

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**THE IMPACT OF CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF BRAND
POSITIONING ON BRAND CHOICE IN GHANA'S BOTTLED
WATER INDUSTRY: THE MODERATING ROLE OF CUSTOMER
BRAND SENSITIVITY**

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
(MARKETING OPTION) DEGREE**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this country or in any other university. All references used in the work have been fully acknowledged.

I bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings.

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University of Ghana, Legon.

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DATE

DEDICATION

I specially dedicate this work to the loving memory of my late father (Dominic K. Tuffour) whose pride, hope and wish was to see the completion of this work, and also that I (his first son) would graduate: his untimely demise just months before this day did not grant him this wish during his life time. God rest his loving and gentle soul.

Singular dedication goes to my mother, Comfort Aidoo, for her special daily prayers and blessings. I also thank my siblings and loved ones, especially my beloved Beatrice Baidoo, Deborah Donkor, Eric Frimpong Tuffour and Abena Afrah Tuffour, for the sacrifice, prayers, and encouragement they invested in my life.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the moderating role of brand sensitivity on the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice. Explanatory in nature and design, the study is designed to predict the association between brand positioning and brand choice and further to assess the impact of brand sensitivity on this relationship, focusing on the bottled water industry of Ghana. Founded on choice theory, the study adopts a self-administered questionnaire to examine 400 consumers of bottled water. Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyse and test the proposed hypotheses. The outcome of the study shows that corporate social responsibility, attributes and surrogate positioning strategies have significant positive relationships with brand choice in Ghana's bottled water industry. Adding to this, brand sensitivity moderates the relationship, such that brand sensitivity dampens the positive relationship between surrogate positioning and brand choice in Ghana's bottled water industry. With respects to contribution, the study improves theory by empirically examining choice theory alongside providing credibility to the perceived positive association between brand positioning and brand choice. The moderating impact of brand sensitivity on this association is a reasonably novel contribution to empirical works on brand positioning. The study also offers a commendation for policy-makers and management in the bottled water industry of Ghana to particularly consider customer brand sensitivity issues as they employ brand positioning strategies in their bid to differentiate their brands from that of competition. The study also affirms from the findings, the significance of brand positioning on brand choice, evidenced from consumers' positive perceptions for corporate social responsibility, attributes, and surrogates as positioning strategies that resonated well in Ghana's bottled water industry. The study recommends that it is imperative that future studies consider replicating the study in other jurisdictions to confirm the validity of the cross-sectional outcomes obtained from the Ghanaian context.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
GWSC	Ghana Water and Sewage Corporation
GSB	Ghana Standards Board
FDA	Food and Drug Association
HDPE	High Density Polythene
RUT	Random Utility Theory
CBP	Customer Brand Preference
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
NBP	No Brand Preference
COO	Country Of Origin
USP	Unique Selling Proposition
GPF	Generic Positioning Framework
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSP	Corporate Social Performance
CSCSP	Consumer Sensitivity to Corporate social Performance
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
IBM SPSS	International Business Machines Statistical Package for Social Sciences
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
EBA	Elimination By Aspects
USA	United States of America

FMCG Fast Moving Consumer Goods

GCA General Country Attributes

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter one is made up of a background to the phenomenon being investigated in this study. It presents the concept of brand positioning and its evolution to becoming an integral part of the marketing programme. Additionally, the gaps in research alongside the problem that this study looks to address are outlined within this chapter of the thesis. The chapter presents objectives of the study and research questions. The research purpose, significance, and chapter disposition are also found in this chapter.

1.1 Research Background

The worldwide economy is progressively challenged with the trouble of keeping up solid brand differentiation despite having imitated and homogenous offerings (Hatch & Schultz, 2001) inside crowded and disjointed markets (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010). Thus, businesses can no longer follow after strategies constructed wholly on operational competences (Porter, 1996, 2001) or on steady and conventional customer markets (Zahay & Griffin, 2010). Relatively, even with the most grounded of brands, firms are tested to look at/reconsider their marketing practices and positioning strategies so that they do not appear to be myopic in their overall marketing program (Penttinen & Palmer, 2007).

It is commonly acknowledged by scholars that the main driving force of an industry is its domestic environment and that is to say when the economy moves from autarky to free trade, speedier development is encouraged by a bigger assortment of technology overflow in a more competitive setting, giving a sign that both trade openness and decreased trade barriers promotes development as a by-product of the expanded innovative incentives

created by a more competitive environment (Peretto, 1999, 2003; Porter, Schwab, & Sachs, 2004). This view is enhanced and supported by Essoussi and Merunka (2007) in that, as a result of globalization, companies venture into prospective markets in diverse countries leaving customers with increasing numbers of international products adding to domestic ones in their daily lives. Cespedes and Piercy (1996) assert that, because of global competition, fast development, and dissemination of technology and information, systems presently figure out how to duplicate, with speed, any successful strategy easily. Accordingly, we can state that competitive advantage is progressively depending on companies' capacity to successfully accomplish and track a progression of strategic initiatives, appropriate to the organisation (Cespedes & Piercy, 1996). To differentiate their brand from rivals, firms need to position their brand and communicate chosen brand association to clients (Keller, 2002; Beverland *et al.*, 2007). In the work of Devlin *et al.* (1995), an assertion is made that, similarly, as marketing has turned into an undeniably critical component of strategic planning, so has the idea of brand positioning ended up central to the success of firms' marketing approach. This assertion is supported hereon by Kotler (2000) and Hooley *et al.* (1998) in that there is a common agreement that the idea of positioning has become one of the fundamental constituents of contemporary marketing management (Kotler, 2000; Hooley *et al.*, 1998). Moreover, for firms to profit from long term survival, there is an increasing need for firms to evaluate their offerings (Park *et al.*, 1986; Bernstein, 1992) and, furthermore, manage their organisations relative to the competition (McKenna, 1986; Ries & Trout, 1986; Wright, 1997).

Ghana is among a couple of nations in sub-Saharan Africa that have embraced a liberalised economic strategy (Appiah-Adu & Blankson, 1998; "Country report on Ghana", 2005). This is inspiring competition into the developing parts of the economy. As the Ghanaian economy

develops, it is clear to contend that organisations using superior competitive strategies will profit most from the economic extension (Hooley *et al.*, 2004, 2012; Porter, 2008). Ghana has been positioned by all governments since 1983, the onset of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), as "the gateway to doing business in the West African sub-region" (see www.doingbusiness.org). Considering Sub-Saharan Africa as an equitable market as well as an area appropriate for scholarly investigations, the Ghanaian market centre represents a challenging, but productive research domain. The many-sided qualities and difficulties routinely inherent in Ghana's liberalised transitional market environment implies that marketers must provide solutions for not just a unique and dysfunctional (instead of functional) competition (Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002), developing middleclass and expatriate groupings (Bruner, 1996; Zachary, 2001), poor infrastructure and low buying power, but likewise for the socio-political and economic vulnerabilities (www.Ghanaweb.com; Phillips, 2007) and erratic government involvement in the activities of firms (Ayittey, 2001).

The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) has, overall, been effective (Appiah-Adu, 2001) in its central goal to help development in the private sector, among others, to the degree that Ghana is seeing a critical increment in business activities including foreign investments and local business formation. This is confirmed by the changes in consumer lifestyles, and the inflow of foreign products and services. Outstanding among these is that competition among firms (domestic and foreign) have been inescapable in the Ghanaian market place since the commencement of the SAP in 1983 (Appiah-Adu, 2001; Debrah, 2002). Inducing from the previously mentioned, the expanded competition or the competitive environment implies marketing and advertising are at present made notable inside the Ghanaian market place (Kuada & Buatsi, 2005), and the changing business atmosphere will undoubtedly offer intriguing research questions for positioning activities in a post-SAP economy.

Ghana's bottled water industry is one of the developing sectors of the economy and is benefiting from the economic expansion legacy of the SAP, such as increased competition and rapid technological and market growth due to trade liberalization, globalisation and privatisation (Debrah, 2002). Along these lines, the bottled water industry is seen as one of the fastest developing markets in the non-alcoholic beverages classification. In referencing the year 2012, it was said that there were twenty (20) firms registered by the Food and Drugs Board to manufacture bottled water (Sutton & Kpentey, 2012). These organisations in all represented around 95% of the bottled water brands accessible locally (Sutton & Kpentey, 2012); with local brands listed among others, Voltic, Bon Aqua, Safina, Aqua Fill, Bel Aqua, Ice Cool, Special Ice, Still Pure and Smile Natural Mineral Water.

It was anticipated in the subject report that, in the next five years from the year of the report (2012), the industry will grow by at least 10% every year in light of strong demand and the entry of new players into the market, evidenced by the crop of new brands that have surfaced in current years. Notable amongst them are, Awake Purified Water, Verna Mineral Water, and Vaettelle. It was likewise reported that brands will become more grounded as marketing heightens, with conventional soft drink makers moving into products such as bottled water (Sutton & Kpentey, 2012).

With such a large friary of alternatives currently facing consumers of bottled water, choice becomes an issue for consumers; in other words consumers are spoilt for choice. Today's consumers can be described as suffering from 'over choice' and choice fatigue, (Ballantyne *et al.*, 2006).

An implication for firms in Ghana's bottled water industries, is the challenge of getting customers to be able to distinctively recall their brands in the category within the increased

competitive environment that Ghanaian bottled water producers operate in. Marketing has changed altogether to the level that, as features of offerings turn out to be less particular, intangible components pick up significance and, by this, the management of reputation and impact of customer perceptions and the positioning of the company and its offering in the market becomes principal if the firm intends to keep advantage or stay successful in its operation (Hooley, Greenley, Fahy, & Cadogan, 2001; Lindgreen, Palmer, & Vanhamme, 2004; Ries & Trout, 1986).

The following market characteristics - increased competition, advancement in technology and information systems, and evolution of customer needs and choice difficulties – are a strong indication for firms to strategically place their brands or differentiate their brands to elicit favourable perceptions leading to consumer selection or choice of brand. Positioning strategies are the major sources of shaping consumer preferences toward a brand. Busch, Fuchs, and Unger (2008) echoes this by saying that the correct positioning at the opportune time is fundamental to construct the required image in the mind of the consumer. Brand positioning assumes an extremely fundamental part in building the customer touch points, for example, brand equity and demand related flexibilities (Keller & Richey, 2003). Response to positioning strategies appear in different ways as price, quality, ease of access, and value consciousness that eventually lead to brand selection or otherwise. Another crucial role of brand positioning is that it carves searching behaviour of customers such that they are perpetually discontent until the point when the required brand is made accessible to them (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010; Trommsdorff & Paulssen, 2005).

In the end, the brand that is well positioned draws in the necessary portion of customers by influencing brand loyalty, brand preferences, brand values, brand beliefs, brand attitudes, and brand behaviours.

1.2 Research Problem

To accomplish competitive predominance, researchers (e.g., Bennion, 1987; Matthyssens, Vandembemt & Weyns, 2009) postulate that, notwithstanding an organisation's attractive offering(s), the company should have a different and hard to-copy position in the minds of consumers (i.e. reflecting favourable perceptions), which supplements its offerings. Thusly, the company enters the area of positioning – the art of designing the company's offering and brand image to inhabit a different place in the mind of the target market (Kotler & De Bes, 2003).

Despite its recognized significance for organisational success, there is reasonably minimal proof of studies into positioning in sub-Saharan Africa. A search into available literature reveals that brand positioning has been studied, however the contributions have majorly focused on the developments of constructs or typologies and measured against performance, profitability, competitive advantage, purchase likelihood or purchase intentions (Malik & Sudhakar, 2014; Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003; Sapatnekar, 2015; Chowdhury, 2013).

Numerous studies over the previous years explored what elements have been impacting the purchasing behaviour of consumers toward bottled water (Quansah *et al.*, 2015; Ogbuji *et al.*, 2010; Durga, 2010; Phend, 2009; Doria, 2006). The results of these studies and suggestions of researchers differ broadly and there is relatively little or no empirical evidence of studies that have looked at brand positioning as a factor that can impact brand choice in the bottled water industry.

Quansah, Okoe, and Angenu (2015) studied the “Factors Affecting Ghanaian Consumers’ Purchasing Decision of Bottled Water” in Ghana. The outcomes demonstrate that demographic factors influence bottled water choice in Ghana’s bottled water industry. The study proposes that further research should reach other impacting variables of bottled water consumption.

It can be observed that all the studies that have looked at factors that impact consumers’ choice of bottled water have consistently considered fundamentally the baseline relationship underlying those factors and brand choice. The current study introduces brand sensitivity as a moderating variable on the baseline relationship between brand positioning and brand choice. This is to observe the direction and magnitude if any, that brand sensitivity brings to the association between brand positioning and brand choice. Brand sensitive consumers are only interested in the brand’s ideals. The consumer will put major importance on brand name when buying, if they are sensitive to the brand (Rothschild, 1984), however the said sensitivity is not limited to the choice process (Houston & Rothschild, 1978; Sohierr, 2004). In a category, the level varies amongst buyers (Michon & Changeur, 2003; Dawar & Pillutla, 2000). Customers might exhibit sensitivity differently across product classes (D'Astous & Gargouri, 2001; Kapferer & Laurent, 1992).

In response to the recommendation of Quansah *et al.* (2015) and Akhtar’s call in 2016 to investigate other variables that influence brand choice, the current study takes departure to examine whether brand positioning in Ghana’s bottled water industry impacts consumer brand choice.

Moreover, Adokou and Kyere-Diabour (2017) and Chowdhury (2013), in their study of “Positioning Strategies of Retail companies in Ghana”, and guidelines to developing effective positioning strategies for achieving sustainable competitive advantage,

respectively, seem to agree generally that the prominence placed on each positioning strategy differs from company to company, and that some of the suggested ways to position a product might not be applicable to all industrial sectors and to all product categories.

Moreover, the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice appears to be simplistic. We ask the question, does brand sensitivity influence the relationship?

The current study seeks to investigate brand choice as an outcome of brand positioning, with emphasis on the moderating role of brand sensitivity on this relationship, considering Ghana's bottled water industry as the focal context.

1.3 Research Purpose

On the foundation of the foregoing discussions, the present study takes departure and seeks to examine whether brand positioning impacts brand choice in Ghana's bottled water industry based on insights from customers. The study aims at empirically investigating the influence of selected brand positioning strategies on brand choice in Ghana's bottled water industry taking into consideration whether consumers have choice brands they buy and exposing the considerations that lead to making those choices over time through the lens of choice theory.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To examine whether brand positioning impacts consumer choice of brand in the bottled water industry of Ghana.
2. To identify positioning strategies that may be employed by firms in the bottled water industry of Ghana.

3. To look at the moderating role of customer brand sensitivity on the association between brand positioning and brand choice.

1.5 Research Questions

2. Does brand positioning impact consumer brand choice in the bottled water industry of Ghana?
3. What positioning strategies may be employed by firms in the bottled water industry of Ghana?
4. What is the moderating role of customer brand sensitivity on the association between brand positioning and brand choice in the bottled water industry of Ghana?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study can be regarded along three (3) strands: research, practice and policy. As regards the research significance, this study will contribute empirical findings to existing knowledge of the positioning concept, and how it relates to brand choice. With regard to practice and policy, the study would provide the relevant stakeholders with insights concerning the industry specific applicable positioning strategies from customers' perspectives. It will consequently provide suggestions on how to make the most out of same.

1.7 Chapter Disposition

The study is grouped into six different chapters. Chapter one consists of the background to the study, the research problem, aims and objectives of the study, the significance of the study and finally the chapter disposition. Chapter two is the context of the study and assists in contextualizing the study. An overview of the bottled water industry in Ghana is presented and a brief discussion on three companies is presented, based on industry information from the non-alcoholic beverages sector and regulatory authorities. The third

chapter critically reviews literature on brand positioning, brand choice, brand sensitivity. Furthermore, choice as the main theory underpinning the study is discussed. Finally, a conceptual framework is developed to explain the discussions put forward by the researcher in the study along the path of the hypothesized relationship between the selected constructs of brand positioning and brand choice and the moderating role of brand sensitivity. The fourth chapter details the research methodology used in the research. It was made up of the research design and data collection procedures employed in the study. Data preparation procedures and analytical approaches and tools that were used in this thesis are likewise explained in this chapter. The fifth chapter showcases the presentation and discussion of the study findings. The sixth chapter highlights the study conclusions and makes recommendations.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has set out the main issues of the thesis by espousing on the fundamental problem, whether brand positioning impacts brand choice in Ghana's bottled water industry, and has elucidated the purpose and questions that formed the basis of the problem. Moreover, the indication is made to the point that the objectives would be achieved after answering those research questions.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH CONTEXT

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter of the study observes the developmental issues in the bottled water industry of Ghana. As part of the issues examined, the chapter probes into the industry as a whole, and exhibits the advancement in water production, consumption and regulation in Ghana. The market structure of the bottled water industry and the considerable evidence of competition as a result of the country's economic policy of free trade and the impact it has on producers and consumers at large. The chapter highlights some of the major revolutions in water packaging and its effect on consumers and producers in Ghana since the early nineties. This chapter presents information on the contributions made by the industry to the Ghanaian economy and the wellbeing of its people and finally looks at challenges of the bottled water industry of Ghana.

2.1 A Historical Assessment of Drinking Water in Ghana

In 1928, the principal pipe water supply framework was set up in Cape Coast. The public works department's water supply section was in charge of the administration in Ghana's urban and rural areas. After Ghana's independence, Works and Housing Ministry surfaced as the section was separated from the public works department. It was later to be renamed as the Ghana Water and Sewage Corporation (GWSC) in 1965, an authorized institution in charge of rural and urban supply of water to household, for modern uses and, in addition, there was the institution, process, and organization of sewerage infrastructure.

In Ghana especially, the country has made some amazing progress from when the only source of portable drinking water accessible to the public was sold in cups, and rubbers. Nowadays however, the standard has changed, so it is either in sachets or plastic bottles produced in manufacturing plants.

To fully understand the reasons behind the rapid expansion of the bottled water industry in Ghana, one must view the current phenomenon as a snapshot in the longer history of Ghanaian water infrastructure. First appearing in the country in the late 1990s was sachet water. It differentiated itself from previous water sources most prominently because of its portability. Before sachet water, Ghanaians regularly chose between a variety of water sources daily, with different sources chosen based on local climate and water source attributes. Home water options could include piped water, water delivered to the house, or water stored in a container fetched from a water kiosk, borehole, or dugout, and from rainwater (Kjellén & McGranahan, 2006; Stoler, 2013). However, once out of the home, Ghanaians depended on water vendors who sold their products in a variety of ways, including the “cup water” or “from the cup” as translated in English. With public water infrastructure insufficient for providing water to all homes on a reliable basis, the only way to find water was to fetch it from a water source outside the home, whether it be a kiosk, well, stream, or the occasional rain collection. This meant that, in order to move about freely and thirst-less, Ghanaians would have to fetch water from the community water source, or find a way to bring some water with them for the day. This paved way for water carriers to begin selling water to Ghanaians outside the home too. This trend developed into a steady business for Ghanaian women. Women would carry around large pots of water, and customers would purchase a cup of water. The cups were reused by these women to attend to several other customers.

This method was practically not safe because most people saw it as unhygienic. There were also some sanitary concerns with the “cup water”. The first and most obvious concern was the water itself, being unregulated, unlabelled, and of questionable quality. Mobile consumers would purchase this water, with its quality unknown. Secondly, the fact that the water seller would use the same plastic cups for dozens of customers raised additional sanitary concerns. Transmutable illnesses and bacteria could be spread simply from using a cup from a previous customer, and the water itself may not be clean enough to drink.

The cup water saleswomen were limited in how much water they were able to sell in a number of ways. For example, the customer would have to stay put until they had finished the water, and returned the cup to the saleswomen, limiting the customer base. Another way was the emergence of Ice water, which eliminated the problem of having to consume water at the seller’s location.

Although bottled water emerged in Ghana around the same time as plastic bags and bottles, bottled water was a luxury item, with a starting price that was 30 times more expensive than cup water (Stoler, 2013). A growing, mobile population needed a more mobile water source, and that source was known as Ice water. Ice water (also known as water “in the rubber,” rubber being a colloquial reference for plastic bags, and sometimes Pure water) is simply water poured into a thin polythene bag, and tied up at the top. Imagine the bag used to transport a goldfish home from the pet store – without the fish! According to the Stockholm Environment Institute, the Ice water nomenclature originates from how many sellers added blocks of ice to the water bags and stored them in iceboxes or chilled pots (Songsore & McGranahan, 1993).

In 2013, the Ice water industry had nearly disappeared because, due to outbreaks in waterborne diseases like Cholera, certain municipalities, like the Tema Metropolitan Authority, had chosen to ban Ice water for human consumption (see Ghana Web, “*Cholera Cases Rise; Home-Tied Iced Water Ban*”, 2005). Customers could now buy a half-litre of water and carry it away from the saleswoman. This was of course preferable to all parties; saleswomen could now abandon the hassle of cleaning and reusing plastic cups, sell more, more easily, to more mobile customers. Indeed, customers could now choose when and where they wanted to consume their water, as well as buy some extra water if they were making a longer journey. Another convenience factor was that there was no immediate clean-up factor for the saleswomen; the disposable nature of Ice water meant the clean-up from this water source was someone else’s problem.

The single-use nature of Ice water also decreased the risk of spreading germs from sharing cups as seen in the cup water market, yet created a new opportunity to contaminate water. In order to conveniently open the polythene bags, sellers often placed the polythene bags on their mouth and blew into them (Obiri-Danso, Okore, Hanson, & Jones, 2003).

