with the consumer choice. Bottled water pricing strategy is crucial for consumers based on the fact that consumer choice is dictated by quality and quantity of water. Therefore, pricing

strategies should be considered by bottled water producers to ensure that the consumer does not associate cheap with quality and prices that they set for the products should be affordable.

5.4 Recommendations

The following determinants which are price, brand and customer expectation were found to significantly influence consumer choice of bottled water brands. The study makes the following recommendations;

Since consumers spend less time in selecting low involvement products such as bottled water, recalling brand and recognizing reduces purchase decision process. Therefore, study recommends to bottled water companies to consider branding strategies, spend money on building brand and choose carefully brand names that connects consumer emotionally and psychologically with the product. Further the study recommends that companies need to do repetitive advertisement to create awareness, to remind consumers of their products frequently so as to gain competitive edge in dynamic marketing environment.

The study recommends that price differentiation using cheapest supply chain to be adopted avoid unnecessary cost. Further bottled water companies should set affordable prices for the consumers so as to gain leverage on branded water. The manufacturers should find ways of reducing cost of production while ensuring high quality of their products. The service industry as well should consider pricing strategy followed by customer expectation and also branding. In this era customer is the key in business both goods and service industry. The study finally make recommendation to Regulatory agency authority such as Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) International Standardization of Organization (ISO) to strictly enhance and take charge in

supervising production process of bottled water companies and make sure they meet both local and international quality standards.

5.4.1 Suggestions for Further Research

The study recommends the following;

The study recommends that further studies should be done on perceived quality and consumer choice of other products to further explore the effects of brand on consumer choice and customer expectation one they have made choice. Furthermore, research should companies should research on branding strategies that will help them to position the brand in the mind of consumer.

The study also recommends further investigation be done on customer expectation and consumer choice since very few studies if any have handled this in the product industry, studies done in this area target the service industry only.

The study further recommend that more studies should be done to explore other factors that affect consumer choice rather than brand, customer expectation and price in order to account for 33.1% that was not investigated in the current study.

APPENDICIES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

**UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA,
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS,
P. O. BOX 2030-20200,
KERICHO,KENYA.**

**MERCY KAARI BII
MBA/A/022/2017
BOX 25,KAPSOIT
MOBILE, 0723675217**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Respondent,

REF: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Kabianga, School of Business and Economics. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree in Master of Business Administration (Marketing Option). I am conducting a research study entitled **“Relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of branded bottled water: A survey of institutional Bottled Water consumers in Kericho Town, Kenya.”**

Kindly you have been selected to form part of this study. I therefore humbly request you to assist in filling in the attached questionnaire to help in the success of carrying out this study. The questionnaire is in three parts. Kindly fill in all the questions in all the three parts (section A, B, C). The information provided is fully for the purpose of the study and will be treated as confidential by the researcher.

Thanking you in advance.

Mercy Kaari Bii

MBA/A/022/2017

Appendix II: Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to explore your views on quality perception on consumer choice pertaining bottled water. Part one seeks to capture personal details, parttwo captures the objectives, which seeks information on the brand consumer chooses, their concern on price, the frequency of drinking, and theexpected satisfaction upon the choice. The last part captures other factors influencing choice. Kindly tick where appropriate

Section A: Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions truthfully without stating your name, the information obtained will be used for academic purposes only.

Instructions; please tick against the choice of your answer only once

QUESTIONS

1. What is your occupation?

(Optional).....

Description	Options	Tick		Option	Tick
2. Please tick the age bracket in which you fall	Below 18 years		4. Gender (tick)	Male	
	19 – 24 years			Female	
	25 – 29 years		5. Education level	Masters	
	30 – 34 years			Undergraduate	
	35 – 39 years			Diploma	
	Above 40 years			Certificate	
3. Please indicate your marital status	Single			Secondary	
	Married		Primary		

SECTION B: Relationship between perceived quality and consumer choice of bottled water.

Part I: Brand and Consumer Choice of Branded Bottled Water

Kindly answer the question on brand by ticking appropriately against your choice as shown below. Key: 5 = strongly agree 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree

Brand	5	4	3	2	1
6. Brand recalling affect the choice of bottled waterI take					
7. The awareness through advertisement has influenced the choice brand of bottled water that buy.					
8. Brand loyalty to only a specific brand of water based on the quality.					
9.Consumer will take any bottled water available in the shelves despite the brand.					
10.Brand of bottled water is important to the consumer choice					

11. Which is your opinion brand of beverage that you think competes with brand of water you use

- Soft drinks (sodas, etc.) []
- Beverages (tea, coffee) []
- Alcoholic Drinks []

