

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**BRAND IMAGE AND CONSUMER BRAND CHOICE: THE
MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND TRUST IN THE
TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR IN GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION

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

I bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings.

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DATE

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

This work is dedicated to Almighty Allah for his favor and grace upon me and to the Daama family especially Alhaji Amadu Daama and Marriam Zakari, my lovely wife, for their immense support throughout this journey.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
FTP	First Telecommunications Project
GSMA	Global System for Mobile Communications Association
GSM	Global System for Mobile Communication
MSV	Maximum Shared Variance
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error Approximation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
STP	Second Telecommunications Project
WILL	Wireless Local Loop

ABSTRACT

Brand image is acknowledged as an important concept in modern brand management and it has been examined with respect to its impact on several aspects of brands management. Brand image is frequently examined as an aggregated component. The current study sought to examine the impact of brand image as an aggregated component on brand choice. The study further sought to examine the impact of brand image as a disaggregated component, made up of cognitive and affective dimensions and the impact of these individual dimensions on consumer brand choice in the mobile phone sector in Ghana. Furthermore, the mediation effect of brand trust on the relationship between brand image and brand choice was also examined. The study employed a quantitative research approach. The study considered the views of cell phone users living in Accra and Tema metropolis in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically, the convenience sampling technique was used and 400 respondents were used as a sample for the study. Data were collected using a survey method, through self-administered questionnaires. Out of the four hundred (400) questionnaires, three hundred and eighty-five (385) questionnaires were returned, three hundred and sixty one were used for the study and twenty four were rejected. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 22 (SPSS 22) and AMOS version 22 were the tools used for data analysis. The outcome of the study confirmed that brand image is positively related to brand choice, however, brand trust mediates the relationship between brand image and brand choice. The study further revealed that the cognitive dimension of brand image does not significantly have a direct influence on brand choice whereas the affective dimension of brand image has a direct impact on brand choice. Furthermore, the affective dimension of brand image is more influential in explaining brand choice. Brand trust mediates the relationship between both the cognitive and affective dimensions of brand image and consumer brand choice. This study adds to the literature on brand image by identifying the dimension of brand image with the greatest impact on brand choice. It explains the role of brand trust in influencing consumer brand choice. It is recommended that significant attention should be paid to building strong emotional bonds with consumers as the affect was found to contribute more to brand choice. It is further recommended that organisations build trust in order to make the cognitive attributes of their products influence consumers brand choice. As the study considered only the views of mobile phone users in two metropolis in the Greater Accra Region, application of the findings to the general population should be done with this in mind.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the background to the study, the problem statement and the research objectives. It further explains the study's significance and the research purpose. It would also give a chapter disposition that highlights the key areas the various chapters are to cover.

1.1 Background of the Study

Government's deregulation of the telecommunications sub-sector in 1994 has led to an expansion of the sector in Ghana. Statistics from the National Communications Authority (2017) indicates that the total number of voice subscriptions in Ghana by the end of July 2017 stood at 37,136,600, representing an upward surge of about 1.94 from the figure for June 2017 (National Communications Authority, 2017). The total penetration rate for voice subscriptions in that same period was 130.35%. Arguably, the statistics is indicative of the fact that the use of mobile phones is widespread and the mobile phones market is one of the largest electronic gadgets market in Ghana. The use of mobile phones has created several avenues for economic development as it provides a source of livelihood for a majority of the populace. In several product markets, manufacturer brands are facing stiff competition and one such market is the mobile phones market. Competing firms are able to influence consumer decision making if their offerings are perceived by consumers to have a positive brand image (Persaud & Azhar, 2012).

For decades, brand image has been documented as a crucial aspect in brand management (Keller, Parameswaran, & Jacob, 2011). Although scholars agree brand awareness is an essential step in building brand equity, it is however insufficient: additional important considerations like brand image are crucial in creating and sustaining brand equity over time (Motion, Leitch, & Brodie,

2003). In line with this assertion, some scholars argue that brand equity is driven by brand image (Chen, 2010). Furthermore, the findings of Alwi (2009) indicates that brand image allows consumers to distinguish alternate choices. The image that a brand is linked with has the ability to affect opinions about quality, value and price (Chi, Yeh & Yang, 2009).