Sanitary concerns over water quality still remained due to the fact that bags were filled from a variety of sources. With Ice water, both bacterial and mineral content were unknown and varied from seller to seller. Whereas cup water was prevalent during a period of Ghanaian history where public water infrastructure was nearly non-existent in many cities, the period in which Ice water developed also saw a rapid increase in community water infrastructure. Many Ice water sellers filled the bags with piped water, well reservoirs, and boreholes, both filtered and unfiltered. Comparing the “cup water” with “ice water”, some few points could be noted;

Firstly, refrigeration made Ice water a more attractive, exotic product while providing entrepreneurial opportunities for Ghanaians. Secondly, the packages are thin and susceptible to leaking. The bags used for Ice water were exceptionally thin, and could accidentally pop, tear, or rip easily. In addition, one could only carry a few Ice water bags at a time, for too much pressure on the bags would pop them. This is different from the higher-density polythene bags used for sachet water that are much more difficult to tear. In essence, it is understandable that cup water and sanitary concerns were known unknowns, in the sense that, everyone knew that the water source was unpredictable, sanitation measures varied, and it was a drink at your own risk situation.

Next to follow was “sachet water”. As the years erupted, Ice water producers began to accumulate so much capital that they could afford to put ink text and label their bags. Once a product is labelled, it is considered a good to be regulated under the Food and Drug Association, and is subject to regulation (sachet water is under the direct regulation of the GSB and FDA). Now, the known unknown of Ice water had a name, and the producers could be held accountable for sanitary conditions, mineral content, and human consumption.

However, the law that was designed to get packaged water producers to properly label and thereby properly filter and produce water in sanitary conditions had the opposite effect: it drove producers to not label their products in order to remain anonymous and continue unsafe production. This is how the Ice water industry remained until the advent of the sachet water industry and the technological advancements that made it possible, such as inexpensive filtration, automated bagging, and cheap lab access.

In the presence of all these, sachet water bags could also be emptied halfway and stand upright unattended unlike the “ice water”.

The next item to look at is “bottled water”. In reality, there are far more sachet water producers than bottled water producers in Ghana, and researchers like Addo *et al.* (2009) show that bottled water is predictably safer to drink than sachet water.

The common perception among Ghanaians is that, while bottled water may be better tasting, sachet water is just as safe (among foreign tourists, the perception is that the bottled water is more hygienically produced). Of course, an added benefit of bottled water is that it is reusable in packaging – the resalable bottles are often used to store other goods like palm oil, and it’s even more portable than sachet water.

2.2 A Governmental Drive since the Early Nineties

The Ghana government and the health organisations have, since the nineties, effectively urged Ghanaians to stop drinking water from rubbers and sachets and instead settle for bottled water from manufacturing plants. This is due to the various health related hazards that the country was vulnerable to regarding portable water supply. The crusade was successful and now a majority of Ghanaians prefer sachet or bottled water. Within the published literature, concerns centre on the facts that regulatory oversight is insufficient to keep pace with the growing industry, and that producers can evade regulatory officials relatively easily (Suleiman & Crosman, 2014; Ackah *et al.*, 2012; Yidana & Koffie., 2014; Obiri-Danso *et al.*, 2003).

2.3 The Ready Market for Bottled Water in Ghana

The existing demand for bottled and sachet water in the Ghanaian market and the moderately little investment needed to start-up (particularly for sachet water production) has

spurred a considerable number of organisations and individuals to go into sachet and bottled water business. The very gainful packaged water business is likewise an important source of work for a huge number of individuals, directly and indirectly. The business, besides providing moderately good quality and more secure portable water to Ghanaians, likewise contribute to public income that is much required for national development.

2.4 The Success Story of the Industry

The wellbeing of Ghana has a fundamental link to the success of the bottled water industry. Unfortunately, the majority of firms within the industry are not meeting expectations because of their incapacity with respect to management strategies leading to obtaining their preferred portion of the overall market, competitive advantage, development and profit.

The expanded demand for bottled water by people, family units, organisations, and so on has prompted an increased rivalry in the industry. Increased technological expansion combined with water sanitization and utilization have triggered a lot of people in Ghana toward purchasing “bottled water” for the sake of well-being and other advantages like gratification and reputation. Companies have, in line with this, recognized an open door to Ghana’s bottled water market and are perpetually planning ways of expanding their business.

The competences of two giants in the water bottling companies (Voltic and Bel Aqua) have substantial influence on the opinion of consumers. It is trusted that these organisations have procured for themselves customers that are incredibly faithful to their loyal brands. Water cannot be effectively distinguished without packaging because it is colourless. This consciousness has caused water bottling companies to brand and package their goods

(water). Voltic and Bel Aqua for instance have differentiated their products based on branding procedures and due to this, have great impact on their clients.

2.5 Industry Contribution

2.5.1 Voltic Ghana Limited

Voltic has been a market leader in the bottled water category for over twenty-one years. The company has become a widely accepted name for the bottled water category by producing internationally recognised products with quality and natural features for many homes. Voltic has joined the Coca-Cola family as a subsidiary of Coca Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA), The company is committed to refreshing Africa every day and making the continent a better place for all.

Over the years, the company has invested some of its profits to improving the lives of many of Ghanaians, counting the provision of jobs and other community interventions. Voltic Ghana's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability programmes affect three key themes; women, water and waste. According to the Sustainability and Community Affairs Manager, the company has set an ambitious target to empower 1,000 women within its value chain by the end of the year, provide accessible water to more than four water stressed schools and manage its post-consumer waste through a series of programmes.

Between 2016 and 2018, Voltic Ghana says it has paid taxes in excess of GHS 100 million, further demonstrating its resolve to contribute to the economic improvement of the country. Also, Voltic Ghana has added new alcoholic and non-alcoholic brands to its fold as part of the strategy to maintain market leadership. The new brands include Happy Hour, Hollandia and Evaporated milk. Furthermore, a recent partnership with the Campari Group is aimed at spicing up the Voltic Ghana brand portfolio to offer customers products beyond water and soft sparkling drinks, which is also in line with Coca-Cola's global goal of becoming a total

beverage company. In addition, they look forward to producing over 24,000 bottles of water in an hour. The new plant, which has the capacity to produce 24,000 bottles of purified natural water every hour, is expected to be a key contributor to the new mission.

2.5.2 Kasapreko Company Limited

The company was established in 1989 by Dr. Kwabena Adjei, a businessman, who was aiming to respond to the rising demand for quality alcoholic drinks. This vision was birthed in his private home at Nungua, in Accra. At the beginning of this venture, he had five employees who worked passionately to see this vision realised. Today the company has over ten different drink brands and the expansion continues. The firm's flagship brand, Alomo Bitters which has won many awards, is the reason for the achievement of the company told in the light of its capability to reach markets the world over. Other brands manufactured by the company are, Kalahari Bitters, Airforce Bitters, Kasapreko Barman Herbal Gin, Kasapreko London Dry Gin, K20 Whisky, Opeimu Herbal Bitters, K20 Dry Gin, VIP Irish Cream, Kasapreko Brandy, Lime Cordial and Classic Carnival Strawberry, Tonic Wine, Margarita Lime, Kasavino Vermouth; all of which have become household names and have good demand.

From Kasapreko's current status as a pacesetter in innovation in the industry, it has grown to the production its new purified drinking water Awake. Awake is a charity-driven purified bottled water determined to transform lives in Ghana, as a pioneer in the category. Awake, Kasapreko's water brand showcases the firm's ingenuity from coupling its outstanding products along with its social responsibility. The mantra "One4Life" is what drives this initiative, every bottle that consumers buy has enormous influence on the health of deprived patients of the Korle-Bu Cardio-Thoracic Centre in Ghana. by reason of this cooperation

between the firm and its customers, the One4Life campaign increases the effect of each Ghanaian's contribution towards the needy in society.

Since the start of this programme to date, Kasapreko has made payments over GHS 350,000 to the Cardio Centre in Korle – Bu to fulfil its promise to offer help to individuals with heart complication; and overall, about twenty Ghanaians have benefited from this benevolence. The company also donates water and drinks to the individuals during their recuperation in their homes.

2.5.3 Twellium Industrial Company

Twellium was licensed by Monarch beverages – Atlanta Georgia; to manufacture a couple of its line brands in the non-alcoholic beverages category, and since its incorporation in Ghana in September 2013, to commence manufacturing four major licenced products; Original American Cola, Rush Energy drink, Bubble Up lemon lime Range and Planet Range, the firm has rigorously harnessed customer interest to its pervasive product line. Even with these appealing beverages, the company holds very dear, its hallmark water brand, Verna Mineral Water, for its refreshing taste, as confirmed by its consumers.

The “Verna Changing Lives” programme, under the Twellium Foundation' corporate social responsibility umbrella, aims to recognise people who are exceedingly denied and truly require help. The Verna changing lives, has moved from city to city, transforming the lives of disabled and needy individuals in the country. It is obvious that creating occupations is not the only mission of Twellium Industrial Company. Additionally the company is involved in social responsibility.

2.6 Challenges of the Industry

Ghana's bottled water industry has throughout the years been challenged with a few quality difficulties that have compromised the achievement and market performance of organisations within the industry. The business is constantly tested by various quality issues, which undermine the existence of the business and is of much worry for the well-being of individuals who patronise packaged water products. As indicated, a challenge to the industry is some manufacturers bottling unprocessed water and selling it as though it were filtered or treated. This compromises the industry and destroys the trust of consumers (Dodoo *et al.*, 2006). Customer trust in the industry has dwindled overtime due to these quality and health issues and dangers related to the production and consumption water. In light of these practices, Ghana Chemical Society concluded by a declaration that 85% of sachet water produced was not healthy for drinking (Tawiah, 2011).

Furthermore, water bottling companies are battling with having to know the particular observations their customers have concerning their brands. This consequently makes it difficult for these companies to deliver the exact needs of their customers as well as maintain their markets.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has focused on the bottled water industry of Ghana and has thus discussed the issue of increased competition over the past years in the industry. The chapter presents the result of increased competition brought on the industry through trade liberalisation, which effect has left producers burdened with the issue of finding ways to differentiate their brands from competition. The context of the study has looked at the various merits brought to the industry through the evolutions related to packaging and orientations of drinking water that Ghana's bottled water industry has undergone since the nineties. The chapter similarly

presents an idea of the number of brands of bottled water in the industry, stressing on the contributions and challenges of the industry.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter addresses the main theoretical issues that bind the entire study and details an in-depth exposition of concepts relevant to the study; brand positioning and brand choice in addition to developments in these areas over the years. From this view the researcher synthesizes available literature and discusses, within the frame of the chapter, extant works with respect to the concepts of brand positioning, brand choice and the moderating effect of brand sensitivity on the selection process, having choice theory as the foundation theory that underpins the research.

Finally the chapter will conclude with a discussion on the objectives of the study, to the extent of the benefits, conceptualizations and justifications of the theory used in the research to explain the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice.

3.1 Theoretical Foundation - Choice Theory

Choice refers to the freedom to choose among options as opposed to being given one outcome (Botti & Iyengar, 2004). Given this, consumers have more options and an extensive variety of brands to explore (Léger & Scholz, 2004). As opposed to studies by psychologists, choice modeling theories in marketing are not expected to be routine models specifying how associations to the human brain stimulates decision results. Instead, they are simulated, as shown by Simon (1969) to be paramorphic in nature i.e., an “as if” depiction of choice behaviour aimed to increase knowledge of the influence of environmental factors (for

example, the marketing mix) on choice. A choice model is thus defined: A consumer is given the task of choosing one out of a number of options. For every option, there exists an assigned real-valued number (rating) based on the quality of that particular option (Russel, 2014).

The consumer creates a preference (in psychology) or utility (in economics), which permits an arrangement of the choice alternatives on a one-dimensional scale. Utilizing the weights placed on the preferences or utilities, the individual consumer chooses one option by using a sort of decision rule. The decision rule consigns a likelihood of picking an alternative as against other alternatives by considering how s/he rates the choice alternative on the one-dimensional scale constructed earlier.

Louis Thurstone proposed a *discriminable process*, which states that a combination of the true intensity of the quantity of options, and the error variance across stimuli, results in the sensation of intensity that is seen by the individual when choosing which stimulus has greater intensity. Thurstone contended that the choice rule is simple: the subject chooses the stimulus with the higher sensation of intensity value or rating.

Researchers in marketing, proceeding from Thurstone (1927), accept that the consumer dependably picks the option with the most astounding apparent sensational intensity. This blend of a randomly derived value combined with a maximum choice rule, which is currently known as a *random utility theory* (RUT) model (Train, 2003).

3.2 Evolution of Choice Models

The initial idea behind brand choice was crafted by Louis Thurstone, an analyst inspired by “psychophysics” (how humans perceive physical stimuli, for example, the power of light).

Thurstone's tests expected participants to figure, out of two stimuli, which was more concentrated: for instance, which was the brighter of two lights. His main knowledge, detailed in the Theory of Comparative Judgment (Thurstone, 1959), originally captured in Thurstone (1927), shows that stimulus is not perceived by an individual in a similar manner on various occasions, despite the fact that the stimulus object has not changed.

Then, Luce (1959) suggested another theory of choice in light of specific presumptions about choice probabilities. The Choice Axiom expresses that a proportion of decision probabilities is fixed and has no dependence on the evoke set. Models having this relevant characteristic show *independence from irrelevant alternatives*.

Tversky (1972) added significant knowledge to the theory of choice that inspired impressive succeeding works in marketing research. The author suggested the Elimination by Aspects (EBA) model. The model is based on a wording, to obtain the rule. As opposed to Luce and Thurstone, he accept that every available option of choice can be split up into characteristics, which will successively be employed to trim the choice set until the moment when just one option remains.

Tversky and Kahnemann in 1979 proposed a utility model known as Prospect Theory, which contended against linear utility saying that it ignores vital choice components (Kahnemann & Tversky, 1979). The model admits that people develop reference points and thereafter assess choices in respect of what they stand to either lose or gain with respects to the reference point. It is thought that people are risk opposed such that losses affect their value more resolutely than gains. Drawing from these establishments, works in brand choice have earlier been engrossed in relating models to behaviour in the real world. All the models are

based on an assumption that presupposes that the customer creates a set from which he chooses to review available alternatives, and finally selects an item.

3.3 Brand Choice

Brand choice theory is a fundamental component of marketing science (Russell, 2014). For all intents and purposes, every choice that marketing managers make include unequivocal or clear assumptions concerning consumer choices, and how tactical variables (advertising, distribution and price) affect consumer choice. Understanding and envisaging brand choice decisions by consumers has been a theme important to practitioners and scholars alike. Brand choice inquiries includes understanding consumer behaviour in their determination of brands among different product categories (Bentz & Merunka, 2000).

Brand choice research has been investigated for quite a while and has increased as product classes have ended up being more proliferated. Brand choice research has been, generally, through likelihood models to test the effect of marketing mix variables as an indicator of brand choice (Wagner & Taudes, 1986; Chib *et al.*, 2004; Bentz & Merunka, 2000). Diverse areas that have been researched with brand choice have been to study the influences of brand related variables on brand choice. These variables incorporate situation related factors, consumer persona, social benefits, sentiments, quality, brand credibility, product features, seasonality, and trends. Every one of these examinations that utilized inside brand choice research have included survey and studies of key marketing factors to evaluate the effect on brand choice (Ehrenberg & Charlton, 1973; Simonson *et al.*, 1994; Erdem & Swait, 2004; Wagner & Taudes, 1986; Orth, 2005). Amidst particular marketing mix variables, pricing

seems to have the steadiest effect in extant research in that promotions such as sales promotions, for example, have indicated impacts on brand choice, which eventually influence prices for consumers (Singh *et al.*, 2005; Papatla & Krishnamurthy, 1996; Wagner & Taudes, 1986; Orth, 2005).

Extant works by academics and practitioners, reveal that sales promotions influences the final consumer's viewpoint of brand value (Schultz & Peltier, 2013; Aaker & Keller, 1990; Yeshin, 2012). Several others have contended that the consistent increase and decrease of price and the "yo-yoing" of brand cost advantage connections have seemingly affected consumers' assessment of the brand (Christopher & Peck, 2012; Buttle, 2012; Gitlin, Hayes & Weinstein, 2012). In later writings, Schultz together with Block, (2013a, 2013b, and 2013c, 2013d) have shown that consumer brand preference (CBP) for USA fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands has dropped from 2002 to 2012.

One territory not really considered was the possible impact of sales related activities like promotional events; although these events might have affected no brand preference (NBP) scores (Shimp, 2013; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Schultz and Block's paper aimed to explore whether current sales promotions added to the decrease in NBP. Client cards had most effect on purchase of discretionary, not fundamental brands in orders. The outcome reveals that customer cards are an evidently underused instrument in building brand inclination and deals as well as an evidently underused promotional instrument in building brand preferences and sales.

The other real discovery shows that the adoption of shopping cards are inversely associated with the main brand's customer preference. Therefore, whatever the top brands are doing here does not appear to work. On the other hand, shopping cards are exceptionally important

and viable for subsidiary brands. Furthermore they exert minor effect on the preference for the top brand as well. In investigations concerning probability studies and modeling, displays and features are confirmed to influence choice, however the confirmation is not irrepressible like other factors in choice research studies (Alvarez & Casielles, 2005; Chib *et al.*, 2004; Papatla & Krishnamurthi, 1996).

In sub-Saharan Africa, and predominantly Ghana, market liberalization has presented another economic structure in which organisations contest to gain consideration of customers for their specific brands. All things considered, buyers are regularly confronted with varied brands to satisfy their regularly developing requirements (Narteh, Odoom, Braimah, & Buame, 2012).

As shown by existing studies, given that there is visibility of the quantity of brand attributes for a brand item, consumers are likely to settle for that choice (Romaniuk, 2003; Greenwald, & Stiglitz, 1986). Consumers observe product attributes to distinguish one product from the other (Aaker, 1992; Belch & Belch, 1995).

Consumer choice is also impacted by brand knowledge and brand experience (Jain, Madan, & Gupta, 2015). The knowledge and learning consumers acquire is reflected by brands, making information gathering a simple process. Preference relationship encourages the choice task as it shows the relationship between brand choice and brand preference (Beach, 1993). Brand choice has to do with the collection and consumption of the brand (Bettman *et al.*, 1998). Brand preference can be seen as an initiator of brand choice. Consumer choices rely very much on characterized preferences through which a buyers can decide the organisation of options from within which they will settle on their choices (Louviere, 2000). Consumer preference and choice have a propensity to be steadier; in this way, preference

gives a more precise forecast of consumer choice contrasting with attribute (Bithier & Wright, 1977).

Notwithstanding, the connection linking selection and brand preference is interpreted by conditions in the market (Sagoff, 2003). Marketing practitioners use brand preference rather than brand choice to indicate repeat purchase, as preferences seem to be consistent over various situations, contrary to choice that is limited to specific situations (Amir & Levav, 2008). Consumer brand preference is a fundamental step in considering customer brand choice; by this, preference has constantly received mentionable concerns along these lines from marketers. Brand preference represents customer disposition to go for a specific brand (Overby & Lee, 2006). It alludes to the behavioural inclinations reflecting the degree to which consumers like one brand over another (Hellier, Geaursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003; Zajonc & Bargh, 1980).

Narteh *et al.* (2012) state from their finding of investigating the “Key drivers of automobile brand choice in sub-Saharan Africa: the instance of Ghana”, saying a car’s attributes make a concrete and enormous contribution in light of brand choice in the Ghanaian market. This work established that Ghanaian consumers’ choice of car brands is subject to a variety of components, by which some especially credited to the brands while others are peripheral signs related to the brands (Narteh *et al.*, 2012). Consumers regularly end up confronting different brands with varied attributes like quality and price from which the choice is made. Extant studies account for a few elements that influence “consumers’ decision making” in such circumstances. Quality as viewed by the buyer is one such factor that appeared to influence choice (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004).

It has been suggested lately that “message framing” may impact choice of product. When confronted with making a choice between two products - a costly but superior brand versus

an inexpensive but lower quality brand, customers are dependent upon the results of comparing quality and price in order to make a choice. In line with prospect theory, when given the positive framing of financial benefit while deciding to buy a less expensive product, buyers may forgo the benefit and buy the better and more costly item; conversely, when given the negative framing of financial loss related to buying the costly item, buyers may hesitate to experience the associated loss thus purchase the less expensive item (Gamliel, 2010).

In their study of three nations, Gamliel, Herstein, Abrantes, Albayrak and Caber (2013) looked at which elements impact brand choice: the outcome demonstrates that consumers who are intricate or involved show a higher likelihood to buy better but costly brands compared to uninvolved consumers. However, on the other hand, the financial and superiority benefits expected by buyers arbitrates this connection. Adverse framing of the associated loss evasion impacts expected benefits better than affirmative framing for consumers who are not such intricate respondents, as opposed to exceedingly involved ones (Gamliel, Herstein, Abrantes, Albayrak & Caber, 2013).

The scholar and practitioner communities have unravelled more interesting factors as varied as human characteristics come, which are capable of driving brand choice. Howard and Kerin (2013) advanced a study to investigate if evidence exists checking name resemblance significance on brand choice and consumer behaviour. The researchers expected to test whether consumers whose surnames are similar to names of the brands like them better than other brands. The results supported the proposition that people whose surnames match brand names mostly prefer those brands to other brands.

There seems, by all accounts, to be a general assertion in literature that the intense effect of country of make or origin (COO) on choice is fairly inconsequential (Khmel'nyts'ka & Swift, 2010; Kwok, Uncles, & Huang, 2006). In their study on consumer choice criteria and the relative significance of the COO concept, authors Swift and Khmel'nyts'ka investigated the extent that COO contributes to the Ukrainian consumers' choice of beer. They attest that COO is essential and it plays a role in advertising the product. However, country of make or origin by all accounts, is less significant compared to other attributes of beer.