12. Kindly tick against your favourite brand only once

- i) Dasani []
- ii) Keringet []
- iii) Kerimist []
- iv) Maisha []
- v) Grange park []

- vi) Highland []
vii) Mobi []

13. How often do you drink your favourite brand?

- i) Daily []
ii) Twice a week []
iii) Thrice a week []
iv) Any other (specify)

14. What attracts you to the brand of bottled water you drink?

- (I) The function it serves []
(ii) The satisfaction it gives []
(iii) The flavour it has []
(iv) Association with success []
(v) Any other (specify) []

Part II: Customer Expectation and Consumer Choice of Branded Bottled Water

Kindly answer the question by ticking appropriately against your choice as shown below. Key: 1

= Strongly agree 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree

Customer Expectation	5	4	3	2	1
15) The bottled water is reliable and with right expected content.					
16) Am satisfied with bottle water that I take					
17) The bottled water is highly used in the market that is why I choose it.					
18) Bottled water is of standard					

19) Customer expectation is important in selecting the choice of water.					
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20) How would you describe the satisfaction that you get from the brand of bottled water you normally drink?

- i) Very satisfactory []
- ii) Satisfactory []
- iii) Fairly satisfactory []
- iv) Not satisfactory []

21) How important is perceived quality on choice of bottled water you drink

- (i) Brand familiarity of bottled water is very important []
- (ii) Brand recognition of bottled water is important []
- (iii) Brand loyalty of bottled water is somewhat important []
- (iv) Brand awareness of bottled water is Not very important []
- (v) Brand association of bottled water is not important at all []

22) Does the company's description of quality match your expectation of bottled water brand that you drink?

- (i) Yes [] (ii) No []
- (iii) Sometimes (specify)

Part III: Price and Consumer Choice of Bottled Water

Kindly answer the question by ticking appropriately against the choice as shown below. Key: 5 = Strongly agree 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.

Price	5	4	3	2	1
23) Consumers are sensitive to pricing method used and it affect their choice of bottled water					
24) The consumer income determines the type of bottled water					
25) The pricing policy has affected my consumption of bottled water.					
26) Price strategy used affects what kind of bottle water					
27) Price affects consumer attitude of bottle water.					
28) Price is important to the consumer in choosing bottled water					

29(a) Have you ever consumed bottled water of high price which you perceived to be of low quality?

(i) Yes ☐ (ii) No ☐

b) If your answer in 14(a) above is yes, what reason(s) can you kindly indicate?

.....

SECTION C: CONSUMER CHOICE

Kindly tick where appropriate as per your choice. Key; 5=Strongly agree 4 = Agree 3=Neutral

2=Disagree 1= Strongly disagree

30. Quality of bottled water is key in consumer choice	5	4	3	2	1
31. Taste and preference of the bottled affects choice	5	4	3	2	1
32. Perception of flavour of bottled water has great influence on consumer choice	5	4	3	2	1
33. Size and type of package affect choice of bottled water	5	4	3	2	1
34. Brand, price and Customer expectation on choice is important is very important	5	4	3	2	1

Thanks for your participation

Appendix III: Kericho Map



Appendix IV: Letter from Board of Graduate Studies



UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA

ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES

REF: MBA/A/022/17

Date: 22th August, 2019

Mercy Kaari Bii,
MMHT Department
University of Kabianga,
P.O Box 2030- 20200,
KERICHO.

Dear Ms. Bii,

RE: CLEARANCE TO COMMENCE FIELD WORK

I am glad to inform you the Board of Graduate Studies during its meeting on 17th July, 2019 approved your research proposal entitled "**Relationship between Perceived Quality of Bottled Water and Consumer Choice: A Survey of Institutional Consumers of Branded Water in Kericho Town, Kenya.**"

I am also acknowledging receipt of two copies of your corrected Proposal.

You are now free to commence your field work on condition that you obtain a research permit from NACOSTI.

Please note that, you are expected to publish at least one (1) paper in a peer reviewed journal before final examination (oral defence) of your Masters thesis.

Thank you.

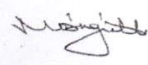
Yours Sincerely,

Prof. J. K. Kibett

DIRECTOR, BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES.

- cc 1. Dean, SBE
2. HOD, MMHT
3. Supervisors

Appendix V: NACOSTI

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 276490	Date of Issue: 19/September/2019
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This is to Certify that Ms.. Mercy Kaari of University of Kabianga, has been licensed to conduct research in Kericho on the topic: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED QUALITY OF BOTTLED WATER AND CONSUMER CHOICE: A SURVEY OF INSTITUTIONAL CONSUMERS OF BRANDED BOTTLED WATER IN KERICHO TOWN, KENYA for the period ending : 19/September/2020.	
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Appendix VI: Publication