According to Chi, Yeh and Yang (2009), a customer's purchase decision is influenced by their motivations and preferences in purchasing a specific brand and the image of a brand is an important cue in this process. Collins-Dodd and Lindley (2003) are of the view that consumers ordinarily select well-known brands with positive brand image as this lowers their perceived risk or increases their perceived value. There has been heightened attention among scholars and practitioners on issues related to consumer brand choices (Hennessy & Tol, 2011); this has created the need for companies to comprehend the dynamics that impact consumers' choice of brand and provide products that suit their demands.

Keller (2003) argues that, although abstract and intangible aspects (affect or emotion) facilitate the illumination of the customer side of brand knowledge, other dimensions of brand knowledge like the tangible dimensions of brands are also relevant. Alwi and Kitchen (2014) confirm this assertion, and they contend that the image of a brand is a total attitude judgement of an object, which is based on two dimensions of attitude, namely cognitive and affective dimensions. Keller (2001) further argues that understanding the cognitive and affective aspects of brand image will improve the capacity of scholars to predict the behavior of consumers and of practitioners to tailor their marketing programs. Although the literature is clear that brand image influences consumers' choice of brands, brand image has always been measured as an aggregated component, often comprising both cognitive and affective brand attributes (Akdeniz Ar & Kara, 2014; Collins-Dodd

& Lindley, 2003; Narteh, Odoom, Braimah, & Buame, 2012). However, what is not yet examined is the relative effect of each of the dimensions on brand choice.

Delgado-Ballester and Sabote (2011) assert that scholars from various backgrounds like psychology and sociology conceptualise trust as a vital foundation and a part of the highly preferred quality in almost all relationships. Delgado-Ballester and Sabote (2011) further argue that, in applied areas like management and marketing, trust has been acknowledged as a relevant element in the business environment. Brand trust is an important factor that has an impact on the nexus between brand image and brand choice. Findings from recent studies have shown brand trust influences the long-term connection consumers develop with a brand and it also impacts brand loyalty (Alhadad, 2015). The findings of Ming, Ismail and Rasia (2011) and Sung, Kim and Jung (2010) suggests the existence of a significant relationship between brand trust, image and consumers choices. Previous studies have revealed that brand trust is the most salient feature a brand can possess (Scott, 2000; Smith, 2001). In this regard, Homer (2007) called for brand trust to be examined as an additional aspect of the connection between customers and brands. In spite of the vital role of brand trust in consumer purchase decisions, it has received relatively little empirical attention in studies on brand image and brand choice.

1.2 Problem Statement

The increasing demand for mobile phones has placed the mobile phone industry among the fast-developing industries in the electronic gadgets market as several brands of mobile phones can be found in almost every nation across the globe (Odoom, 2016). Consumers' perceptions about brands are one of the main predictors of a long-term consumer relationship with these brands, this has made the creation of strong brand perceptions a top priority for many businesses (Teas &

Agrawal, 2000). There seem to be an agreement among scholars that the significance of brands exist in the minds of customers depending on the things they have learnt, felt, seen or heard about the brands: these brand meanings include the brand image (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2001).

Although brands and consumers' perceptions of them are central to the success of firms, marketing researchers have usually measured brand image as an aggregated component and its effect has been examined on various variables in marketing including brand loyalty, purchase intention and brand choice (Low & Lamb Jnr, 2000). Marketing executives are now becoming progressively conscious about the significant role of a brand's image in modern brand management (Alwi & Kitchen, 2014). Although there is growing awareness about the relevance of brand image, a search of extant literature shows that scholars are divided on the concept and there is no clear agreement on the relative effect of each of the dimensions of brand image on brand choice (Driesener & Romaniuk, 2006).