Kwok, Uncles, and Huang (2006), in looking at the amount of impact that the "made in" country has on Chinese customers' actual purchase behaviour, found that Chinese consumers by and large like simple supply brands made in China. Secondly, consumers in China believe it is essential to buy China made brands for specific products or brands. Thirdly, even though they show favouritism for Chinese made brands, that does not necessarily convert into actual choice.

Other scholars like Sultana (2014), studied the factors that affect consumer brand preference and choice towards a new package of a cellular phone. The results show that call rate and bonus talk time are the most significant features for the targeted customers in Comilla region. So, new brands of cellular phone package operators can consider the results of this analysis and put more emphasis on improving quality.

As shown in Bonaiuto *et al.*'s (2012) "Food reputation impacts on consumer's food choice", the authors verified the four dimensions of reputation on consumers' choice of food. It was demonstrated that the effect of the deployed features on food led to selection, mainly during the final selection stage. The outcomes offer help appearing as a rule indicating that food

reputational features can influence decision-making for food and drink in an appropriate illustration with Italian young adults.

The outcomes establish that, essentially, food reputation is concerned with consumers' food selections: especially, consumers who have a predisposition to depend greatly on a portion of these features as opposed to others. In this approach, only some of the reputation features are esteemed or similarly influential by consumers once they need to resolve to choose food or drink. In addition, this influence rarely shows up when the consumer chooses beforehand a portion of the selections from a bigger set with a particular end goal to cut them to a lesser set of several sorts of the same product.

The above study and its outcome, while in accordance with past examinations, demonstrates in what ways the general food and drink characteristics stimulate food choices (Conner & Armitage, 2002; Magnusson *et al.*, 2003; Al-Sulati & Baker, 1998; Ahmed *et al.*, 2004; Carrus *et al.*, 2009; Shepherd & Towler, 1992). The study further proves unambiguously that, food and drink characteristics might influence the selection or the choice behaviour.

Laverie and Rinaldo (2017) studied the effectiveness of advertising on social media and brand involvement through coincidental introduction, and found that accidental exposure or introduction impacts brand selection. It moreover shows that, for categories with low-involvement products, social media introduction does not impact choice. The findings, in any case, propose that, basically, observing brand communications via different settings influence brand choice.

3.4 Brand Positioning Concept

Brand positioning is widely considered by academics and professionals as a crucial component in marketing (Zednik & Strebinger, 2008; Hooley *et al.*, 2008; Esch, Brunner, Gawlowski, Knorle, & Krieger, 2010; Aaker, 1996; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Kotler & Keller, 2012; van der Grinten & Riezebos, 2011; Porter, 1996). Practically speaking, brand positioning statements support the story of the brand and denotes how stakeholders should perceive the brand (Urde, 2003; Keller, 2012; de Chernatony, 2010; Aaker, 1996). In reiterating Ogilvy's scepticism, Park *et al.* (1986) criticized the positioning concept for not proposing enough guidance to practitioners for handling and sustaining a steady image over time. Various authors have acknowledged the likely intended utility of the concept, and proposed varied implied definitions of the concept.

Aaker and Shansby (1982) understand positioning as a premeditated judgment predicted through the customer's decisions concerning choice, while Keller and Lehman (2006, p. 740) consider it to be, setting "the direction of marketing activities and programs, that is, knowing what the brand ought to and ought not to do with its marketing". The current scholastic and practitioner literature on positioning provides various methods, models and systems of understanding and assessing the concept (van der Grinten & Riezebos, 2011; Aaker, 1996; de Wit & Meyer, 2010, 2012; Keller, 2012; Zednik & Strebinger, 2008).

Therefore, management's issue is not an absence of choices of methods, models or systems, but instead, the ability to choose the correct general method in characterizing the position of the brand, and aligning it to the appropriate tool for the positioning development (Urde & Koch, 2014). In this manner, when managing customer/ consumer beliefs of brands, what is

obvious is that these beliefs are firmly identified with the associations that bind the customer and brand together (Gummesson, 2002). The pillar supporting the positioning idea remains that customers need to manage a myriad of information, always presented with heaps of media, ads, products, news (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). As demonstrated by Ries and Trout (2011), the human brain is able to develop a predetermined amount of data (Miller, 1956; Ries & Trout, 2001) at any given moment.

Primarily, the brain develops thoughts it has learned in the past or has previous knowledge of; as it were, humans continue to rationalize by methods of associations or connections (Ries & Trout, 2001). Furthermore, when moving toward the breaking point of information gathering, our brains filter the information: as it were, there is a constrained space that firms can use to be part of our lives. Possessing the preferred positioning involves numerous process configuration inside the firm. One such procedure is advertising, and as Mathieson (2005, p. 11) suggests, advertising calls out to you on a first name basis. This implies that advertisements recall the importance of the brand in the minds of potential buyers, allowing navigation amongst various brands. Therefore advertising is an essential instrument in illustrating what the preferred brand positioning should be.

3.5 Evolution of the Brand Positioning Concept

According to Warren (1916), quoted in Marsden, Flynn, and Harrison (2000), the concept of positioning may be sourced from Classical Greece when Plato suggested that memory recalls other memories, raising numerous connotations, from which the three laws governing associations were carved out. Maintained by a few other human memory studies in psychology (Wagner *et al.*, 1996), the corporate usefulness of positioning has been receiving increasingly more consideration from researchers and professionals as the idea was progressively connected with brand construction processes (Marsden, 2000).

With expert skill in the field of advertising, and a continuously escalating popularity in the field of marketing, writers such as Ries and Trout, who penned "positioning: a battle for your Mind" (Ries & Trout, 2001) advanced the concept. With these few alterations in the field, it is valuable to possess a synopsis of key periods and transitions in marketing and sales strategies. In citing Ries and Trout, Balzoni and De Bernardi (2003) recommended that the era directly after World War (II) was touted with a sort of universal idealism towards living. Therefore buyers readily purchased goods that they believed guaranteed to abridge and, most of all, improve regular day to day existence. This period was the Product era, when producers focused on the product attributes and their advantage for customers (Ries & Trout, 2001). In this era, very little importance was placed on advertising with goals except for educating consumers of the availability of an added product: another product implied additional deals. This portrayed the system of the alleged *Unique Selling Proposition* (USP), used as a term among marketing folk to exhibit that when goods are branded they have excellent physical properties and offers unique advantages (Lambin, 2002). In Reeve's book, the product should possess a solid offer, a value that all consumers need, one quality desired by a large number of individuals, and a gain that rivals neither are equipped for offering nor developing (Reeves, 1961). The eruption of "me-too" goods killed the era of the product, and afterwards the Image Era commenced.

The decade following the Product era was characterised by a growing capacity of the market. This was an exponential process which perpetuated till not long ago (Lambin & Schuilinng, 2004) when consumers started to effectively make choice amongst products, and developed more advanced methods of verification in the direction of producers' offers

(Kapferer, 2004). Along these lines, executives understood that the time had come to advance or leave the market to competitors. David Ogilvy recommended that consumers may be the ones who possess answers to progress (Ogilvy, 1983). In this sense, consumer research may symbolise the ideal apparatus to discover this secret. The period was the start of consumption investigations based on marketing goals. Likewise in the direct selling era, it was all about forthrightly talking to consumers and giving essence to the products from the insights so collected. Ogilvy's proposal was that, consumers don't recollect products, yet their recollections of a celebrity may keep going endlessly. At this point, the branding concept was conceived. Brand personality began to take the popularity from products.

The image overwhelmed the market scenes, and it didn't generally make a difference as to whose image it was, be it the sales executive, brand or the organisation (Ries & Trout, 2001). Therefore the accompanying era takes note of the ascent of the brand positioning concept. Despite the fact that marketing scholars were undoubtedly a long way from conceptualising positioning, nevertheless, the brand positioning idea was gradually drawing closer with a continuous move from real-world to figurative approaches becoming detectable. It was in the mid 1970's that a paper on positioning emerged (Ries & Trout, 1969). It directed at the business market, suggesting a strategy to enhance sales, controlled by both products and organisations struggling to be seen (Ries & Trout, 2001). This was the first mention of the term 'positioning'. In an intensified setting of proliferation, brands, products, and business data excess, the idea of positioning arises to rescue businesses.

The positioning era signifies a different viewpoint in the direction of communications: positioning is tied in with attaining levels of being adequately heeded to in an uproarious

marketplace (Fill, 2002). As indicated, positioning is the regular outcome of certain principally consequential occurrences; thus the explosion in the media, product, and against the restricted measure of facts that could be accessed by consumer minds, the explosion of advertising (Ries & Trout, 2001). Using positioning, consumers secure a conclusive vital role in deciding the company strategy (Ries & Trout, 2001). However, a couple of years earlier, Ogilvy proposed that customers remember brands better than they do goods or products (Ogilvy, 1983). According to Ries and Trout (2001, p.36), “individuals can regularly recall positioning concepts superior to names”. That is, consumers barely recollect brands, yet effortlessly evoke the links they build up with past encounters or previously treated data. In this way, if otherwise not linked with a conspicuous positioning statement and a definite strategy, branding is irrelevant. From here on, marketing experts and researchers started to give regard for the concept of brand positioning.

3.6 Defining Brand Positioning

Blankson (2001) asserts that the basis of the positioning concept is uncertain but he tends to agree with Nylén (1990) who suggests that the concept goes way back, somewhere in 1940 when investigations still rudimentary on the marketing mix. In their original work (Ries & Trout, 1986), Al Ries and Jack Trout, who are touted as the fathers of the brand positioning concept, found that, “*Positioning starts with the product. A piece of merchandise, a service, a company, an institution, or even a person . . .*” Again, it must be perceived that “positioning is not what is done to the product, but instead what is done to the mind of the prospect (i.e., consumer/ customer)” Ries and Trout (1986).

In the assertion of Blankson (2001), no generalised definition for positioning has been postulated yet, and this may be a result of the non-existence of a practical standpoint in theory on the idea. Rigger (1995) shows that, this notwithstanding, there is an indication of a universal acceptance in extant works acknowledging positioning as a basic component of marketing strategy even though it can be perceived at from a theoretical, applied or strategic level. As clarified above, the positioning concept has been securing fundamental impact due to the increasing overload and saturation of markets (Marsden, 2002), leaving very little compositional material and structural disparity amongst brands within product categories (Fill, 2002, p.323). Products don't come about by themselves, however they exist as associations within consumer minds (Ries & Trout, 2001). Positioning comes as a result of the communication intensity that drive firms along with their products (Marsden, 2002). In an intensified setting (Lambin, 2004), being able to create and communicate an alternate position in the market, may be the only way to define the achievement of positioning (Kapferer, 2004; Marsden, 2002, p.307).

Positioning does not start in the marketing section; now, however, it is in the consumer's mind. Positioning development suggests it concerns a product or some other entity (Hooley & Saunders, 1993), however it really comprises of possessing a definite position in the prospect's mind. Blythe (2003) recommends that positioning is instituted as a term to portray that space a particular product inhabits in the customer's brain map. These expressions, points of parity (related characteristics possessed by all competitors) and points of difference (dissimilar features of brands) depict what should essentially be adapted to impact customers' insights (Keller, 2012). This procedure is especially significant regarding product branding and it expands the logical resolution of rational thinking (Heding *et al.*, 2009). Therefore the tangible power behind the development of brands abide in consumers' minds and their experience of tasting the brand over time (Keller & Lehmann, 2009).

Through the years however, many a scholar and practitioner has coined various definitions connoting varied conceptualisation of the positioning term, as an example, product position is defined by Kotler *et al.* (2001, p.369), “it is the way the product is *defined by consumers* on significant characteristics; the place the product dwells in a consumer’s mind contrary to competing products” (Kotler *et al.*, 2001; Kotler & Armstrong, 2006).

Arnott (1992) defines the positioning concept as: “the deliberate, proactive, iterative process of defining, measuring, modifying and monitoring consumer perceptions of a marketable object”. In the words of Blankson (2008), this definition is made up of tactical and applied views of positioning as a marketing concept. Ries and Trout (1986, p.77) believe “positioning is not what is done to the product or service, but rather what is done to the mind of the prospect”.

Kotler and Scheff’s (1997) definition says; “the process of designing the company’s product or services and image in view of consumers’ perceptions with respect to that of competitors”. Likewise, Hassan and Craft (2012) affirm that, “the term positioning is regularly used to denote the company's decision to regulate the place that its brand and corporate image inhabit in a given market including the kind of benefits to be assessed and the sort of portions to be battered on”. Positioning is defined by Sekhar (1989) as “a diagnostic tool which gives insight into newer territories of product development and the gaps in the market which could be exploited to a marketer’s leverage by product planning and understanding of customer needs”. As indicated by Blankson (2001), this definition underpins advocates who see determination from management in forming the preferred place for positioning in the market.

Inferring from the above definitions, it is clear that positioning aims at establishing a desirable image on customers. When an organisation decides to engage in positioning strategies it aims at aligning its product or organisation to be in sync with consumers' aspirations. It is also clear that from the onset of a positioning strategy, the organisation has the consumer in mind as to how the consumer will perceive the product or the organisation.

In line with this study, Kotler's (1997) definition encapsulates the discourse. It talks about service or product as well as image, based on consumers' perception. The fact that it also talks about the perception being relative to that of competitors really draws in every aspect of the concept of positioning.

The authors, Blankson and Kalafatis (2007, p.79) expound that the subject of positioning is seen as one of the important features of current marketing management (Hooley, Saunders, & Piercy, 1998; Kotler, 2000; Porter, 1996) and the basis for defining and formulating marketing communications plans (Fill, 1999; Ries & Trout, 1986; Rossiter & Percy, & Rossiter, 1997). Positioning is theorized as an intricate multifaceted construct used to firmly modify the important features of the offering and the imperceptible views of the offering in the market Blankson *et al.* (2008). Arnott (1992), opines that the practise of positioning approaches comprises certain interrelated activities, for instance, defining the scope of a specific envisaged space that amply shows the intended interest group's perceptions; estimating an object's area inside that dimension, and altering real features of the item and views of the target audience using marketing communications tactics (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007).

3.7 Development of Positioning Typologies

Throughout the years, positioning typologies have been applied alternatively. These range from conceptual (Wind, 1982, 1990; Aaker & Shansby, 1982) to empirical (Easingwood & Mahajan, 1989; Crawford, 1985). Positioning typologies or types can likewise be managerial (Hooley *et al.*, 1998; Hooley & Saunders, 1993) or customer-derived (Diwan & Bodla, 2011; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004). Practically, a particular type is usually founded on dimensions from a firm's viewpoint (it's always about how low or high prices get, superior versus rudimentary quality and original against synthetic) or how consumers see positioning dimensions. Typologies of positioning play a critical role of classifying the forms of methodology or strategy that impact the understanding of brand positioning.

According to Blankson (2001), the related literature states that the Brand Concept Image Management (BCM), which is the work of Park *et al.* (1986), and the Generic Positioning Framework (GPF) propounded by Hooley and Saunders (1993) are the formally communicated frameworks of the positioning concept. The brand concept comes from essential consumer needs (Park *et al.*, 1986). When these needs are optimally satisfied it leads to three main objectives concerned with brand positioning: practical, symbolic and experiential. The researchers affirm that, when a concept is selected for a brand before going into a market, it serves as the basis for making positioning decisions that influence the brand. The life cycle stages of introduction, elaboration and fortification are catered for as soon as brand concept is selected in a strategy.

According to Blankson (2001), the limitations to this model are: firstly, it does not provide the means to operationalize it; and secondly, it doesn't give the method that allows the changing features and position of offerings as against that of rival firms to be managed (Sekhar, 1989).

Hooley and Saunders (1993) attest that a firm can position (based on membership, consolidation, deposition and latent position) by employing the following strategies: price/quality, attributes, application, competition, product class, and user. Blankson (2008) citing Hooley and Saunders (1993) explain that positioning improves brands' ability to establish a firm identity perception wise on consumers irrespective of the never-ending communications coming from other competing products/services. Additionally, the Generic Positioning Framework (GPF) builds on Aaker and Shansby (1982), which generally talks about strategies used by organisations to communicate the positions of their goods/services. In view of this, Blankson (2008) went on to say that he agrees with Engel *et al.* (1968) and Jacoby (1978) who suggest that it is important for researchers in the field of marketing to employ extant models, including that expanding extant models will offer needed intuitions in marketing occurrence.

The author then proposes the adaptation and extension of Hooley's (1998) generic positioning framework. Blankson (2008) states that an additional strategy, a seventh, called organisational "image/ethos" is suggested to be added to the strategies of positioning. The writer explains that, owing to the rising significance associated with improving corporate image (Bernstein, 1992), the surge in firm empathy to philanthropic, compassionate and environmentally responsible causes (Worthington & Horne, 1993), and the increasing consumer mindfulness about cause-related marketing (Cobb, 2002), numerous firms are trying relentlessly to distinguish themselves along the lines of respectable outward image, ethos and upright citizenry (Guerrera & Firm, 2001; Cobb, 2002; The Economist, 2008).

Blankson (2008) further assert that a review of the generic position framework indicates that the generic market positions seem to be an adaptation of the life cycle stages concept citing Kermanshah (1997) and more specifically, the product life cycle concept by Kotler (1994). The following were identified as limitations to the generic positioning framework: firstly the framework emphasises arranging the differing features of the goods/service with no sign of brand supervision. Secondly, aside from the above, Blankson (2008) affirms that the generic positioning framework does not provide for fading or near attrition products.

Subsequently, re-positioning does not appear; and, in addition, apart from the absence of any sign of the overall supervision of positioning aim (Kotler, 2000), the GPF provides no guidelines to its operation or applicability. Blankson and Kalafatis (2001) contend in their work, that efforts made by researchers and practitioners to conceptualize and develop positioning strategies have resulted in outcomes that are descriptive in nature, or have limited empirical evidence and reflect managerial views (Brown & Sims, 1976; Berry, 1982; Wind, 1982; Aaker & Shansby, 1982; Bushkirk, 1975; Easingwood & Mahajan, 1989; Crawford, 1985), and (Kalafatis *et al.*, 1997; Arnott, 1992) respectively.

The authors establish that there is no customer-generated positioning types in the Positioning literature and, as a result, they advanced to present the initial results without approval of an empirically derived consumer/customer based generic positioning. They iterate that extant works do not capture consumer/customer inferred concepts fit for use as strategies of positioning. The findings of their study revealed eight (8) factors that could pass for strategies of positioning. They are: country of origin, top of range, value for money, reliability, service, attractive, the name, and social class.

Accordingly, this study will be measuring the following positioning constructs as positioning strategies that can impact brand choice in the bottled water industry of Ghana: corporate social responsibility and top of range as developed by Blankson (2001); attributes as developed by Aaker and Shansby (1982); surrogates developed by Crawford (1985), and Country of Origin (COO) as developed by Blankson (2001).

3.8 Corporate Social Responsibility

Originally, corporate social responsibility (CSR) was defined as “encompassing the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that the society has of organisations at a given point in time” (Carroll, 1979, 2004). However, Carroll (1996) conceptualised a model capturing philanthropic or optional responsibilities (e.g. supporting community/education, corporate contributions, and community involvement), ethical obligations (working over the minimum required by law, attesting moral leadership and avoiding questionable business practices), legitimate duties (e.g. complying with natural laws, all laws, satisfying every single legally binding commitment regulations, and laws influencing all employees and consumer laws) and economic obligation (e.g. maximizing sales revenue, being productive, making wise strategic decisions and limiting cost).

3.9 Top of Range

Five other strategies are captured under the Top of Range strategy. These are perceptions of reputation credited to contributions, namely upper class, top of the range, status, prestigious, posh (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004). Top of Range is used for describing something that is the most expensive in a group of similar products (Cambridge English Dictionary). The results of a study aimed at examining positioning strategies of international and

multicultural-oriented service brands (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004), demonstrate that “top of the range” seemed favoured by consumers of card brands.

3.10 Product Attributes

Initially, product attribute was defined by scholars as the physical characteristics that the product has that were measurable and impartially quantifiable (Wu & MacKay, 1988). However, this acknowledged definition has later been protracted to comprise every verifiable qualification, not leaving out the purpose or physical characteristics, for instance, price, brand name or country of origin, for example, comfort, quality, style and diverse product parts that customers might view as giving benefit or value (Grapentine, 1995; Jamal & Goode, 2001; Wu *et al.*, 1988). Engel *et al.* (1993) assert that condition, motivation, involvement and knowledge impacts the qualities that a consumer assesses prior to a choice or selection decision. Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2010) mention that the company highlights the solid attributes of the brand with a specific end goal to make a differential benefit; solid characteristics are attributes of the brand; these are quantitatively quantifiable, and for the most part substantial and normal features related to search. Likewise they are particular to the classification of the product.

Attributes are categorised as either being intrinsic or external by their outlook. Intrinsic attributes are product specific, for example, ingredients, flavour, colour, aroma and shape. Exterior attributes are physically non-product related but may be outside relations created by the product. Scholars are still seeking to comprehend the significance of the two categories during the buyer choice process. Previous investigation, employing a female students’

sample revealed that inherent product characteristics influenced the view of product quality more than the external signals did (Szybillo & Jacoby, 1974).

3.11 Surrogate

Surrogate is positioning made to exude a mental impression. Essentially it is intended toward the creation of consumer associations concerning the brand's outside characteristics which are created to shape the consumer relationship about peripheral parts of a brand; it projects to some degree, concerning the brand, what enables the consumer to arrive at singular assumptions of affiliations toward vague parts of the brands. For example, User category, "for individuals who never grow up"; building relationship with Formula 1 or extraordinary writers; featuring the pioneer status; product category disassociations; "the bestselling auto" (Fuchs and Diamantopoulos, 2010).

Jaworski and MacInnis (1989) suggest that surrogate strategies incline towards delivering additional self-dependent connotations that come close to the needs and standards of consumers', and must in this way be more firmly identified with brand activities than evidence that makes implications concerning the good. Graeff (1997, p. 178) asserts that, "consumers should be more persuaded by thoughts about what products can do for them and a product's relevance to personal goals or objectives than by thoughts about physical product characteristics".

Giving an instance, using user positioning – a generally utilized type of surrogate positioning (Crawford, 1985) – favourability is made as a result of relating customers using their preferred or else real participation group, self-view (Lefkoff-Hagius & Mason, 1993;

Sirgy, 1982). Then in this way, the need for self-articulation or social-endorsement are pleasing for consumers (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982). Another contention remains that surrogate strategy gives further information than solid strategy alternatives to consumers such that they (consumers) are inclusive of the separate features (Pham & Muthukrishnan, 2002). In specific terms, consumers who remain exposed to surrogate information likewise regularly (certainly) construe the elements that lie beneath the principal value (Snelders & Schoormans, 2004), or stand related by means of the surrogate (Friedmann & Lessig, 1987).

3.12 Country of Origin

Bilkey (1982) confirms that consumers hold product labelled perceptions built on country of make or origin effects. These images stay usually related in the direction of a definite product category, and not generalised across all products that come from one nation or the other (Roth & Romeo, 1992). The valuation, quality and purchase intents of a consumer are impacted by the country of origin imageries that they perceive. Wine for instance possesses vintage country of origin perceptions, and thus the signal from these perceptions are observed to be a vital concern for wine consumers (Keown & Casey, 1995; Halstead, 2002). These images related to country of make or origin laterally with their consequences going on consumer behaviour stand principally essential to producers and marketers in the worldwide markets. Country of origin effects as a purchase stimulus can form other physical product qualities or properties for the product (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995). Goldberg and Baumgartner (2002) suggest that the country of origin signal can be assessed by buyers with an explicit objective of assigning significance to the attribute of the product otherwise to the general category. Moreover, customers can deploy this to forestall or reduce risk and also to socially review the acceptability of the brands they purchase (Papadopoulos & Heslop 2002).

3.13 Brand Positioning and Brand Choice

Burke (2011) has mentioned that it is for the purpose of driving brand choice in a particular segment of a specific market that competitive positions are developed. However various research empirically investigating the usefulness of some positioning grounds remain comparatively sporadic (e.g., Hartmann, Ibanez, & Sainz, 2005; Diamantopoulos, Sarstedt, Fuchs, Wilczynski, & Kaiser, 2012; Eryigit & Eryigit, 2014).

Positioning has been applied to Australian breakfast cereals in the past by Roberts and Lattin (1991). It was revealed that “brand positioning” influences likelihood of consideration and the likelihood of choice. They maintained that the functions that decide choice, also decide brand consideration. Their framework is attuned to predict consideration of three new product concepts on the basis of perceived position. However their interest was centered on whether the choice model derived from the proposed consideration framework can improve predictions of consumer choice behaviour. The model is suggested to be helpful in assessing ways in which brand positioning can be used to improve consumer choice behaviour not necessarily using brand position to predict choice. A limitation nonetheless arises because the study examines the composition of the consideration set at a given point in time and therefore cannot describe the changes to the consideration set as the consumer searches for information.

Qi and Dandan (2013) conducted a study of luxury brand positioning and choice. The study, presents an approach on the positioning of luxury brands and the effects on the luxury brand consumer behaviour. Being a comparative research, the Chinese in addition to British luxury brand customers were studied using a synthesis of secondary data of prior studies. The

analysis revealed that, consumers in China are conscious when it comes to branding, and a bulk of them desire exotic brands, based on the brands' effective positioning. This notwithstanding, as a limitation, the data collection and analysis method leading to such assertions are not able to describe certain patterns of individuals' choice of luxury brand.

Adokou and Kyere-Diabour (2017), in their study of "Positioning Strategies of Retail Companies in Ghana", assessed in what ways Ghanaian retail companies follow brand positioning. The results showed "service", "value for money", "attractiveness", "reliability", "top of the range", "selectivity", and "brand name" as the dominant strategies. The authors indicate however that the importance respectively put on each of these strategies differ from organisation to organisation.

Malik and Sudhakar (2014) studied the concept of brand positioning using celebrity endorsements. The paper sought to investigate the factors of brand positioning through sports celebrity endorsement. They contended that positioning using sports celebrities may well become a successful source of competitively differentiating one brand from another. In addition, they mentioned that mixing the concepts of positioning and sports celebrity introduced gaps that ought to be addressed, such as what the extent or intensity of the craze among the customers of celebrity recommended brands are, and what would be the preference impact on lesser recognised brands if suggested by a sports celebrity?

Lowry and Owens (2001) applied the positioning concept to a university in their paper, "Developing a Positioning Strategy for a University". The study focused on the means required for a school to create a successful positioning strategy. A goal of the paper was to

present how a university can adopt a well ordered strategy to position itself and build up a distinctive image that can fortify its enrolment and produce a favourable reaction to its projects.

Blankson *et al.* (2004) researched Ghana's tourism positioning. The reason behind that research stayed toward achieving a further profound appreciation of tourism positioning in Ghana. Besides, they investigated whether positioning strategy extracted from extant works can additionally clarify Ghana's tourism positioning. The outcomes demonstrate that the tourism positioning of Ghana is worked out on views of a "competitive middle class tourist destination". The authors however recognize that the study only works on perspectives of managers, and that, to a huge extent, is centered on initial views on country tourism positioning from a management perspective. They add that the study is not consumer/customer based. Therefore, despite the fact of its appropriateness for experimental research, the qualitative nature of the research suffers particular interpretation from the researcher's side.

Quality is suggested to be regularly connected by means of sensitivities to globalness (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2003). The authors analysed the impact of perceived brand prestige on likelihood of purchase. The outcome of their study demonstrated that prestige of the brand in addition to the quality of the brand remain essential issues in worldwide brand positioning. Likewise it was discovered that the impact relative to perceived globalness taking effect on the likelihood of purchase was more noteworthy than the impact on likelihood of purchase by local image value or local consumer culture positioning. By this study's findings,

Steenkamp highlights the inherent relationship between customer perceived globalness of a brand, as a positioning strategy, and purchase likelihood.

Wason and Charlton (2015), in their study of “how positioning strategies affect co-branding outcomes,” bore in mind how customer perceptions can be affected by co-branding. This study, employing the strategies from extant works, show how co-branding results are affected by partner brands’ positioning, focusing on hedonic and utilitarian perspectives. It was found that post-alliance brand positioning beliefs are firmly connected with earlier convictions. In addition, these beliefs exert a marginally more grounded impact for positioning based on hedonic attributions than positioning based on functional attributions. The outcomes propose that suitability between the brands is more critical for hedonically oriented positioning, than it is between the classifications of the product for propelling brand perceptions that are positive. The opposite is prevalent for a utilitarian oriented positioning strategy.

As part of an on-going study in strategic positioning in British charitable organisations, Chowdhury (2013) sought to integrate the results of earlier investigations and concentrated on highlighting key positioning strategies and suggesting to marketing practitioners a few rules to developing compelling positioning strategies for accomplishing sustainable competitive advantage. The author’s motivation is premised on his observation that not enough recently published literature exist on brand positioning; his focus therefore being to highlight possible ways that brands can be positioned. The author was limited by the fact that a chunk of the literature employed for this review were centered on the western context.

Based on this, the author indicated that the findings should not be inappropriately extrapolated to cover for instance, emerging markets.

In 2016, a research conducted by Akhtar *et al.* on “the *Impact of Brand Equity on Consumer Purchase Decision in L’Oréal Skincare Products*” made a clarion call for research into positioning and brand choice, saying that future research can work on the other variables that can influence brand choice or purchase decision of customer such as brand positioning, etc. (Akhtar *et al.*, 2016). Brand positioning is a vital decision (Attia & Hooley, 2007; Keller & Lehmann, 2006), as it denotes an instrumental role to the consumer’s perception besides choice (Aaker, 1982).

Drawing from the above studies, it is obvious that brand positioning and brand choice studies must be immensely looked into; as the positioning of a firm can affect the overall perceptions held by customers and, if favourable enough, those perceptions could translate into customer choice of products or services. One unique central constituent of marketing stays invariably, the concept of choice. Essentially all decisions (clear or implied) made by directors of marketing departments project to predict buyers decisions and how marketing factors impact such choice decisions. Essentially brand choice theories rely on predictions about how buyers settle on their purchase decisions. Choice denotes an opportunity to select out of options instead of having a single result (Botti & Iyengar, 2004).

3.14 Moderating Variable - Customer Brand Sensitivity

Kapferer and Thoenig (1992) comment that consumers are said to be sensitive if they attempt to know the product brand, in the event that the product is considered in the

consumer's choice set. Being sensitive to a brand means that the consumer is intensely interested in the character and values portrayed by the brand in question (Rothschild, 1984), although this sensitivity is not a reserve of the choice decision process (Sohierr, 2004; Houston & Rothschild, 1978). The levels of sensitivity also differs amongst consumers for different product categories (Michon & Changeur, 2003; Dawar & Pillutla, 2000). A customer could show sensitivity to one product class but no sensitivity to others (Kapferer & Laurent, 1992; D'Astous & Gargouri, 2001). The sensitivity of the brand constitutes an interest in the association amongst manufacturers and suppliers (Olshavsky & Granboi, 1979). Bourke, Tomlison, Williams, Bullock, Shaw, and Gibson (2006) opine that a consumer that is sensitive to a brand is dedicated to the brand emotionally and cognitively (Zainuddin, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2007). Thereafter, the choice he makes differs depending on the nature of the brand and the significance attached to the buying process.

Kapferer and Laurent (1992) argue that sensitivity to a brand is a psychological development that points to the buyer's choice process, thus saying an individual stands to be brand sensitive implies that he allows brands to play an essential role in his mental procedure that ensues before the actual purchase. Theory wise, this is not similar to the behavioural concept, brand loyalty, which is estimated by reviewing forms of sustained buying over a period time. In any case, such assessment of loyalty doesn't say anything as to what causes and brings this loyalty about (Lachance, Beaudoin, & Robitaille, 2003).

Consumer involvement is observed to be one of the variables that are the most straightforwardly identified with brand sensitivity in a specific product category (Kapferer & Laurent, 1983; Laurent & Kapferer, 1986). The symbolic or communicative effect of the object renders the consumer vulnerable to the personality (Haghirian, Madlberger, &

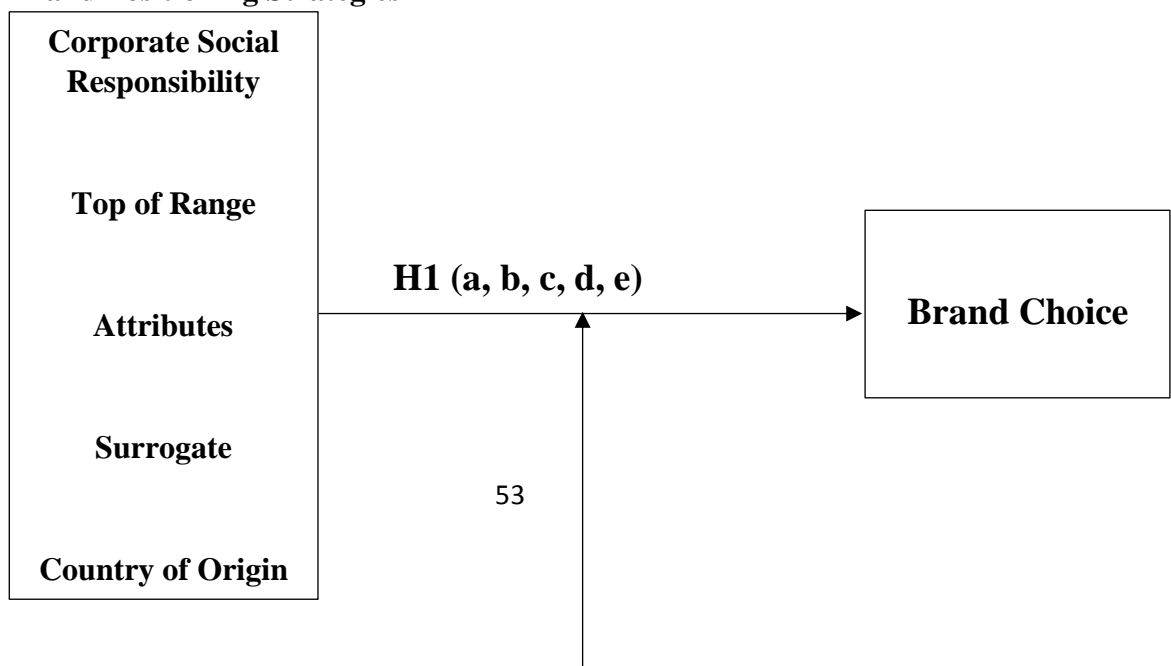
Tanuskova, 2005; Kapferer & Thoenig, 1992). In cases where the individual is not sensitive to a brand, his behaviour alters in line with the current circumstance and he may choose to forfeit, postpone, or pick another brand. If the consumer shows sensitivity to a brand, the intensity will propel his trust in an upward manner (Michon & Changeur, 2003). If the intensity is strong enough, coupled with high involvement on the product category, trust will be accelerated by the brand personality.

A study by Bouhlel, Mzoughi, Hadiji, and Slimane (2011) features the significance that brand personality brings to bear on consumer’s decision making, aided by social factors. By way of an empirical study of 380 respondents, each of whom received an “SMS ad”, an affirmation is made that the personality of the brand stimulates trust for the brand, attachment and commitment to the brand. Adding to the findings, it’s noted that sensitivity by a moderating role, positively influences the association between brand personality and trust.

3.15 Conceptual Framework and Research Hypothesis

Below is a conceptual framework of positioning strategies which are expected to impact or influence brand choice in Ghana’s bottled water industry.

**Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework
Brand Positioning Strategies**



H2 (a, b, c, d, e)

Source: Author's own Conceptualization

The above framework is designed to integrate positioning strategies from the different typological perspectives; conceptual or theoretical (Aaker & Shansby, 1982; Wind, 1982, 1990), empirical (Easingwood & Mahajan, 1989; Crawford, 1985), managerial (Hooley *et al.*, 1998; Hooley & Saunders, 1993) and customer-derived (Diwan & Bodla, 2011; Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004)”.

For the purpose of this study the selected strategies (corporate social responsibility, top of range, attributes, surrogate and country of origin) are measured against brand choice. The aim is to investigate whether the strategies impact brand choice, and furthermore, what the effect will be when the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice, if any, is reliant on brand sensitivity of consumers. The selected positioning strategies are explained below.

The above positioning strategies may be engaged separately as well as cooperatively; thus, the connectors that link the various positioning strategies suggest that companies may employ more than one strategy at any given point in time (Hooley *et al.*, 1998; Blankson, 2008). Firms may embrace one or more positioning strategies, this means they must

constantly observe the usefulness of these strategies alongside the life cycle stages of the brand or product (Blankson, 2008).

Corporate Social Responsibility and Brand Choice

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Carroll (1979, 2004) initially defined the term CSR as “encompassing the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that the society has of organisations at a given point in time”. Defined also “as a stakeholder focused concept that ranges beyond the organisation’s confines and is compelled by an ethical understanding of the organisation’s duty for the impact of its business deeds, thus, pursuing in return society’s approval of the legitimacy of the organisation” (Maon *et al.*, 2009, p.72). Checks through extant works show few studies that have looked at CSR against positioning (Du *et al.*, 2007; Anselmsson & Johansson, 2007). The findings from Anselmsson and Johansson (2007) show that CSR positioning reveal three scopes that are based on attitudes. The authors identified that retail brands can undeniably, in relation to top national brands, build a CSR image. Additionally, the CSR scope of greatest impact on general CSR image is product responsibility, while human responsibility impacts customer purchase intentions the most. Further, environmental responsibility, possibly the most regularly used CSR dimension, is in this study known to apply the smallest impact on both overall CSR image and on purchase intentions. The study was on grocery brands and was limited to Sweden. The authors also stated that the one industry that has received great attention with respect to CSR related matters is the grocery industry (e.g. Adams & Bruck 1993; Bickel, DeGrandpre, Higgins, Hughes & Badger, 1995; Jones, Little, Bothroyd, DeBruine, Feinberg, Smith, & Perret, 2005; Klein & Dawar, 2004; Ness, 1992; Pearce, 1999; Piacentini *et al.*, 2000). Du, Bhattacharya and Sen, (2007), found in their study of corporate social responsibility that, CSR views held by consumers are related with purchase likelihood, loyalty and advocacy

behaviours. The work of Khojastehpour and Johns (2014) on “CSR motives on purchase intention” reveals that, a philanthropic intention positively impacts customers’ behaviour toward firms, such that purchase intention through perceived quality is driven toward the brand.

From the above the current study proposes a hypothesised relationship between corporate social responsibility and brand choice.

H1a: Corporate social responsibility as a positioning strategy has a positive impact on brand choice

Top of Range and Brand Choice

Top of Range: Top of Range strategy includes five sub-strategies relating to perceptions of reputation ascribed to contributions (five items), namely, upper class, top of the range, status, prestigious, and posh (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004). Top of Range is used for describing something that is the most expensive in a group of similar products (Cambridge English Dictionary). Blankson and Kalafatis (2007) aimed to investigate strategies of positioning employed by international and multicultural-oriented service brands. According to the literature, three main populations (executives and experts, companies’ marketing communications, and the target group of consumers) were examined. The results indicate that “top of the range” positioning strategy is favoured among Amex and Diners Club card brands. A look at the results of the study endorses that in the charge card sector “Top of the range” is important for consumers in their choice or selection. This result stands constant with the positioning activities of the debit/credit card sector. This is observed as stimulating longing in lieu of actualizing core needs by using services that are luxurious. Particularly, “Top of the range”, is among six others that were alleged to be pursued. In reality, these

strategies align with effort of the card makers to be perceived at the top of their range as the name suggests. For instance, “Top of the range” strategy of positioning has associations of unique exclusivity. The authors report a statement by a respondent to the effect that Amex, one of the card makers, is cost-effective and at the top end of the market and not a product for the masses. “Top of the range” and “The brand name”, seemingly control perceptions of positioning of the target group (Amex). The outcomes undoubtedly gives credence to the current discussion. It also puts into effect the concept of exclusivity that the card is related with. Moreover, with respect to Top of the range”, a conclusion can be made to the point that, although growth in the card sector is not extraordinary, the business is still viewed as high-class (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2007). Kirmani, Sood, and Bridges (1999) studied the “ownership effect in consumer responses to brand line stretches”. The reasoning for stretching product line downwards is to entice customers who could not pay for the prestigious brand to hopefully opt for other relatively expensive versions of the parent brand. The outcome of the study shows that brand owners’ longing to stop brand dilution and maintain brand exclusivity for the prestige brands, do not allow for downward stretching to occur. A study by Geiger-Oneto, Gelb, Walker, and Hess (2013) titled “Buying status by choosing or rejecting luxury brands and their counterfeits” examines a model of three alternative brand type choice processes of genuine and fake brands and finds support for the significance of status projection in choosing or refusing to buy luxury brands. It was confirmed that rejecting the two brands (authentic and counterfeit) supposes a state of status or prestige.

On the basis the above we propose a hypothesised relationship between Top of Range positioning and brand choice as such.

H1b: Top of Range positioning has a positive impact on brand choice

Attributes and Brand Choice

Attributes: Attributes are defined as the physical properties of a product that were quantitative and impartially quantifiable (Wu, Day, & MacKay, 1988). However, in later years the acknowledged definition has extended to comprise every evaluative qualification, including objective or physical properties e.g. price, brand name or country of origin, and subjective properties e.g. quality, style or comfort, and different parts of the product that a consumer may see as providing benefit or value (Grapentine, 1995; Jamal & Goode, 2001; Wu *et al.*, 1988).

The product attributes model (Lancaster, 1966, 1979) supposes that consumer choice is based on the features (or attributes) of a brand. The consumer develops utility based on the level of these attributes existing in the brand that she/he chooses within a budget constraint (Gwin & Gwin, 2003). The product attributes model describes individual choice as a procedure of choosing bundles of product attributes innate in goods and services. The model assumes that consumer choice depends on increasing utility (or the level of gratification received) from the product attributes subject to a budget limitation. Lancaster (1966, 1971, 1979) demonstrates that consumers have preferences for qualities (or attributes) of products. Singh, Hansen, & Gupta (2005) discovered strong associations in favourability across categories for product attributes such as brand names and low fat or fat free in multi-category brand choice model. Myers (2003) studied “Managing brand equity: a look at the impact of attributes” and concluded that attributes are significant contributors to brand choice.

On the basis of this, the current study proposes a hypothesised relationship between attributes and brand choice as follows.