Extant literature is overwhelmed with explorations of key determinants of consumer brand choice. The results of these studies depict an array of factors that influence brand choice. The findings of previous studies have revealed brand awareness to be a major determinant of brand choice (Keller, 2001; Huang & Sarigollu, 2014; Srinivasan, Vanhuele & Pauwels, 2010). Other studies on brand choice indicated accessibility, price, country of origin and influence of family and friends as the main determinants of brand choice (Lin & Chang, 2003; Van Auken, 2003; Kim, 2008; Ching, Erdem, & Keane, 2009; Wang & Yang, 2010; Evanschitzky, Wagenheim, Woisetschlager, & Blut, 2008). The results from previous studies seem to suggest that a multiplicity of factors including price, country of origin and a brand's image influence customers' choice of brands (Erdem & Swait, 2004; Freling & Forbes, 2005). Narteh et al. (2012) assert that people usually choose to buy a brand based on their image. There is a preponderance of literature on brand choice (Agyei &

Kilika, 2014; Alwi & Kitchen, 2014; Bravo, Montaner, & Pina, 2010; Narteh et al., 2012; Homer 2007). These studies have been carried across different product categories and the findings have often revealed a different set of factors that influence brand choice depending on the product category. For example, a study by Narteh et al. (2012) revealed the attribute of an automobile, emotional attachment and influences from the external environment positively influence a consumer's purchase decision of automobile brands in developing countries like Ghana. However, a research by Diallo et al. (2015) on store brand choice in Latin America revealed that factors such as merchandise, layout and service influenced consumers store brand choice. Studies on the determinants of purchase decision of cell phones are relatively scarce. Hence, this study aims at narrowing the gap by assessing the connection between brand image and brand choice in the mobile phone sector.

Previous research focused frequently on examining a direct link between a brand's image as an aggregated component and brand choice across various product categories including automobiles, food, institutions of higher learning and clothing (Huang & Sarigollu, 2012; Kim, 2008; Erdem, Swait & Valenzuela, 2006). There seems to be fewer studies on the relative effect of each of the components of brand image on brand choice. Extant literature on brand image and brand choice tended to measure brand image from either a cognitive or affective dimension, or as an aggregated component comprising both cognitive and affective dimensions (Alwi & Kitchen, 2014; Lin & Chang, 2003, Low & Lamb, 2000). Previous studies have revealed that the affect aspect of brands are the most salient in influencing consumers brand image perceptions (Da Silva & Alwi, 2006). Hu, Liu, Wang, and Yang (2012), in their empirical study on the Chinese automobile sector, used functional and symbolic dimensions to measure brand image and their findings indicated affective

aspect of a brand's image does not positively influence brand choice if the consumers' perceptions of the symbolic or affective image is greater than the buyers' expectations.

According to Anatolevna Anisimova (2007), examining brand image using a single dimensional approach only explains the partial impact of brand image. Curtis, Abratt and Minor (2009) made a call for upcoming research to assess the relative impact of the cognitive and affective dimensions of a brand's image, which they argue will help to clarify a brand's promise but this has received almost no attention in the research community. Furthermore, Cho, Fiore, and Russell (2015) viewed brand image as a composition of cognitive, emotional and sensory factors from both academic and industrial perspective and their findings revealed all three dimensions were important for fashion related brands. The current study views brand image as a composition of cognitive and affective dimensions, since the majority of the previous studies on brand image measured the concept from either a cognitive or affective perspective or both (Prayag, 2009; Alwi & Kitchen, 2014; Da Silva & Alwi, 2006; Low & Lamb Jnr, 2000).