H1c: Attributes as positioning strategy has a positive impact on brand choice

Surrogate and Brand Choice

Surrogate: It is fundamentally defined as the positioning made on a mental theme. It is essentially intended to create consumer associations about outside characteristics of a brand. It projects elements of the brand that enables the consumer to arrive at a singular conclusion of affiliation to vague parts of the brand (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010). Particularly, the study by Fuchs and Diamantopoulos, affirms arguments about the relative viability of positioning strategies by uncovering that, surrogate positioning generally overtakes feature-based positioning strategies (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010). An underlying point for this assertion is that customers at first sight of benefits will make the purchase as against features (He, Sengupta, Velkoff, & DeBarros, 2005). Bagozzi (1986) hints that acknowledged brand benefits are a lot more significant to the assessment process of the consumer as compared to the brand's corporeal characteristics on the grounds that they are really expected to tackle a need or an issue. Broniarczyk and Gershoff (2003) added to the argument that brands progressively add on features that are unsuccessful in providing benefits that are significant and important to consumers. Regarding this, markets have become loaded with brands in recent times. This situation supports that with the relatively indistinguishable and common features sprawling around today's markets (Ries & Trout, 1986) – separating brand from that of competition using brand features would be extremely tough (Aaker, 2003) mainly in product categories in which a product's practical usefulness is considered fundamentally the same (Vriens & Hofstede, 2000; Wind & Mahajan, 2002). Specifically because of the present-day innovative advancement, the distinctive preferred standpoint made by feature positioning is as often as possible just brief (Hsieh, 2002), in light of the fact that most

product features can without much of a stretch be replicated by the competition (Moe & Fader, 2001). Therefore, feature based positioning might essentially bring about perceptions of me-too (Lefkoff-Hagius & Mason, 1993). Drawing from above, there is no amazement in the fact that "benefits are felt to be more powerful than features as positioning approaches" (Crawford, 1985, p. 253; see additionally Wind, 1982). Positioning on surrogate yield added self-significant implications with high proximity to the needs and values of customers, and for that matter should, along these lines, be firmly identified with attitudes of brands, better than facts that create connotations concerning the product (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). Graeff (1997, p. 178), confirms for sure that, "consumers should be more persuaded by thoughts about what products can do for them and a product's relevance to personal goals or objectives than by thoughts about physical product characteristics". In their study of "Authenticity perceptions, brand equity and brand choice intention", Lu, Gursoy, & Lu, (2015) observed the associations between customers' authenticity perception and brand equity measures (brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty). The results clearly show that customers' authenticity perception is a vital determinant of brand equity, and brand equity in turn has a substantial influence on customers' choice. The current study in respect of above expects a positive relationship between surrogate and brand choice.

H1d: Surrogate positioning has a positive impact on Brand choice

Country of origin (COO): The country of origin assess the importance of a perceived brand due to the “made in” term, meaning that the brand shares similar image with the country it emanates from if that country is mentioned as the “made in” country (Nebenzahl, Jaffe, & Lambert, 1997). As a result of the globalization phenomenon, businesses expand their establishment throughout a range of nations. Consumers are more sensitive to the growing number of international products available to them currently (Essoussi & Merunka, 2007). Concurrently, the awareness of country-of-origin (COO) also grows and raises several questions in academic and business research (Johansson, Douglas & Nonaka, 1985; Essoussi & Merunka, 2007; Keränen & Jalkala, 2014). Diverse studies propose that COO drives a lot of impact on intention to purchase (Häubl, 1996; Wang & Yang, 2008; Fetscherin & Toncar, 2009). For instance, country of origin impacts consumer buying behaviour towards cars, mobile phone brands etc. (Yunus & Rashid, 2016). Country of origin possesses influence on consumers’ awareness of brand and their buying decisions, and they maintain the influence over numerous perspectives (Schooler, 1965; Samiee, 1994; Peterson & Joilbert, 1995; Lerman & Kabadayi, 2010; Touzani, Fatma & Meriem, 2015).

These perspectives can lead to issues concerning the general attributes of the country (GCA) (Parameswaran & Pisharodi, 1994; Stevens & Dykes, 2013). GCA might influence the COO effect and consequently the customers’ perception on product’s evaluation, especially in less developed countries (Bilkey & Nes, 1982). The results of Mohd Yasin, Nasser Noor, & Mohamad, (2007) on country-of-origin and brand equity show that brand's country- of-origin image impacts brand equity, through brand loyalty and brand awareness/associations. Bruning (1997) investigated “Country of origin, national loyalty and product choice”. The findings show that, national loyalty follows next to price in terms of inducing the selection of air travel.

Drawing from above, the study expects country of origin as a positioning strategy to have a positive relationship with brand choice in Ghana's bottled water industry, and propose a hypothesised relationship as follows.

H1e: Country of Origin as a positioning strategy has a positive impact on brand choice

Moderating Role of Customer Brand Sensitivity on Brand Positioning and Brand Choice

The strength of the relationship between the consumer and the brand is depicted by the customer's brand sensitivity (Ganesan, 1994). When the consumer is in the process of making the purchase, the most influential variable that affects the decision-making to recall the brand is attitude. Therefore, sensitivity aligns with brand attachment (Olshavsky & Granbois, 1979). If sensitivity is based on imagination, then the association is symbolic and elucidates a connexion formed by the brand's frame of significances and the consumer's values (Fournier, 1998). An individual's brand sensitivity is fundamentally underpinned by attachment, which is a psychological variable (Michona & Changeur, 2003). To explain brand attachment, the respective perception between the self-concept and the brand personality may just be enough.

A consumer who shows brand sensitivity is devoted in a cognitive and emotional manner (Zainuddin, Russell-Bennett & Hartel, 2007), and he makes a choice dependent on the brand nature and importance on the buying process (Bourke, Tomlison, William, Bullock, Shaw, & Gibson, 2006). Bouhlel, Mzoughi, Hadiji, and Slimane (2011) investigated the moderating effect of brand sensitivity on the relationship between brand personality and consumer purchase decision and observed that brand sensitivity has a positive moderating impact on consumer purchase decision. One of the motivations for the current study derives

from the results of Bouhlel *et al.* (2011), who examined the brand sensitivity influence on the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice. The authors assert that sensitivity plays an influential or moderating role in the psychological procedure that goes before the purchase (Bouhlel *et al.*, 2011). Given this we propose that,

H2: Customer brand sensitivity moderates the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice.

3.16 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the study has reviewed extant theoretical, conceptual and empirical literature on the different constructs and concepts constituting the study. Various definitions and conceptualisations of brand positioning, brand choice as well as the underpinning theory, choice theory are detailed in this chapter. Development of typologies of positioning and the various era that gave birth to the positioning era are also reviewed.

The chapter shows a review of literature on brand sensitivity and its proposed impact on brand positioning and brand choice relationship. The conceptual framework is depicted graphically in this chapter, showing the various hypothesised relationships between brand positioning, brand sensitivity and brand choice.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Chapter Overview

The fourth chapter of this study is structured in a way that it orients from an introduction through the positivist paradigm, lending relevance to the design so chosen. Additionally the chapter focuses attention on the target population, the sampling technique, the instrument and mode used for the data collection. We go on to assess the tool used for analysing the data collected, and the reliability and validity of conducted on the scale is likewise discussed. Moreover the researcher in this chapter throws light on the limitations of the study and presents a summary of the research methodology.

Yin (2003) explains that a research methodology defines the research activity, how to proceed with the research, how to measure progress, and what makes up the success of the research.

4.1 Research Paradigm

The two main approaches to research are qualitative and quantitative (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2008). Qualitative is said to be subjective while quantitative is described as objective. Qualitative study is inductive while quantitative is deductive in their views on the relationship between research and theory. Whereas qualitative research relies on words and descriptives in its data collection and analysis, quantitative research relies on quantification and statistics in its data collection and analysis (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

For the goal of this study, the quantitative method is employed. A paradigm represents viewpoints, standards and procedures that are commonly held by individuals in an academic or scientific community, besides are guiding codes directing the problem types that scientists

ought to address and the forms of clarifications that are satisfactory to them (Kuhn, 2012). Scholars (Chan, 2015; Kim, 2003; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991) assert that the most commonly used paradigms that researchers in the social sciences employ to reflect the major hypothetical and philosophical issues are positivism, interpretivist, realism, relativism and critical realism. According to Creswell (2014) however, each of the paradigms has its own distinctive procedure of ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs that serve as a conception to clarify and isolate them from each other and, based on this, explanations are given for the theoretical position embraced by the researcher. The positivist approach of investigation is chosen for this research.

The French philosopher, August Comte is quoted to have given prior philosophical thoughts structured on the fact that observing and reasoning are approaches for understanding human behaviour and this is where the experts have indicated that the positivist paradigm stems from (Dash, 2005). Moreover, the greatest number of academics hold the view that the positivist method dominates management research literature at present (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). There are scientific principles and norms which are used to understand the positivist framework. These are determinism, empiricism, parsimony, and generality (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Determinism, as suggested by Dash (2005), puts forward that happenings are initiated by numerous conditions; therefore, recognising the related connectivity, is paramount for controlling when and how events occur. Secondly, empiricism supposes collection of confirmable empirical evidences for backing hypotheses or assumptions. The author notes moreover that parsimony suggests the justification of the occurrence in the most reasonable way understandable; with generalization as the means of summing up the opinion of the precise issue to the rest of the world.

4.2 Research Design

A study's design is the plan for meeting aims and understanding information to respond to the research purpose (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). In the opinion of Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), most likely a research's purpose may be exploratory, explanatory or descriptive. Malhotra (2007) recognises two broad areas under research design, namely exploratory and conclusive. Primarily, he considers that exploratory research seeks to offer awareness into, and an understanding of the problem that the researcher meets. It is mainly used in cases where one must define the problem more accurately, identify related courses of action, and or gain extra awareness into a phenomenon.

Conclusive research, on the other hand, is characteristically formal and more structured than exploratory research. It is founded on large, representative samples, and the data so obtained are processed through quantitative analysis. Thereafter, the results are considered to be conclusive in nature owing to the fact that they are used as inputs into managerial decision making. In respect of the above and considering that the current research seeks to investigate the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice with the moderating role of brand sensitivity, the researcher considers it suitable to progress with an explanatory study, make an effort to explicate why the occurrence of an outcome (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Through the lens of choice theory the researcher hypothesizes direct relationships between positioning variables and consumer brand choice.

According to Yin (2003), either one of an experimentation, surveying, archival analysis, history and case studies could be used in exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research

when gathering and evaluating data to be used as empirical evidence. Therefore in line with the above, the survey approach was considered suitable for this study; the reason being that the research was founded on evaluation of hypotheses using data collected and analysed from a large sample size (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). A survey refers to a method of data collection and analysis where participants are drawn from a population for study purposes, and from the findings, inferences are made on the population (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Depending on whether they reject or include clear thought regarding a period of measurement, survey designs might be recognized as cross sectional or longitudinal (Robson, 2002).

4.3 Study and Target Population

Burns and Bush (2000), in defining population, consider the entire group under study in line with the specified goals of the research work. For the current study, the population was limited to consumers of bottled water in Ghana with specific bounds on the students and lecturers of the University of Ghana Business School, the University of Professional Studies, the Regional Maritime University and the general public. The researcher was not be part of the population under study, and only administered the data collection instrument.

4.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A structured questionnaire with close ended questions was the chosen instrument to collect data (Burns, 2000), and it was self-administered through convenience sampling to arrive at the sample population. The sample population, as explained by Bryman and Bell (2007), “is the world of units from which the sample is to be nominated”. Consumers of bottled water in Ghana constitute the population for this research.

A sample is the section of a populace that is chosen for examination (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.183). Bryman and Bell (2007) elucidates that, likelihood testing is the point at which every unit in the populace has an equivalent chance of being selected while non-likelihood inspecting includes human judgment in the choice procedure of an example.

Many other researchers such as Tikunov, Lommen, De Vos, Verhoeven, Bino, Hall and Bovy (2005, p. 202) likewise reason that, with non-likelihood testing, it depends on the judgment of the scientist, suggesting that a sample is made up of elements that are highly representative of the population in terms of characteristics and attributes. Accordingly, a sample size of 400 was used for this study.

According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of about 384 is adequate for a study with a vast population. Considering the population of bottled water consumers in Ghana, the researcher's choice of a 400 sample size can be seen as appropriate. Non-probability sampling technique involves selection of samples. According to Neuman (2006), non-probability sampling technique is useful when working with a smaller sample size and when the researcher wants to select cases that are well informed. Lecturers and students from the above mentioned institutions who consume bottled water are well informed as well as a prudent targets for brand positioning strategies and can better understand and answer the questions. Saunders *et al.* (2009) identified five kinds of "non-probability sampling; quota sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, self-selection sampling and convenience sampling". The convenience sampling was used for the study. This was done to address issues of accessibility and proximity of respondents to the researcher.

4.4.1 Student Sample Justification

As justification for the selection of a large student sample for this study, the relevant literature has established that even though they (students) may not have regular income, they have purchasing power (i.e., they have other sources like student loan/credit schemes, parental support, and support from spouses etc.). They are “trendsetters, brand loyal, early-adopters and with influence over parental purchases” (Noble *et al.*, 2009). Additionally, university students are sure to benefit from future advanced standard of living made possible with credit facility, and precisely, credit cards (Worthington, 1998, 1999).

Purchasing power is understood to be the capacity to buy products, be it minor (low involvement) or most important (high involvement) buying. Undoubtedly, it shows that the college or university student market is a worthwhile business endeavour and a justifiable sample for research (Worthington, 1998, 1999). This brands the college student market worthy of interest to scholars and practitioners alike.

4.5 Data Collection Instrument and Method

With the purpose of addressing the research questions and to examine the stated hypotheses, the data collection instrument employed for this study was a questionnaire (see Appendix A).

A survey approach utilizing surveys was acknowledged for this study, in accordance with earlier investigations identified with brand selection/choice (Friedl, Sulla-Menashe, Tan, Schneider, Ramankutty, Sibley & Huang, 2010; Hansen *et al.*, 2007). The plan of the polls were principally in light of numerous estimation scales, which were embraced and adjusted

from past studies. The main segment of the poll inspired statistic data on age, sex, job, wage ranks and instructive capabilities collectively with the brands of bottled water consumers preferred most. The second segment got data on how selected brand positioning variables influenced brand selection/choice. The study questionnaire was built on a five (5) point Likert scale, which indicated 1 “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree”. For Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) positioning we adapted a scale from previous works (Paul et al., 1997) measuring CSR with six (5) items. Top of Range positioning was measured by adopting Blankson and Kalafatis’ (2004) scale, which measures Top of Range with six (6) items, namely upper class, status, prestigious, posh and impressive, personal attention and see people as vital. In addition, the scale chosen to measure the third latent variable (Attributes) was adopted from Taylor (2006), and measured using four (4) items; quality, design, durability, and safe and hygienic. The scale for the fourth latent variable, Surrogate, was adopted from Crawford (1985) using five (6) items to measure surrogate; nonpareil, parentage of brand, brand company and person, manufacturer, and process, ingredients, design. Country of Origin (COO) positioning was evaluated by adopting a scale in the literature that scholars (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Yang & Wang, 2008; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009) have tested over time based on three (3) items; patriotism, country of origin, and youth market.

Moreover to evaluate respondents’ brand sensitivity (moderating variable), we applied the Kapferer and Laurent’s (1983) brand sensitivity scale. The first scale shows a solitary measurement, plus it’s made out of eight items. In any case, after approval through two fundamental investigations of young people, one item that did not appear to impart sufficient change communalities to other items and was discarded. From the remaining seven items, six are five-point Likert scale items and the seventh item asks the participant to rank the

importance of choice. Therefore, in respect of the purposes of the current study, we adopted the 6 items that fitted on the 5 point likert scale.

The outcome or dependent variable, brand choice, was adapted from Shabbir *et al.* (2009) and Radder and Huang (2008) and was operationalised with seven (7) items.

The structured questionnaires were used to collect responses from consumers of bottled water in the University of Ghana Business School, Regional Maritime University, and University of Professional Studies. The questionnaires were self-administered and retrieved on the spot where the intercept occurred. From the overall sample of four hundred (n=400) respondents, participants who had missing data on measures of Corporate social responsibility positioning, Surrogate positioning and Top of Range positioning equalled seven (n=7) and were omitted from the dataset. As a result, the total number of respondents reduced to three hundred and ninety three (n=393) used for the analysis. Their demographic profile is briefed in Table 5.1.

4.6 Data Processing and Mode of Analysis

In all, a total of 400 questionnaires were distributed out of which 393 were found useful for the analysis. This represented 98.25 per cent. The remaining were composed of that which were not returned, not completely filled or had more than one answer ticked for the same question. An assertion by Emery and Cooper (2003) has it that raw data gathered from a research serves no useful purpose until it has been converted into information that is capable of driving or influencing decision making. Data analysis included developing, summarising, connecting statistical inferences and the use of tables and charts to interpret the raw data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) software was used for this analysis.

Data was then presented in tables, graphs and narratives. The IBM SPSS was used for “descriptive statistics” including “frequency tables”, central tendency and regression. (AMOS 21.0) was used for structural equation modelling (SEM) to examine the structural component of the measurement and the structural model (Hair, Sarstedt, Weman & Kuppelwieser, 2014).

The SPSS was mostly used for coding, inputting of raw data and data cleaning. The AMOS, on the other hand, was used for running covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) to measure the structural model (Hair, Sarstedt, *et al.*, 2014).

Structural Equation Modeling is deemed the dominant multivariate technique used in social research (Chin, 1998; Hair *et al.*, 2014). When SEM procedure is rightly applied it possesses considerable merits over other techniques such as principal component analysis, factor analysis, or discriminant analysis. This is because SEM is much more flexible when used to empirically examine theories and conceptual models (Hair *et al.*, 2014), model associations among manifold estimators and standard variables (Chin, 1998), assess latent variables at the observation level (measurement model), and to test associations between latent variables on theory level (structural model) (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2012), and to model errors in measurements for observed variables (Chin, 1998).

The data analysis encompasses and begins with undertaking descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, frequencies and mean errors for the latent variables. The model is then assessed and verified for fitness, validity and reliability. Measuring model fit comprises two main conditions: *absolute* fit and *comparative* fit (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Mostly absolute fit criteria include chi-square (χ^2), root-mean-square-error of approximation (RMSEA), root-mean-square-residual (RMSR), goodness-of-fit-index (GFI) and adjusted

goodness-of-fit index (AGFI). The absolute fit is based on the variances between the observed and the covariance matrix (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The comparative fit, on the other hand, reflects whether, in accounting for the observed data, the model used is more enhanced than other models. Hair *et al.* (2014) confirms that comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI) and relative non-centrality index (RNI) are some of the criteria used in the comparative fit.

Data collected in this study was evaluated for measurement model fit with the following fit indexes showing values predictably satisfactory according to researchers (*see* Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hu & Bentler, 1999): Root-Mean-Squared-Error of Approximation (**RMSEA ≤ 0.08**), Goodness-of-Fit-Index (**GFI ≥ 0.90**), Normed Fit Index (**NFI ≥ 0.90**) and Comparative Fit Index (**CFI ≥ 0.90**). The chi-square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit value is used to estimate the adequacy of the theorised model's construction of a covariance matrix. Hu and Bentler (1999) contend that the significance of the chi-square (χ^2) is affected by sample size; large sample sizes can swell the chi-square (χ^2) during the estimation of model fit. This has led researchers to divide the value of the chi-square (χ^2) by degree of freedom (*df*) (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair *et al.*, 2012, 2014; Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow & King, 2006). Generally it is agreed that a χ^2/df ratio (normed chi-square) smaller than 3 is positive for a large sample study. Centred on the recommendations of Byrne (2016) and Kline (2015), the study employed the use of these fit indices to assess the suitability and strength of the construct measurements.

4.7 The Reliability and Validity of the Scale

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire scales is important for obtaining the most accurate results. Based on the above, questionnaires must be evaluated or assessed in order to confirm that measurements are free of bias and distortion. Reliability and validity tests are necessary for weighing the accuracy of the measurement scale chosen for the analysis (Golafshani, 2003; Read, 2013; Roberts, Priest, & Traynor, 2006). According to Hair *et al.* (2003), when repeated, the given results must of necessity be similar in order that questionnaires can be considered reliable and valid. In effect, that study would produce the same results if repeated on a consecutive time or occasion.

The reliability and validity of the research instruments used is done by checking the Pearson's correlation coefficients. Pearson's correlation is a measure of the strength of the relationship between the two variables. It presents information on the magnitude of the relationship, or correlation, as well as the direction of the association among variables.

Reliability is determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the composite reliability. Assessing Reliability using Cronbach's alpha means considering a threshold of 0.6 as a minimum, as compared to the composite reliability, which has an acceptable minimum of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

Validity, on the other hand, covers convergent validity and discriminant validity. Fornell-Lacker criterion and cross loadings, are used to assess Discriminant validity, where the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than the correlation shared between the construct and the other constructs. AVE loading should have a minimum of 0.5 to be satisfactory (Hair *et al.*, 2014) in assessing Convergent validity.

4.7.1 Reliability of the Research Instrument

Saunders *et al.* (2009) assert that reliability is a suggestion of the accuracy, exactness, and stability of the measurement. Reliability likewise is indicative of the trustworthiness and strength of the research findings, such that the findings can be replicated in varied contexts (Cooper, Schindler & Sun, 2006). In other words, reliability is a pointer of how sufficiently the items being tested measure the subject construct or notion, that is, a measurement of internal consistency (Babin, Carr, Griffin & Zikmund, 2012). The Internal consistency of the measuring scale items is typically verified using the Cronbach alpha coefficient (see Hair *et al.*, 2006; Pallant & Tennant, 2007). Cronbach alpha howbeit being a widely used method of testing reliability, Peterson and Kim (2013) caution that Cronbach alpha is of lower bound therefore underestimates the true reliability. Drawing on the above argument, the study adopted both the Cronbach alpha and the composite reliability method, which is mostly used in structural equation modelling (see Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016; Hair, Sarstedt, Matthews, & Ringle, 2015). Composite reliability measures the total reliability of a collection of assorted but like items (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014).