Previous research indicates brand trust performs an important role when consumers make a choice among alternative brands (Delgado-Ballester, 2001). Previous studies indicate that brand trust is a major variable that influences brand equity (Delgado-Ballester, 2001). Findings of recent studies have shown brand trust has an impact on relationships consumers develop with brands and it also impacts brand loyalty (Alhadad, 2015). The findings of Ming, Ismail and Rasia (2011) and Sung, Kim and Jung (2010) showed brand image is positively linked to brand trust and brand trust further has a significant relationship with consumers' choices. Scholars argue that brand trust is the most important feature a product can possess (Smith, 2001; Scott, 2000). In this regard, Homer (2007) called for brand trust to be assessed as another aspect of the connection between buyers and brands.

In spite of the significant role brand trust plays in consumer brand selection, the variable has not received much empirical attention in studies on brand image and brand choice.

A thorough examination of extant literature revealed less literature on the indirect impact of brand image on brand choice through brand trust. The available studies tend to examine the direct effect of brand trust on purchase intention or brand image (Akdeniz, [Ar](#) & Kara, 2014; Homer, 2008).

Furthermore, the majority of the available studies on brand image and brand choice were conducted in developed economies, with fewer studies conducted in developing countries such as Ghana. Previous studies indicate that factors that influence consumers' brand choice differ based on geographical location. For example, a study by Ahmed, Zaman and Irfan (2013) in the United Kingdom revealed availability of spare parts was the most salient predictor of consumer brand choice of automobiles while a study by Narteh et al. (2012) revealed attitude towards an automobile was the most significant factor for Ghanaian consumers. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to assess the mediated impact of brand trust on the relationship between brand image and brand choice in the mobile phone sector in Ghana. It further seeks to assess the relative impact of both cognitive and affective aspects of brand image on brand choices with the intention of identifying which has the greatest impact on consumer brand choice.

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1.3 Research Purpose

The aim of this research is to analyze the effect of brand image on brand choice and the relative influence of cognitive and affective dimensions of brand image on consumers' choice of mobile phone brands in Ghana. The study further aims to assess the indirect role of brand trust in this relationship.

1.4 Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. Examine the impact of brand image on brand choice;
2. Examine the impact of cognitive dimension of brand image on brand choice;
3. Assess the impact of affective dimension of brand image on brand choice; and
4. Assess the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between brand image and brand choice.

1.5 Research Questions

The following questions are asked in order to help achieve the objectives stated above:

1. What is the impact of brand image on brand choice?
2. What is the impact of the cognitive dimension of brand image on brand choice?
3. What is the impact of the affective dimension of brand image on brand choice?
4. What is the role of brand trust in the relationship between brand image and consumer brand choice?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will enable manufacturers and mobile phone dealers to understand what influences consumers brand choices so they can devise the needed strategies to make their brands preferable.

The study of brand image and consumer brand choice is limited and this study will contribute to the literature in the area. This research can also serve as a guide to other researchers who intend to research in this area in future. The study will inform policy makers to come up with necessary policies to assist the mobile phone industry.

1.6 Chapter Disposition

The current study is made up of six main chapters. The composition of the various chapters is concisely highlighted in the next section. Chapter One is the opening chapter, and in addition it discusses the introduction and the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, significance of the study and chapter disposition.

Chapter Two comprises the literature review and conceptual framework. The second chapter reviews relevant literature in the study area, as well as concepts and theories on brand image, consumer brand choice and brand trust. The chapter further discusses the theoretical framework of the research.