According to Malhotra and Birks (2007) however, reliability simply denotes “the extent to which measurement replicates consistent results principally if the process of measurement is to be recurrent” and therefore, evaluating reliability is not a sufficient way of evaluating validity. Pallant (2003) in agreeing confirms that the reasoning behind testing reliability is to check the scales used for analysis to safeguard that all items that make up the scale "make sense" and, as a result, they are internally consistent. In this study therefore, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to verify the dependability of the scales. Researchers Pallant (2003) and Hair *et al.* (2010) seem to generally agree that, preferably, this value ought to be

more or greater than 0.7. it can nonetheless also be as low as 0.60 especially when considering exploratory research (Malhotra, Kim & Patil, 2006). After all corrections to errors and end of invalid cases or reasons were made, the last example measure for this examination stayed at 393. Utilizing the reduced data set (n=393), the investigation approved multi-things measures. The “internal reliability” of the seven elements/factors was analysed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and complemented by the assessment of composite reliability. Only factors that met the minimum values as hypothesized by Hair, Sarstedt, Weman and Kuppelwieser (2014) were recognized for further analysis.

4.7.2 Validity of the Research instrument

Whereas Zikmund *et al.* (2012) define validity as the point to which a score honestly represents a concept, Burns and Burns (2008) refer to the appropriateness of the measurements to estimate the variable it claims to measure. In this study, Construct Validity is used to detect how well the results from the data analysis fits theory (Sarstedt, Wilczynski, & Melewar, 2013). Construct validity includes two (2) sub-types: Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity. Convergent Validity was used to confirm that the constructs identified are truly reflected by their indicators (Rezaei & Ghodsai, 2014; Rezaei, 2015), likewise, to determine the point to which a construct differs from other constructs, Discriminant validity was employed (Rezaei, 2015; Rezaei & Ghodsai, 2014). We note here that Discriminant validity is observed using Fornell-Lacker criterion and cross loadings, where the square root of AVE is greater than the correlation shared between the construct and the other constructs. Whereas for Convergent Validity, it is observed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings (Kim, Hwang, Zo & Lee, 2014; Rezaei, 2015). The indication in extant literature recommends that the threshold for loadings of 0.50, be accepted to be substantial and an indication of validity. The AVE defines the proportion

of the variance that is explained by the indicators relative to a precise construct. The satisfactory AVE score is 0.50 and above (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

4.8 Ethical Consideration

Saunders *et al.* (2009) explain that ethics is the right kind of behaviour that the researcher exhibits to keep in confidence details of the respondents who participated in the survey. To this end, the researcher made certain to conform and subject the study to principles meant to protect the dignity and privacy of respondents or participants in the survey including those who provided personal, confidential and valuable information about themselves, and of their organisations. The authors assert that, because sensitive and personal information will be asked for, analysed and afterward reported, the researcher must make sure not to implicate any respondent or ensure no participant is negatively affected. On the basis of the above, the purpose of the research was introduced to all respondents to give them the opportunity to voluntarily offer themselves to participate. In essence, confidentiality was a key principle that was observed in collecting data. No person became a subject of this study under duress or undue influence, so that all participants out of their free will gave their consent. Trochim's (2006) principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, no risk of harm and of confidential and anonymity were followed strictly in the collection of data and processing of same.

These research ethics were followed during the data collection process to the point that respondents were free to participate or otherwise. The respondents unequivocally consented to take part in the study, and the researcher assured participants that there was no risk involved in taking part whether to health or security. The questionnaire did not at any point require a respondent to specify their address or name, and this aided to ensure confidentiality.

4.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the philosophical opinion employed by the researcher for the study, the research design, sample size, the variables under study, the data collection instrument and method, the reliability and validity of the scale, ethical consideration and data processing and analyses.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Chapter Overview

The previous chapters of this study were dedicated to the review of literature relating to the topic, which enabled the development of appropriate hypotheses and methodology for collecting data. The findings of the research have been presented in this chapter, and the information is shown in tables, frequencies and percentages, guided by the objectives of the study. The presentation of analysis are grouped into three parts: the first part presents information on the demographic characteristics of respondents and the actual consumer preference for bottled water; the second section of the finding details information on the descriptive statistic of the items measuring the different factors or construct of the study; and the latter section of the chapter examines the influence of brand positioning strategy on brand choice in Ghana's bottled water industry.

The data collected was evaluated using SPSS and AMOS. The SPSS was used for the descriptive analysis, and AMOS was deployed for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The data collected was subjected to screening in order to refine it and get rid of non-engaging answers by respondents on the scale measurement items. The researcher, for the purposes of fine tuning the data, removed responses that had no variation in their responses

with a standard deviation of zero (see Ainin *et al.*, 2015). In all, seven (7) responses were removed at the end. Therefore, out of the four hundred and four (400) responses received, the usable responses were three hundred and ninety three (393) representing 98.25%.

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents indicate or describe the demographic statistics of consumers in Ghana's bottled water industry. It also gives an indication of how respondents demonstrated their preferences for different brands of bottled water. Table 5.1 represents the frequency and percentages of the demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, employment status, educational level, average monthly income, and bottled water brand preference) of bottled water consumers who were sampled for this study.

Table 5. 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents: (N=393)

Factor		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	206	52.40%
	Female	187	47.60%
	Total	393	100%
Age of Respondent	Less than 24	248	63.10%
	25-34	114	29%
	35-44	29	7.40%
	45-54	1	0.30%
	55-65	1	0.30%
	Total	393	100%
Marital Status	Married	44	11.20%
	Unmarried	328	83.50%
	Divorced	16	4.10%
	Widowed	5	1.30%
	Total	393	100%
Employment Status	Self Employed	23	5.90%
	Paid Employment	71	18.10%
	Unemployed	20	5.10%
	Student	279	71%

	Total	393	100%
Current Level of Education	SHS	21	5.30%
	Diploma	49	12.50%
	Undergraduate	243	61.80%
	Post Graduate	80	20.40%
	Total	393	100%
GhC 4.67:Usd 1	GhC		
Average Monthly Income	None	228	58%
	Less than 100	22	5.60%
	110-500	56	14.20%
	510-1000	52	13.20%
	Above 1000	35	8.90%
	Total	393	100%
Bottled Water Brand Preference	Voltic Mineral Water	147	37.40%
	Bel Aqua Mineral Water	116	29.50%
	Awake Purified Water	67	17%
	Verna Mineral Water	25	6.40%
	Special Ice Mineral Water	21	5.30%
	Eva Water	4	1%
	Vaettelle Mineral Water	1	0.30%
	Everpure Mineral Water	9	2.30%
	Safina Mineral Water	3	0.80%
	Total	393	100%

Source: Field data (2018)

Gender: Observing from Table 5.1, out the total number of three hundred and ninety three respondents 206 constituted male, representing 52.40% and 187 constituted female representing 47.60% of the total respondents.

Age: The indication from Table 5.1 above shows that for this study, 248 respondents representing 63.10% were of the age range less than 24, 114 respondents representing 29% of the total respondents were of the age range 25 to 34, 29 respondents representing 7.40% were between 35 and 44 in years of age. Additionally, for age ranges 45 to 54, and 55 to 60, we recorded one respondent each representing 0.30% and 0.30% respectively of the total

respondents. It can be inferred partially from above that Ghana's bottled water market is a youthful one.

Marital Status: The outcome shows that the majority of the sampled respondents, 328 representing 83.50%, were unmarried because they were students, whilst 44 respondents representing 11.20% were married. Furthermore, the number of respondents who were divorced was 16 representing 4.10%, and widowed respondents were 5, representing 1.30% of the total respondents.

Employment Status: When we considered the employment status of respondents, it was revealed that 271 respondents representing 71% constituted students, whereas 71 respondents representing 18.10% categorised respondents under paid employment, 23 respondents representing 5.90% were self-employed and 20 respondents representing 5.10% were unemployed.

Level of Education: Table 5.1 above shows 243 respondents representing 61.80% were found to be undergraduate students, and 80 respondents representing 20.40% were post graduate students, 49 respondents representing 12.50% Diploma students whereas 21 respondents were SHS students.

Monthly Income: The study reveals from the table that 228 respondents representing 58% of the total respondents were without monthly income. The question of how they buy bottled water then emerges. This is due to the rather large students sample adopted for this study. Literature has established that even though they (students) may not have regular monthly income, they have purchasing power (i.e., they have other sources like student loan/credit schemes, parental support, and support from spouses etc.). They are also trendsetters, brand loyal, mostly early-adopters and able to significantly influence parental purchases (Noble *et al.*, 2009). This clearly justifies why the large student sample was chosen. Fifty-six (56) representing 14.20% of respondents had structured monthly incomes of 110 to 500, with 52

respondents making up 13.20% of total respondents had incomes of 510 to 1000. Respondents with incomes above 1000 were 35 and constituted 8.90% of the total, whereas 22 respondents representing 5.60% claimed to have incomes of 100 and below.

Bottled water brand preference: The information from the data collected and analysed shows that respondents who preferred Voltic Mineral water were in the majority with a number of 147, representing 34.7% of total respondents. This was closely followed by respondents who favoured Bel Aqua Mineral water of 116 respondents representing 29.50%. In third place was Awake Purified water scoring a respondents number of 67 representing 17% of the total respondents. Again, 25 respondents followed with preference for Verna Mineral Water, representing 6.40% of the total respondents, Special Ice Mineral Water with 21 respondents constituting 5.30%. Ever Pure followed with 9 respondents representing 2.30% of the total respondents, and in addition, Eva Water had 4 respondents favouring as their preferred brand representing 1% of the total respondents. Safina Water came with 3 respondents representing 0.80% of the total. One (1) respondent representing 0.30% of the total respondents showed preference for Vaettelle.

It can be inferred that the information presented here is in consonance with what is prevalent in the industry with Voltic, Bel Aqua and Awake seemingly leading and directing developments in the industry.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 5.2 is an extraction from the dataset showing the descriptive statistic of the study. It exhibits the individual means and standard deviations of the numerous variables measured, and gives an indication of the degree to which the participants either disagreed or agreed with the statements embodied in the data collection instrument. The outcomes of the means of the measured variables point to how each statement, from the view point of the 393

respondents, was ranked. The means as estimated, varied from a minimum of 2.68 (Brand is very important to me when I buy bottled water) to a maximum of 3.58 (It makes me angry when bottled water brand producing companies act socially irresponsible). This could give an indication that, in Ghana's bottled water industry, consumers may be moderately attached to water brands. This notwithstanding, consumers appreciate very highly bottled water producers who are socially responsible. An implication for firms could be that they ought to inculcate social responsibility programmes in their total strategy as it seems to resonate well with consumers.

Table 5. 2: Descriptive Analysis of Measurement Statements

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
SR1 - I would be willing to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand produced by a company which helps the needy in society or promotes a social course	3.45	1.155
SR2 - I am willing to boycott buying bottled water brand from companies that I do not consider to be socially responsible	3.57	1.121
SR3 - It makes me angry when bottled water brand producing companies act socially irresponsible	3.58	1.069
SR4 - I try to avoid buying bottled water brand from companies with a poor reputation for social responsibility	3.51	1.187
TR1 - I buy bottled water brand that is characterized as high class by the upper class in society	3.51	1.139
TR2 - I am willing to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand that has the quality to exhibit my status	2.98	1.218
TR3 - I will buy bottled water brand to signify prestige in life	3.36	1.223
TR4 - I buy bottled water brand from a bottled water	3.28	1.241

producer who demonstrates attention to my personal needs		
AT1 - I buy bottled water brand produced under very high quality standards	3.32	1.203
AT2 - I prefer buying bottled water brand packaged in very attractive and well-designed bottles	3.4	1.204
AT3 - I choose to buy bottled water brand which is produced under very hygienic and safe conditions of purification	3.21	1.266
SG1 - I buy bottled water brand that is considered the best in the category	3.13	1.181
SG2 - I buy bottled water brand from a trusted and well known bottling company within the industry	3.12	1.22
SG3 - I buy bottled water brand that has a well-engineered production process and uses purification material that satisfies high standards in the food and beverages sector	3.18	1.233
SG4 - I buy bottled water brand produced by a company that has years of experience in bottled water production and has become a house hold name in the category	3.07	1.246
SG5 - I buy bottled water brand that is endorsed by the relevant regulatory authority and has other endorsement from high profile persons in society	3.16	1.215
CO1 - I take into consideration, the country from which my choice brand of bottled water is produced	2.88	1.163
CO2 - As a patriot, I prefer to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand that is produced from my own country as it supports economic growth of my country	2.97	1.225

CO3- I buy bottled water brand that serves a market that has a large segment of youth	3.08	1.156
CS1- When I buy bottled water, I look at the brand	2.9	1.253
CS2- When buying bottled water, I take the brand into account	3.02	1.231
CS3- I choose bottled water according to the brand	2.81	1.129
CS4- Brand is very important to me when I buy bottled water	2.68	1.171
BC1- I prefer buying the bestselling brand of bottled water	3.39	1.197
BC2- I buy well-known bottled water brand	3.52	1.152
BC3- I usually buy high quality bottled water brand	3.35	1.109
BC4- Given a choice, I buy bottled water brand with the best quality	3.37	1.101

Source: Field Data (2018)

Table 5.2 also presents information on the standard deviation of the respondents' totals. The standard deviation shows the degree to which each participants' tally digresses from the mean score of the statement in question. For this study, the standard deviation totals confirm that the score for each respondent deviated appreciably well from the mean of their score for the statement in question. The study recorded standard deviation measurements ranging from the least of 1.069 to the highest of 1.266. Recording a low standard deviation presupposes that responses from the statement in question were not too different from each other and, on the other hand, a high standard deviation suggests that the statement in question had responses that were very different from respondent to respondent.

5.3 Structural Equation Modeling

Structural Equation Modeling in research has attained an incomparable level of approval since its beginning (Chin, 1998). In extant studies, an assertion is made that structural equation modeling is obviously the leading multivariate technique in research (Hair *et al.*, 2014). This is due to the fact that SEM is more malleable and can be engaged to: empirically test theories and models (Hair *et al.*, 2014); and model associations among multiple estimator and standard variables (Chin, 1998). SEM uses two steps in assessing firstly latent variables at the observation level (measurement model) under Confirmatory Model (CFA), and secondly testing relationships between latent variables on the theoretical level, that is the Structural Model (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2012). Moreover the two step approach (confirmatory model and the structural model) are also used to model errors in measurements for observed variables (Chin, 1998).

In applying SEM, researchers can choose between two types of methods, namely, covariance based SEM [CB-SEM] (Jöreskog, 1978, 1993) and variance-based partial least squares [PLSSEM] (Wold, 1982, 1985). The two methods share the same foundations (Jöreskog & Wold, 1982), but a substantial number of preceding studies have employed CB-SEM for marketing related research (*see* Bagozzi, 1994; Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 2000) and accordingly this study also employs SEM for the analysis of the data collected.

5.3.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Researchers (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Bagozzi & Yi, 2012) assert that when Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is employed in a research data analysis, it estimates the multiple interrelated dependence relationships that exists among variables or factors. The current study employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) by means of AMOS to conduct the confirmatory factor analysis. The reason, according to Jöreskog *et al.* (1979), is that Structural Equation

Modelling (AMOS) depends on a multiplicity of statistical tests to define the strength of a model's predictive prowess. For this to be done, a combination of a number of fit measures are required to evaluate the outcomes. This is based on the assertion of scholars (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Byrne, 2013) that general fit, comparative fit to a base model, and model parsimony are the three aspects that are needed for confirmation in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM – AMOS). Based on the diverse assessment involved in the process, Bollen (1989) recommends that defining a suitable model fit eventually becomes the prerogative of the researcher. The researcher in line with this assertion has fallen on the commonly acceptable fit indices used in social research.

We understand from literature that testing of a structural model may be futile lest it is likely that the measurement model holds. That is to say that the chosen indicators for a construct must sufficiently measure that construct, if not, the definite theory must undergo modifications before it can be verified (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Having mentioned this however, it becomes necessary to account on the features of the measurement model that will be intended for assessing the operational hypotheses. Accordingly, the measurement model of the seven constructs (Corporate Social Responsibility, (SR); Top of Range, (TP); Attributes (AT); Surrogate, (SG); Country of Origin, (CO); Customer Brand Sensitivity, (CS); and Brand Choice (BC) were evaluated through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

The preliminary results from the AMOS interface exposed some unfit indices, as a result it became necessary to modify and further purify the data items by dropping some of the weak items (Kline, 2015). It can be observed from the AMOS output which modifications are more likely to be made to the proposed model by examining the modifications indices. Hair *et al.* (2010) vehemently suggest that theory and content should of need be factored in making model modifications. On a similar note, one of the most common change would be

the removal of weak items that do not perform with reference to the model reliability, model fit, or construct validity.

As a sequel, the proposed measurement model was modified according to the magnitudes of factor loadings, cross loadings, measurement errors, and correlation between measurement errors. For the current study, the output from the AMOS software proposed adjustment of some items by removal/re-definition of weak variables. The re-specifications were incoherent with theory and leaves the vulnerability of practical modifications without theoretical validations, as held by Hair *et al.* (2014). As a result the researcher approached the modification process making certain sure that it was entirely necessary to drop or delete items, then, and only then were scale items methodically dropped/deleted. Over all, ten items were dropped: for Corporate Social Responsibility (1 items); Top of Range (2 items); Attributes (1 items); Surrogate (1 item); Customer Brand Sensitivity (2 items) and Brand Choice (3 items).

Thus, ten (10) items were removed after the CFA leaving the purified constructs with 27 items that delivered the best fit indices. Table 5.3 below presents the model fit indices after the alterations made to the measurement model.

Table 5.3: Fit Indices for Measurement Model

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	612.154	--	--
DF	282	--	--
CMIN/DF	2.171	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.952	>0.95	Excellent
SRMR	0.063	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.055	<0.06	Excellent
PClose	0.096	>0.05	Excellent

Source: Field Data, 2018

5.3.2 Validity and Reliability of Final Measurement Model

Reliability is determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the composite reliability. Assessing reliability using Cronbach's alpha means considering a threshold of 0.6 as a minimum. In addition however, composite reliability also has an acceptable minimum of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Validity, on the other hand, covers convergent validity and discriminant validity. Fornell-Lacker criterion and cross loadings are used to assess Discriminant validity, where the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than the correlation shared between the construct and the other constructs. AVE loading should have a minimum of 0.5 to be satisfactory (Hair *et al.*, 2014) in assessing Convergent validity.

The reliability measures were beyond the satisfactory levels (Cronbach's alphas > .70, Average Variance Extracted > .50, composite reliability > .70), (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Vandenberg & Higgins 1996; Nunnally, 1978). In addition, the factor loadings ranging from 0.50 to 0.85 exhibited good convergent validity. The resulting validity and reliability indicators of the final measurement model are displayed in Table 5.4 below. In essence, the measurement model represented in Table 5.4 and Fig 5.1 is perceived as the model that sufficiently fits the data collected for the study.

Table 5. 4: Validity and Reliability Results for CFA Final Measurement Model

Source: Field Data (2018)

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE	α
Corporate Social Responsibility	SR1: I would be willing to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand produced by a company which helps the needy in society or promotes a social course	0.789	0.814	0.523	0.813

	SR2: I am willing to boycott buying bottled water brand from companies that I do not consider to be socially responsible	0.63			
	SR3: It makes me angry when bottled water brand producing companies act socially irresponsible	0.829			
	SR4: I buy bottled water brand produced by a company that has years of experience in bottled water production and has become a house hold name in the category	0.749			
Top of Range	TR1: I buy bottled water brand that is characterized as high class by the upper class in society	0.725	0.803	0.605	0.806
	TR2: I am willing to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand that has quality features which meets social standard	0.508			
	TR3: I will buy bottled water brand to signify prestige in life	0.714			
	TR4: I buy bottled water brand from a bottled water producer who demonstrate attention to consumer needs	0.647			
Attributes	AT1: I buy bottled water brand produced under very high quality standards	0.746	0.881	0.708	0.881
	AT2: I prefer buying bottled water brand packaged in very attractive and well-designed bottles	0.668			
	AT3: I choose to buy bottled water brand which is produced under very hygienic and safe conditions of purification	0.766			

Surrogates	SG1: I buy bottled water brand that is considered the best in the category	0.744	0.88	0.6	0.868
	SG2: I buy bottled water brand from a trusted and well known bottling company within the industry	0.754			
	SG3: I buy from bottled water brand producer that shows through its advertisements, to produce water under high purification standards in the food and beverages sector	0.628			
	SG4: I buy bottled water brand produced by a company that has years of experience in bottled water production and has become a house hold name in the category	0.617			
	SG5: I buy bottled water brand that is endorsed by the relevant regulatory authority and has other endorsement from high profile persons in society	0.686			
Country of Origin	CO1: I take into consideration, the country from which my choice brand of bottled water is produced	0.782	0.862	0.677	0.858
	CO2: As a patriot, I prefer to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand that is produced from my own country as it supports economic growth of my country	0.792			
	CO3: I buy bottled water brand that serves a market that has a large segment of youth	0.687			
Customer Brand Sensitivity	CS1: When I buy bottled water, I have a particular brand in mind	0.718	0.864	0.619	0.872
	CS2: When buying bottled water, I take the brand	0.763			

	into account				
	CS3: I choose bottled water according to the brand	0.81			
	CS4: Brand is very important to me when I buy bottled water	0.836			
Brand Choice	BC1: I prefer buying the bestselling brand of bottled water	0.792	0.904	0.703	0.914
	BC2: I buy well-known bottled water brand	0.806			
	BC3: I usually buy high quality bottled water brand	0.86			
	BC4: Given a choice, I buy bottled water brand with the best quality and price combination	0.856			

Table 5.5 below shows that the squares of the correlations of the individual constructs were less than the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), proving its support for discriminant validity. Numerous studies have validated this method and certified that, in the assessment of the discriminant validity, each construct's AVE's must be compared with the squared correlations between each pair of the variables.

Table 5.5: Correlation Matrix

ITEMS	CR	AVE	SR	TR	AT	SG	CO	CS	BC
SR	0.814	0.523	0.723						
TR	0.803	0.605	0.442	0.778					
AT	0.881	0.708	0.445	0.764	0.842				
SG	0.88	0.6	0.546	0.715	0.765	0.774			
CO	0.862	0.677	0.296	0.613	0.713	0.724	0.823		
CS	0.864	0.619	0.346	0.522	0.471	0.571	0.550	0.787	

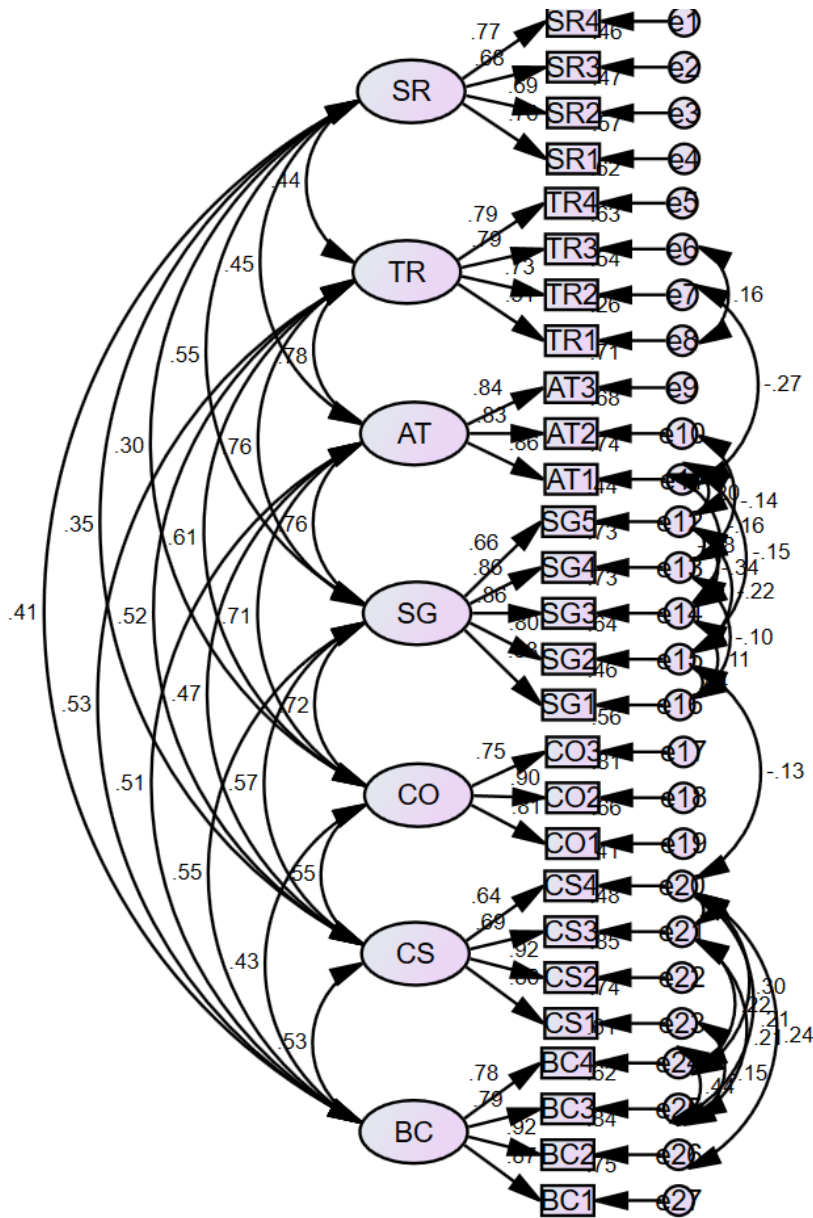
BC	0.904	0.703	0.409	0.529	0.511	0.554	0.426	0.531	0.839
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Note: The square root of AVEs for each construct are far greater than the corresponding inter-construct squared correlations, thereby supporting discriminant validity.

Source: Field Data (2018)

Segars (1997) and Anderson and Gerbing (1988) indicate that AVE's that are greater than any squared correlation suggest discriminant validity has been achieved. With AVE's ranging from 0.723 to 0.842, it is clear from Table 5.5 that discriminant validity has been achieved on grounds that, the criterion where the inter-construct squared correlations are less than the square root of the AVE's that are found on the diagonal.

Figure 5.1: Final Measurement Model



Source: Field Data (2018)

5.4 Assessment of the Structural Model

Given the density of the proposed model, coupled with the fact that existing interdependent relationships between the latent constructs was of interest to the researcher, structural equation modeling was chosen ahead of regression analysis, taking into consideration the assertion of Hair *et al.* (2014) that the suggested model for a study of this nature is finest if verified with a dependence technique. After constructs are confirmed and the measurement

model fits, then, examining the structural model is the key remaining stage of a SEM analysis (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Kline, 2015). The structural model conducted in this study was planned to examine some hypothetical propositions founded on the conceptual framework for the study. Byrne (2013) contends that structural models are proposed to postulate which latent constructs directly or indirectly impact the values of other latent constructs in the model.

5.4.1 Validation Test of Structural Model

The fundamental concerns that are required to validate the hypothesised relationships, as indicated by Byrne (2016), are: firstly, if the directions of the associations between the constructs reflect the ones hypothesised in the model, and that it can be examined from observing the signs of the individual factors; secondly, observing the strength of the hypothesised associations, this is reflected by the expected parameters, which should be at least significant (i.e., their individual t-values should be greater than 1.96); and finally, the volume of variance in the endogenous variables explicated by the individual suggested determinants, which can be estimated by observing the squared multiple correlations (R^2) for the structural equations.

There are five main relationship paths, with five other paths for the interaction and one path for the control variable, and a path showing the relationship between the moderating variable and the dependent variable. The initial five relationship paths depicts the correlation between selected brand positioning constructs (Corporate Social Responsibility (SORES); Top of Range (TORANG); Attributes (ATTRIB); Surrogate (SURROG); Country of Origin (COORIG), and brand choice (BRANCHOI).

The R^2 for the dimensions of brand positioning to brand choice is 0.37, indicating a high tendency for the brand positioning constructs studied in this research, namely Corporate

Social Responsibility, Top of Range, Attributes, Surrogate and Country of Origin of predicting customer brand choice.

The relative signs and magnitudes of the estimates are used to evaluate the path coefficients. The coefficient for corporate social responsibility is positive and relatively significant, with β of 0.115, t-value of 2.227, and p-value of .023. Likewise, top of range has a positive path coefficient but not significant with a β of 0.081, t-value of 0.307, and p-value of 0.191. Additionally, the path coefficient of Attributes is also positive and relatively significant with β of 0.124, t-value of 2.101, and p-value of 0.018. On the other hand, the path coefficient for surrogates was also positive and relatively significant with β of 0.275, t-value of 3.819, and p-value of ***. Moreover country of origin, which is the last construct for the baseline relationship, also had a positive path coefficient but again was not significant with β of 0.030, t-value of 0.494, and p-value of 0.621. Drawing from above information, three of the hypotheses (**H1a, H1c, and H1d**) in the proposed framework passed the test of significance and thus were supported whilst two of the hypothesis “**H1b, and H1e**” failed the test of significance and were not supported. Given that the parameter estimates (β , t-value, and p-value) for the three hypothesis (H1a, H1c, and H1d) are significant in their expected magnitude, it stands to reason that the predictive validity is highly supported (Byrne, 2016). This shows that the proposed hypotheses (**H1a, H1c and H1d**) in the conceptual framework are confirmed by the data, and concurrently supports the nomological validity of the constructs.

Indicatively, the absolute fit and incremental fit of the suggested model was evaluated. From the evaluation, a normed chi-square value of 1.862; root-mean-square-error of approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.047; and goodness-of-fit index (GFI) of 0.987 were realised. This shows an excellent absolute fit for the model. Also the incremental fit

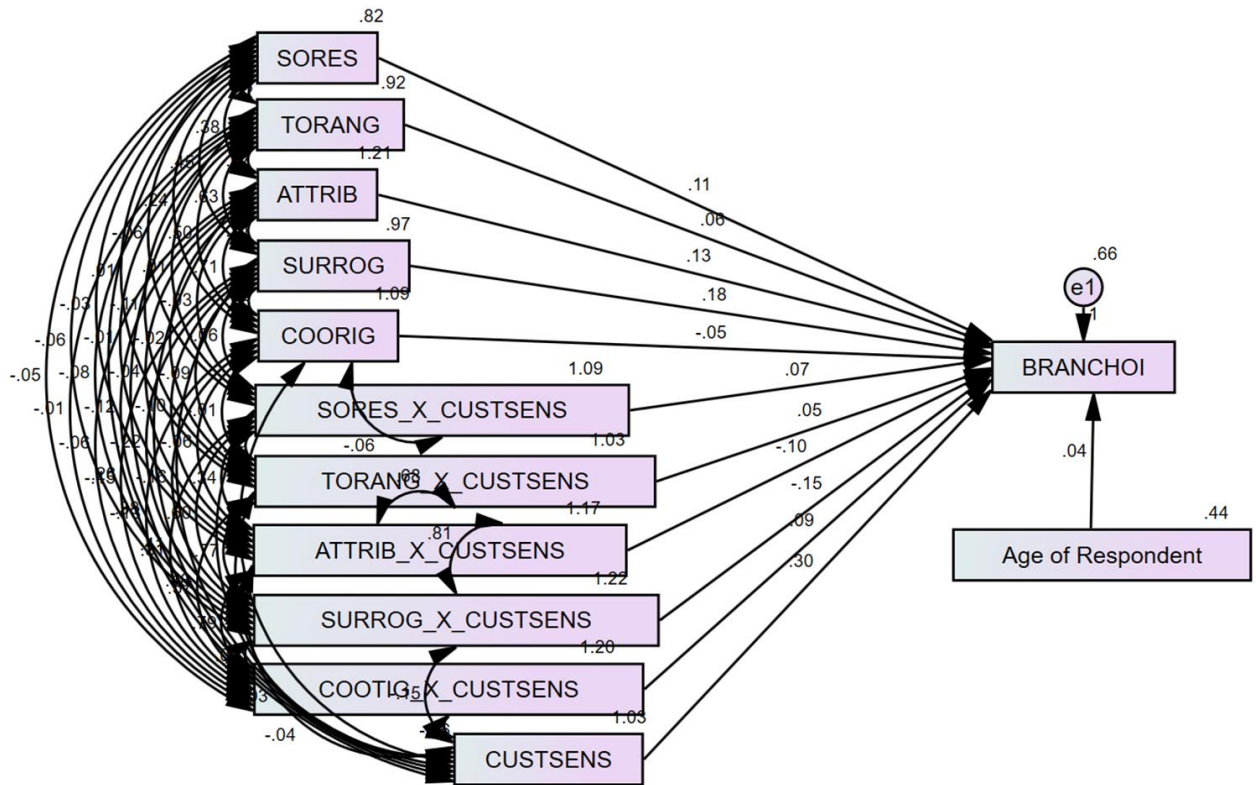
measures came out with a normed fit index (NFI) value of 0.980, and a comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.991. These indicate that the structural model has a satisfactory fit and has accomplished an adequate level of nomological validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 5.5 and Figure 5.2 represents the statistical and graphical results correspondingly from the structural equation modelling test of the hypothesised paths.

Table 5.6: Structural Model Assessment

Relationship			β -Estimate	t-value	P-Value
Direct Relationships					
H1a: BRANCHOI	<--	SORES	0.115	2.227	0.023
H1b: BRANCHOI	<--	TORANG	0.081	0.307	0.191
H1c: BRANCHOI	<--	ATTRIB	0.124	2.101	0.018
H1d: BRANCHOI	<--	SURROG	0.275	3.819	***
H1e: BRANCHOI	<--	COORIG	0.030	0.494	0.621
RMSEA = .047 GFI = .987 NFI = .980 CFI = .991 X2/df = 1.862 R2 = .37 *** p < .001; N = 393					

Figure 5.2: The Structural Model - Moderation



Source: Field Data (2018)

5.4.2 Test of Moderation

In this study it was hypothesised that the level of a customers’ sensitivity to the brand can cause a variation in the relationships between brand positioning constructs and the customers’ brand choice. That is to say, a moderating effect exists once brand sensitivity is introduced. These moderating effects of brand sensitivity have been verified and investigated as presented in Table 5.6. The study employed multiple regression analysis using interactions produced by the main constructs and the moderating variable on the outcome variable.

Researchers (Baron & Kenny, 1986) emphasise that, in a moderation test, the interaction/moderating term(s) ought to be a statistically significant estimator of the relationship

between the constructs being tested, and still be able to change the direction and/or strength of the relationship. Table 5.6 shows the results of the moderation tests. The compounded scales resulting from the CFA investigation are used as continuous variables with the interaction effects applied (that is, the moderating effect of CUSTSENS on the SORES---->BRANCHOI, TORANG---->BRANCHOI, ATTRIB --->BRANCHOI, SURROG --->BRANCHOI, and COORIG --->BRANCHOI paths).

Model	Hypothesis	Relationship	β -Estimate	t-Value	P-Value
1	H1a	BRANCHOI <- SORES	0.113	2.112	0.035
2	H1b	BRANCHOI <- TORANG	0.063	0.998	0.318
3	H1c	BRANCHOI <- ATTRIB	0.13	2.29	0.022
4	H1d	BRANCHOI <- SURROG	0.175	2.456	0.014
5	H1e	BRANCHOI <- COORIG	-0.051	-0.893	0.372
6	H2a	BRANCHOI <- SORES_X_CUSTSENS	0.071	1.519	0.129
7	H2b	BRANCHOI <- TORANG_X_CUSTSENS	0.048	0.796	0.426
8	H2c	BRANCHOI <- ATTRIB_X_CUSTSENS	-0.098	-1.681	0.093
9	H2d	BRANCHOI <- SURROG_X_CUSTSENS	-0.148	-2.18	0.029
10	H2e	BRANCHOI <- COOTIG_X_CUSTSENS	0.088	1.601	0.109
	Moderator	BRANCHOI <- CUSTSENS	0.303	6.273	***
	Control Variable	BRANCHOI <- Age	0.036	0.589	0.556

RMSEA = .0022 GFI = .995 NFI = .994 CFI = .999 X2/df = 1.198 R2 = .66
 *** p < .001; N = 393

Table 5. 7 Test for Moderation

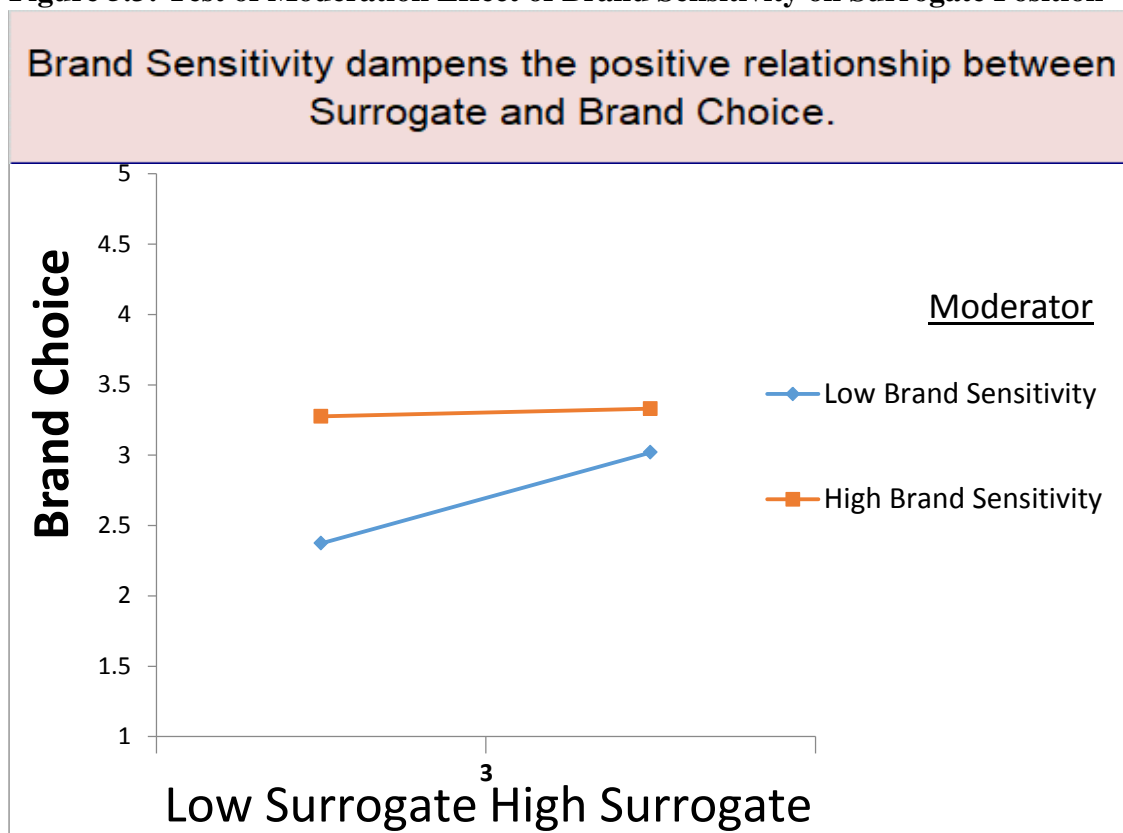
Source: Field Data (2018)

Per Table 5.7 above, Model 1,2,3,4, and 5 shows the structural baseline relationships that exist between brand positioning constructs and brand choice, as initially proposed in the framework of the research. Model 6,7,8,9 and 10, however, denotes the moderating effect of brand sensitivity on the association between brand positioning and brand choice. The information presented in the above table reveals that, for model 6, 7, 8, and 10, the interaction effect of brand sensitivity and corporate social responsibility, top of range, attributes, and country of origin, had no significant impact on brand choice with p-values

($p= 0.129$, $p= 0.426$, $p= 0.093$, $p= 0.109$) respectively greater than 0.05. Model 9, on the other hand, demonstrates that the interaction effect of brand sensitivity and surrogate positioning has a negative but significant relationship with brand choice, thus the probability of attaining a critical ratio as large as 2.18 in absolute value is .029. In other words, the regression weight for **SURROG_X_CUSTSENS** in the estimation of **BRANCHOI** is expressively different from zero at the 0.05 level. With β value of -0.148, t-value of -2.18, and p-value of 0.029, the effect is that, when the interaction effect of brand sensitivity and surrogate (**SURROG_X_CUSTSENS**) goes up by 1, brand choice (**BRANCHOI**) goes down by 0.148.

Figure 5.3 is a graphical representation of the moderating effect of brand sensitivity on the relationship between surrogate positioning and brand choice.

Figure 5.3: Test of Moderation Effect of Brand Sensitivity on Surrogate Position



Source: Field Data (2018)

5.5 Discussion of Major Findings

The idea behind developing brand positioning strategies is to propel brand choice in a particular section of a specific market/product group (Burke, 2011). For this reason, brand positioning has become a significant strategic decision (Hooley *et al.*, 2007; Keller & Lehmann, 2006) as it is influential to the consumer's choice (Aaker, 1982). Calls for research into positioning and brand choice have directed that studies should be conducted to investigate more factors that drive customer brand choice (Akhtar *et al.*, 2016; Quansah, Okoe, & Angenu 2015). Recent studies have revealed that brand sensitivity has a positive moderating effect on brand trust. In the search for other factors that can affect or influence brand choice, and also to contribute to existing knowledge, the researcher in the recent study sought to observe the moderating role of brand sensitivity on the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice in the bottled water industry of Ghana.

Ghana's bottled water industry, which is a section of the non-alcoholic beverages sector of the economy and regulated by the Food and Drugs Authority, has over the years, been seeing an influx of brands, both foreign and local, into the market as predicted in 2012 by researchers (Sutton & Kpentey, 2012). This is a result of the ready market and the liberalised nature of the economy. This phenomenon has invariably driven competition very high in the industry with many brands competing for the attention of customers. This has pushed firms to strive for their brands to be noticed. With homogenization of offerings in the industry, strategies to differentiate ones brand from the many others becomes paramount (Lindgreen, Palmer, & Vanhamme, 2004). As can be evidenced in the bottled water industry, firms are

now employing brand positioning in order to distinctively place their brands in the minds of consumers.

As extant studies have proven, there exists some relationship between brand positioning and brand choice: the question then remains as to whether this assertion is prevalent in Ghana's bottled water industry. If it is prevalent, which of the many developed strategies is effectual in driving customer choice in this industry. Moreover, the moderating effect of brand sensitivity on brand positioning and brand choice relationship is not empirically tested; neither is it clear which dimension of positioning fetches the greatest worth as echoed by Urde and Koch (2014). They stress that management's concern is not a want of positioning options, but rather selecting the right general approach in defining the brand's position and to choose the "right tool" for the positioning process (Urde & Koch, 2014).

The current study employed choice theory to determine the moderating role of brand sensitivity on the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice.