Chapter Three discusses the context of the study. This segment deals with the context of the research. It will present an overview of the mobile phones industry locally and globally. Chapter Four deals with the research methodology. This part of the research discusses the methodology of the research. It covers: sources of data; the study's population; sampling techniques and sample size utilised for the study; the instrument for data collection and methods of collecting; and processing and analysing data. It also covers the study's limitation as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter Five presents the data analysis, discussion and findings. The fifth chapter highlights the analysis of the outcome and discussion of key findings. The chapter discusses major findings in line with the research hypothesis and literature review, while Chapter Six presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations. It summaries the previous chapters and provides summaries of major findings. It also covers the conclusion based on research results and contains the recommendations for practitioners as well as the directions for future research.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter gave an overview of the study and discussed issues relating to brand image and consumer brand choice. The chapter also outlined some gaps in the literature on brand image and brand choice. The study aims to achieve four main objectives that were captured in this chapter. An outline of the composition of the study was also presented.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section of the study presents a relevant and contemporary literature review on concepts and theories underlining this study. There will be a review of literature in the following thematic areas; branding, brand image, the cognitive and affective component of brand image. The section will also review literature on consumer brand choice and brand trust. The issues recognized in the literature review will be incorporated into a conceptual framework for investigating brand image and consumer brand choice and the mediating role of perceived quality.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The research utilizes the theory of consumption values, which is usually used in understanding consumer purchase decisions (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991). The theory was developed by Sheth et al. (1991) to explain how buyers make their choices. Sheth et al. (1991) postulate that consumers make choices after considering multiple value dimensions such as functional values, emotional values, conditional values, social values and epistemic values. The theory is applied to an extensive array of product categories including consumer durable and non-durable products, services and industrial products (Sheth et al., 1991). A detailed explanation of the theory is given below.

2.1.1 Theory of consumption values

The theory of consumption values concentrates on explaining three major areas of consumers' choice behavior; that is, the reasons buyers choose to purchase or avoid a particular product, the

reasons consumers select a particular good over another and the reasons buyers choose one brand over another (Sheth et al., 1991). The theory is guided by three basic propositions that are explained below:

i. Consumer choice behavior is a product of numerous consumption values

As indicated earlier, this theory suggests there are five values influencing consumer choice behavior, namely functional value, conditional value, social value, emotional value and epistemic value. A consumer's decision to choose a particular brand could be affected by one or all of the consumption values (Sheth et al., 1991). Scholars opine that there are numerous value categories capturing the benefits derived from several means (Turel, Serenko, & Bontis, 2010). Every consumption value in the theory is in line with numerous dimensions of the models advanced by diverse researchers (Maslow, 1970; Katz, 1960; Hanna, 1980).

ii. Consumption values offer distinctive influences in a specific choice condition

According to Sheth et al. (1991), the five consumption values make differential contributions in a particular choice context. Sheth et al. (1991) further assert that, in a single merchandise category, the brand, product type and the choice to purchase or not to purchase are determined by totally different consumption values. The theory of consumption values is operationalized such that it could determine, empirically, which precise consumption value in a particular purchase situation has the ability to significantly improve marketing effectiveness (Sheth et al., 1991). Turel et al. (2009) argue that, while there are several value dimensions, their comparative significance may differ depending on the context or product category. For example, when it comes to industrial products, the functional value will be more relevant than the emotional value in influencing brand selection.

iii. The consumption values are independent

According to Sheth et al. (1991), the five consumption values are independent of each other. This implies that variations in a particular value will not automatically lead to a change in another (Turel et al., 2009). Although it is expected that all five consumption values should be maximised, it is frequently practical to receive little of a value so that more of another value can be gained (Sheth et al., 1991). A buyer's choice may be influenced in a positive way by all five consumption values. Hence the consequence of all value dimensions must be taken into consideration simultaneously as antecedents of choice (Turel et al., 2009).

2.1.2 The five consumption values

The five major values that influence consumer choice behavior per the Sheth et al. (1991) model are discussed below.