5.5.1 Brand Positioning and Brand Choice

Generally, this research investigated the relationship between five (5) measurements of brand positioning and customer brand choice. The outcome of the study gives an indication that, within the study context (that is, the bottled water industry of Ghana), brand positioning may lead to brand choice. Out of the five positioning strategies (corporate social responsibility, top of range, attributes, surrogate, and country of origin), three (corporate social responsibility, Attributes, and surrogate) were observed to have a positive direct important relationship with brand choice. This is demonstrated by their respective scores of significance (that is P-values <0.05). This would imply that, when firms in Ghana's bottled water industry employ corporate social responsibility, attributes, and surrogate as their

positioning strategies, it would pose a “direct positive” consequence on the choice of their brand. In other word, in relative terms, customers will choose the brand. Again an increase in these specific positioning activities (corporate social responsibility, attributes, and surrogates) have the potential to increase brand choice because in Ghana’s bottled water industry these strategies resonate very well with customers.

The finding is not too different from what other scholars have discovered in the brand positioning literature. There seems rather to be a general agreement that the importance placed on each positioning strategy differs from firm to firm, and that some of the suggested ways to position a product might not be applicable to all industrial sectors and to all product categories (Adokou & Kyere-Diabour, 2017; Chowdhury, 2013). In support of the finding are works such as Dandan (2013), who concluded in his study of positioning of luxury brands and choice, that the majority of Chinese consumers prefer western brands because of the successful positioning. He added that positioning raises brand awareness or reputation, and increases loyal attitudes, and choice of brands.

5.5.2 The Moderating Role of Brand Sensitivity

Bouhleb, Mzoughi, Hadiji, and Slimane (2011) investigated the moderating effect of brand sensitivity on the relationship between brand personality and consumer purchase decision and observed that brand sensitivity has a positive moderating impact on consumer purchase decision. One of the motivations for the current study derives from the results of Bouhleb *et al.* (2011), who examined the brand sensitivity influence on the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice. The authors assert that sensitivity plays an influential or moderating role in the psychological procedure that goes before the purchase (Bouhleb *et al.*, 2011). On an interesting note, as predicted by the data analysis, it was discovered from this

study that out of the three positioning strategies that had a direct significant relationship with brand choice in Ghana’s bottled water industry, brand sensitivity moderated significantly the positive relationship between surrogates positioning and brand choice. Notwithstanding this, the direction of the moderation was negative. That is to say that brand sensitivity dampens the relationship between surrogate and brand choice in Ghana’s bottled water industry.

5.5.3 Hypothesis Testing

Table 5.8: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

	Hypothesis	β - Estimate	t- Value	P- Value	Results
H1a	Corporate Social Responsibility positioning has a positive impact on brand choice	0.113	2.112	0.035	Supported
H1b	Top of Range Positioning has a positive impact on brand choice	0.063	0.998	0.318	Not Supported
H1c	Attributes as Positioning strategy has a positive impact on brand choice	0.13	2.29	0.022	Supported
H1d	Surrogate Positioning has a positive impact on brand choice	0.175	2.456	0.014	Supported
H1e	Country of Origin as a positioning strategy has a positive impact on brand choice	-0.051	-0.893	0.372	Not Supported
H2a	Brand sensitivity moderates the relationship between corporate social responsibility and brand choice	0.071	1.519	0.129	Not Supported
H2b	Brand sensitivity moderates the relationship between top of range and brand choice	0.048	0.796	0.426	Not Supported
H2c	Brand sensitivity moderates the relationship between attributes and brand choice	-0.098	-1.681	0.093	Not Supported
H2d	Brand sensitivity moderates the relationship between surrogate and brand choice	-0.148	-2.18	0.029	Supported
H2e	Brand sensitivity moderates the relationship between country of origin and brand choice	0.088	1.601	0.109	Not Supported

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; N=393

Source: field data, (2018)

Table 5.8 shows the outcomes of the hypotheses as verified by the data analysis of the research. H1 (H1a, b, c, d, e), which aimed at predicting the positive and significant

relationship between brand positioning and brand choice had mixed outcomes with H1a, H1c, and H1d being supported and confirmed by the data. H1b, and H1e were not supported, thus disconfirmed by the data. This outcome is in line with previous findings (Adokou & Kyere-Diabour, 2017; Chowdhury, 2013) that the prominence placed on each positioning strategy varies from firm to firm, and that some of the suggested ways to position a product might not be applicable to all industrial sectors and to all product categories. Moreover, on the other hand, H2, (H2a, b, c, d, e) also sought to forecast the moderating role of brand sensitivity on the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice. It is interesting to note from the outcome that, of the five (5) hypothesized relationships, only H2d was found supported and confirmed by the data that brand sensitivity moderates the positive relationship between brand positioning and brand choice. For this finding however the results showed a negative significant impact. In other words, the finding could be interpreted as brand sensitivity dampens or weakens the positive relationship between surrogate positioning strategy and brand choice. The higher the customers brand sensitivity in Ghana's bottled water industry, the less likely they are to make a choice for the brand positioned on surrogates (Nonpareil, Parentage of brand, Brand Company and person, manufacturer, and process, ingredients, design) (Crawford, 1985).

5.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter five was devoted to the examination or analysis of the data, presentation of results and discussion of major findings. This process constituted among others, the use of tables and figures to empirically test the associations that exist among the constructs. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted along with validity and reliability tests to determine the statistical power of the data meant for the predication of variable and relationships in the study. The chapter also presented results from the structural modelling and the interaction

effect of the moderation test. In brief, the analysis show that brand positioning indeed drives brand choice in Ghana's bottled water industry, however this relationship is weakened in the presence of high levels of brand sensitivity to surrogate positioning in Ghana's bottled water industry.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Chapter Overview

The concluding chapter of this study accounts for the research summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations that future researchers can direct their investigations to. The research summary is centered on the purpose of the study and research objectives. Furthermore, conclusions are deduced from the findings that were discussed in earlier chapters. Also outlined in this chapter are managerial and research implications in addition to recommendations for future research.

6.1 Summary

Today's consumers encounter many challenges in a progressively sophisticated world, they are cash rich and time poor, and are unveiled to the phenomenon of 'over choice'. Owing to this, consumers are suffering from choice fatigue. An essential component of consumers' decision-making strategies is the construction of a trimmed subset of brands, the consideration set, from which brand choice is made. Homogeneity and similarity of tangible features among brands within the consideration set, have prompted intangible attributes (e.g. brand positioning) as an important differentiator in facilitating choice. It is obvious that brands must develop emotional and symbolic associations with consumers if they are to prosper in today's extremely competitive marketplace (Balantyne & Nobbs, 2006).

To be able to identify, refine and sustain vital brand positioning strategies that drive choice, one must further lighten up the dynamic evolving the relationship between consumers and brands. It is against this background that this study aimed at investigating the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice, highlighting the moderating role of brand sensitivity on this relationship. Three definite objectives were set in order to achieve the goal of this study. First of all, the study aimed to examine whether brand positioning impacts consumer choice in the bottled water industry of Ghana. Secondly, to identify positioning strategies that can be employed by firms in the bottled water industry of Ghana, and finally to scrutinise the moderating role of customer brand sensitivity on the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice.

In order to achieve these objectives, extant works, conceptual and empirical, were reviewed on brand choice, brand positioning and brand sensitivity. From the literature review, a conceptual framework was developed premised on choice theory as the theory underpinning the research. Further generating from the framework, five hypotheses were developed for the baseline relationship and five others for the interaction effect, and examined empirically using responses from 393 conveniently selected consumers of bottled water in Ghana within Accra metropolis. Employing a self-administered structured questionnaire, the data collected was processed using structural equation modeling approach (SEM), and analysed with SPSS version 20 and AMOS version 21. The outcomes confirmed a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility positioning on one hand, and attributes positioning, surrogates positioning and brand choice (outcome variable) on the other. The interaction effect on the relationship between surrogate positioning and brand choice had a negative significant impact. In other words, the presence of brand sensitivity weakens the positive relationship between surrogate positioning and brand choice.

Table 6.1: Summary of Major Findings

Research Objective	Hypothesis	Major Findings
Objective 1: To examine whether Brand Positioning impacts consumer choice of Brand in the bottled water industry of Ghana.	H1a: Corporate Social Responsibility as a positioning strategy has a positive impact on Brand Choice	Out of the five hypothesis developed to test our first objective, The findings from the study confirm that there exist a positive significant relationship between corporate social responsibility (H1a), Attributes (H1c),
	H1b: Top of Range Positioning has a positive impact on Brand Choice	Surrogate (H1d) and brand choice. The estimates from the test of significance are (0.115, t=2.227, p=0.023, R ² =0.37), (β= 0.124,
	H1c: Attributes as positioning strategy has a positive impact on Brand Choice	t=2.101, p=0.018, R ² =0.37), and (β= 0.275, t=3.819, p=***, R ² =0.37) respectively for H1a, H1c, and H1d. this finding is given credence by
	H1d: Surrogate positioning has a positive impact on Brand Choice	Prior studies like, Roberts and Lattin (1991), Dandan (2013), Malik and Sudhakar, (2014) Wason and Charlton (2015).
	H1e: Country of Origin as a positioning strategy has a positive impact on Brand choice	

	<p>H1a: Corporate Social Responsibility as a positioning strategy has a positive impact on Brand Choice</p>	<p>The study through its findings suggest that, out of the five selected brand positioning constructs, three (corporate social responsibility, attributes, and surrogate) were found to positively, and significantly predict brand choice in the bottled water industry of Ghana.</p>
<p>Objective 2: To identify positioning strategies that can be employed by firms in the bottled water industry of Ghana</p>	<p>H1c: Attributes as positioning strategy has a positive impact on Brand Choice</p> <hr/> <p>H1d: Surrogate positioning has a positive impact on Brand Choice</p>	<p>In other words, corporate social responsibility, attributes, and surrogates positioning strategies resonate well with customers in Ghana’s bottled water industry. The results show, ($\beta= 0.115$, $t=2.227$, $p=0.023$, $R^2=0.37$), ($\beta= 0.124$, $t=2.101$, $p=0.018$, $R^2=0.37$), and ($\beta= 0.275$, $t=3.819$, $p=***$, $R^2=0.37$) respectively for H1a, H1c, and H1d. Prior studies from authors, Adokou and Kyere-Diabour, (2017), Chowdhury, (2013) came out with findings that support the findings of the current study.</p>

	<p>H1a: Corporate Social Responsibility as a positioning strategy has a positive impact on Brand Choice</p>	<p>The significant test for the direct relationships or the baseline relationship shows that Corporate social responsibility, attributes and surrogate exhibited a direct significant relationship with brand choice. Notwithstanding this however, the test to investigate the interaction or the moderating role of brand sensitivity on the three</p>
<p>Objective 3: To examine the moderating role of customer brand sensitivity on the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice.</p>	<p>H1c: Attributes as positioning strategy has a positive impact on Brand Choice</p> <hr/> <p>H1d: Surrogate positioning has a positive impact on Brand Choice</p>	<p>significant direct relationships proved that brand sensitivity only moderates the relationship between surrogate positioning and brand choice, showing a negative significant relationship. ($\beta = -0.148$, $t = -2.18$, $p = 0.029$). That is to say that brand sensitivity weakens the relationship between surrogate and brand choice in Ghana's bottled water industry.</p>

Source: Field Data, (2018)

6.2 Conclusions

World over, distinctive features of offerings are increasingly disappearing in highly competitive market environments (Hatch & Schultz, 2001). This is persistently rendering firms incapable of pursuing long term successful strategies, and to operate in a predictable customer market is largely becoming a farce (Zahay & Griffin, 2010). The challenges of the global economy is no different from what which pertains in Ghana's bottled water industry. The great demand for bottled water by individuals, households, companies, etc. has resulted in a heightened competition among the water bottling firms in Ghana. The increased competition means marketing and advertising are presently made essential within the Ghanaian marketplace (Kuada & Buatsi, 2005). Technological innovations together with

water decontamination for drinking is believed to have caused many Ghanaians to change from buying “pure water” to “bottled water” for reasons of good health among other benefits like satisfaction. Perception of consumers is defined “as the complex process by which people select, organise and interpret sensory stimulation into an expressive and coherent picture of the world”.

Consequently the choices consumers make are mainly reliant on the several stimuli (adverts, brands etc.) they have been exposed to (Schifman & Kanuk, 2007). This is because the heart has eyes that the brain discerns nothing of (<http://AmazingService.com>). Firms in Ghana’s bottled water industry have taken advantage of this occurrence in the Ghanaian bottled water market and they are always mapping out strategies to place their brands in the minds of their consumers (Africa Business Directory, 2014).

In adopting particular brand positioning, the issue is not the lack of alternatives but management’s ability to recognise and pursue the most effective strategy (Urde & Koch, 2014). This is largely because precise positioning strategies might work well with some customer segments while overlooking others (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010).

In view of this, it is important for firms in the bottled water industry to contextually test the literature derived positioning and ascertain its applicability to their specific industry, sector, economy, and geographical boundaries with a focal reference to the types of consumer categorization in the subject context. For instance, according to Addo *et al.* (2009), compared to sachet water, Ghanaians see bottled water as an outrageous luxury, a waste of money even,

To conclude the discussion, the aim of this study was to empirically observe from the perspectives of customers, the positive relationship between brand positioning and brand choice, along with the moderating role that brand sensitivity plays on this relationship. The results obtained from the analysis of the data collected and the results offer credibility to the affirmation that effective brand positioning will drive brand choice in the bottled water industry of Ghana.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Recommendations for Management and Practice

The outcomes generated from this study may be channelled into useful strategic suggestions and recommendations for management, practitioners, and policy-makers of bottled water producing companies in Ghana. Firstly, as features of products turn out to be less distinctive, intangible aspects gain prominence. Then, the management of status and manipulation of consumer perceptions through positioning become dominant (Lindgreen, Palmer, & Vanhamme, 2004). Devlin *et al.* (1995) stated that, just as marketing has developed into an increasingly substantial element of strategic planning, so has the concept of positioning become central to the achievement of firms' marketing strategies. Positioning strategies are the major sources of shaping consumer preferences toward a brand. Given this, and drawing from the results of the study, management should employ corporate social responsibility, attributes and surrogate positioning strategies owing to the fact that the results of the study show that they have most resonance effect on customers, showing a positive significant direct relationship with brand choice.

Again the descriptive statistics revealed that the means, as estimated in the study, varied from a minimum of 2.68 (Brand is very important to me when I buy bottled water) to a maximum of 3.58 (It makes me angry when bottled water brand producing companies act

socially irresponsible). In other words, consumers of bottled water in Ghana may be reasonably attached to bottled water brands and, in addition, they appreciate bottled water producers who are socially responsible. An implication for management could be that they ought to inculcate comprehensive social responsibility programmes in their total strategy as it seems to reverberate well with consumers.

Considering the remaining successful positioning strategies from this study (Attributes and Surrogates) their item measuring scales have mean maximums of 3.32 (I buy bottled water brand produced under very high quality standards), and 3.18 (I buy bottled water brand that has a well-engineered production process and uses purification material that satisfies high standards in the food and beverages sector) for attributes and surrogate respectively. Although this disclosure of means and their interpretation from the data collected and analysed contradicts previous findings suggesting that surrogate positioning strategies are most presumably to be observed by consumers as a more effective positioning strategies than feature or attributes positioning (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010), the overall outcome is positive with all three strategies (Corporate social responsibility, attributes, and surrogate).

In effect, firms in Ghana's bottled water industry that adopt any of corporate social responsibility, attributes, or surrogate as their brand positioning strategy are more likely to have favourable perceptions from consumers leading to brand choice. In the study context however, management must be guided as regards brand sensitivity issues of their customers when employing any one of the strategies, with more emphasis on the surrogate positioning as the results of the study shows that the positive relationship between surrogates and brand choice is weakened in the presence of brand sensitivity.

6.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The current research is confined to the Ghanaian locale. However, looking at the pervasive and world-wide nature of bottled water consumption vis-a-vis brand positioning, brand choice, and brand sensitivity phenomena, it is imperative that future studies consider replicating the study in other jurisdictions to confirm the validity of the outcomes obtained. The use of cross-sectional survey also limits the study to a definite time border. It must be noted that, against this premise, within this short period that data was collected, current or prevalent happenings could influence respondents' response and then a different result could emerge from the analysis. In recent times, scholars have agreed to changing consumer needs, behaviour, as well as changing trends in the market (Devlin, Worthington & Gerrard, 2007). Owing to this, impending studies can take on a longitudinal study to truly measure brand choice as a function of brand positioning and examine the impact of brand sensitivity on this association.

It is known and accepted that the remit of the study is also constricted, in that, it is founded on the perceptions of mostly undergraduate students whose views may not be characteristic of the greater population. It would be proper to carry out comparable studies using samples that are wide-spread across the general public.

Moreover, due to the fact that data was collected strictly from consumers of bottled water in Ghana's bottled water industry, management's perspective is missing entirely from this study.

Therefore to have a balance of perspectives, and a broader understanding of how management sees brand positioning and its effects, future research can employ a qualitative

technique or a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to elucidate or examine the brand positioning and brand choice phenomenon.

Furthermore, later research can consider looking at the level of involvement as a moderating factor on the relationship between brand positioning and brand choice in the same context or others.

Overall, within the context of study (Ghana's bottled water industry), this research has showcased highlights of how consumers in the Ghana's bottled water industry interpret brand positioning activities of known brands and its related effect on brand choice.

6.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter concludes the research. It provides a brief of the findings and outcomes of the study. In line with the summary, there is an over-all conclusion drawn on the results and discussions. Numerous valued recommendations are also suggested to managers or practitioners and future researchers alike.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA BUSINESS SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

The researcher is a Master of Philosophy marketing student at the Marketing and Entrepreneurship department of the University of Ghana Business School, Legon. This questionnaire is designed to investigate ***BRAND POSITIONING AND BRAND CHOICE: THE MODERATING ROLE OF CUSTOMER BRAND SENSITIVITY IN GHANA'S BOTTLED WATER INDUSTRY***. This survey is purely for academic purposes and as such any information provided would be managed with absolute confidentiality. Kindly note that there are no right or wrong answers, and the researcher would appreciate it if the responses would depict as much as possible what entails in reality.

General information

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age of Respondent: 24 or less 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-65 above 65
3. Marital status: Married Unmarried Divorced Widowed Cohabiting
5. Employment Status: Self Employed Paid Employment Unemployed
4. Current Level of Education: SHS Diploma Undergraduate PHD
6. Average Monthly Income: None Less than 100 110 – 500 510 – 1000 Above 1000

7. Which of the following brands of bottled water in Ghana most likely meets your preference.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Voltic Mineral Water | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bel Aqua Mineral Water | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Awake Purified Water | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Verna Mineral Water | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Special Ice Mineral Water | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Eva Mineral Water | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vaettelle Mineral Water | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Everpure | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Safina Natural Mineral Water []

Specify if other.....

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning your choice of bottled water in Ghana. Tick the appropriate number on the Likert scale 1 to 5, with 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A) 5= Strongly Agree (SA)

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY		1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	N	A	SA
SR1	I would be willing to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand produced by a company that helps the needy in society or promotes a social course					
SR2	I am willing to boycott buying a bottled water brand from companies that I do not consider to be socially responsible					
SR3	It makes me angry when bottled water brand producing companies act socially irresponsible					
SR4	I try to avoid buying bottled water brand from bottled water brand producing companies with a poor reputation for social responsibility					
SR5	I would be willing to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand produced by a company that has good environmental practices					
TOP OF RANGE						
		1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	N	A	SA
TR1	I buy bottled water brand that is characterized by the upper class in society					
TR2	I am willing to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand that has quality features that meets social standards					
TR3	I will buy bottled water brand to signify prestige in life					
TR4	I buy bottled water brand from a bottled water producer who demonstrates attention to consumer needs					
TR5	I buy bottled water brand that is considered remarkable in its packaging					
TR6	I will buy bottled water brand produced to meet the concerns of its buyers					
ATTRIBUTES						
		1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	N	A	SA
AT1	I buy bottled water brand produced under very high quality standards					
AT2	I prefer buying bottled water brand packaged in very attractive and well-designed bottles					
AT3	I choose to buy bottled water brand that is produced under very hygienic and safe conditions of purification					
AT4	I will buy bottled water brand that has features that show durability and authenticity					

	SURROGATE	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA
SG1	I buy bottled water brand that is considered the best in the category					
SG2	I buy bottled water brand from a trusted and well known bottling company within the industry					
SG3	I buy from bottled water brand producer that shows through its advertisements, to produce water under high purification standards in the food and beverages sector					
SG4	I buy bottled water brand produced by a company that has years of experience in bottled water production and has become a house hold name in the category					
SG5	I buy bottled water brand that is endorsed by the relevant regulatory authority and has other endorsement from high profile persons in society					
SG6	I buy bottled water brand that serves a market that has a large segment of youth					
	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA
CO1	I take into consideration, the country from which my choice brand of bottled water is produced					
CO2	As a patriot, I prefer to pay a little more to buy bottled water brand that is produced from my own country as it supports economic growth of my country					
CO3	I buy bottled water brand that serves a market that has a large segment of youth, indicating how acceptable the brand is to the larger population					
	CUSTOMER BRAND SENSITIVITY	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA
CS1	When I buy bottled water, I have a particular brand in mind					
CS2	When buying bottled water I take the brand into account					
CS3	I choose bottled water according to the brand					
CS4	Brand is very important to me when I buy bottled water					
CS5	When I buy bottled water, I prefer known brands					
CS6	I prefer to wait till I get my preferred bottled water brand if the store I'm shopping from does not offer the brand I'm looking for					
	BRAND CHOICE	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA
BC1	I prefer buying the bestselling brand of bottled water					
BC2	I buy well-known bottled water brand					
BC3	I usually buy high quality bottled water brand					
BC4	Given a choice, I buy bottled water brand with the best quality and price combination					

BC5	I usually buy branded bottled water					
BC6	I recommend branded bottled water to friends					
BC7	I will always prefer branded bottled water to all forms of water					