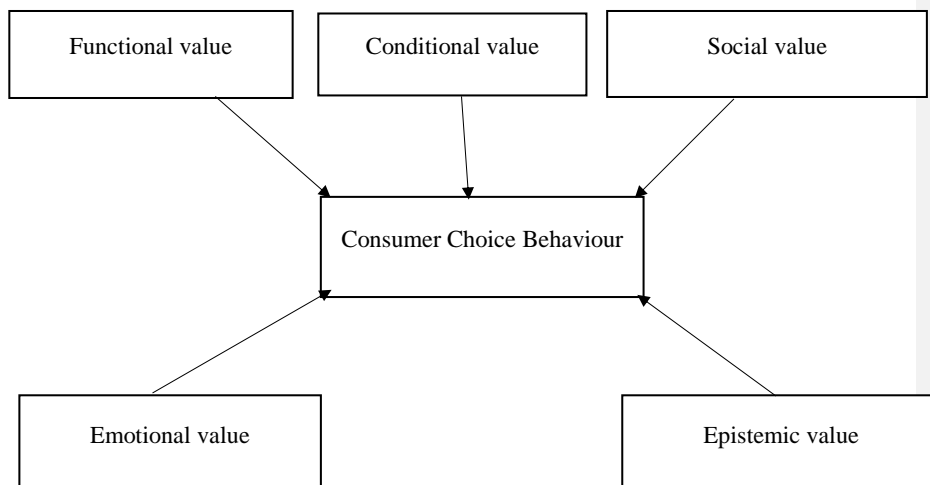
- 1. Functional value:** according to Sheth et al. (1991), functional value of a brand is defined as “the perceived utility from an alternative’s capacity for functional, utilitarian or physical performance. A brand acquires functional value through the possession of relevant functional, utilitarian or physical attributes”. Functional value is usually operationalised on a profile of choice attributes (Sheth et al., 1991). Classically, functional value is presumed to be the prime determinant of brand selection by consumers, and this assumption usually underpins the economic utility theory (Sheth et al., 1991). A brand’s functional value is normally acquired from its features like reliability, robustness and price.
- 2. Social value:** the social value of a brand has been defined by Sheth et al. (1991) as “the perceived utility acquired from an alternative’s association with one or more specific social groups”. They further assert that a brand or product acquires social value via a link with

positive or negative stereotypes about demographic, socioeconomic and cultural or ethnic groups. Social value is usually operationalised on a profile of choice imagery (Sheth et al., 1991). Consumer brand choice of highly visible products (e.g., mobile phones) are frequently determined by social value. For instance, a particular brand of mobile phone will be selected basically because of the social image it arouses rather than for its functional performance.

3. **Emotional value:** Sheth et al. (1991) defined emotional value of a brand as “the perceived utility gained from an alternative’s capacity to arouse feelings or affective states. An alternative acquires emotional value when associated with specific feelings or when precipitating or perpetuating those feelings”. Emotional value is usually operationalised on a profile of emotions linked with a brand (Sheth et al., 1991). Brands are commonly connected with emotional reactions and sometimes brands that are mostly tangible and apparently utilitarian in nature convey emotional values (Sheth et al., 1991). Research in advertising reveals marketing and promotional mix variables evoke affective reactions that usually influence the products being marketed (Sheth et al., 1991).
4. **Epistemic value:** the epistemic value of a brand denotes “the perceived utility acquired from a brand’s ability to arouse curiosity, provide novelty and or satisfy desire for knowledge” (Sheth et al., 1991). Sheth et al. argue that entirely new experiences certainly provide epistemic value though consumers may select brands based on epistemic values as a result of boredom or the consumer’s desire to learn (Sheth et al., 1991).
5. **Conditional value:** the conditional value of a brand has been described by Sheth et al. (1991) as “the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of the specific situation or set of circumstances facing the choice maker” (Sheth et al., 1991). A brand gains

conditional value in the midst of physical or social possibilities that improve its cognitive or social value and it is operationalised based on a profile of choice possibilities (Sheth et al., 1991). A brand's conditional value will usually hinge on the circumstances as some products only have seasonal values (Christmas cards) while others might be linked with "once in a lifetime" occasions (bridal gowns) and others are linked to crisis situations (ambulance services).

Figure 2.1: The Five Values Influencing Consumer Choice



Source: Sheth et al. (1991)

2.1.3 Application of the theory

High tech electronic products like cell phones provide both inherent and extrinsic functions to consumers (Turel et al., 2009). Hence a wider outlook of vital values might be desired to comprehend buyers' choices to utilise these products (Turel et al., 2009). The use of mobile phones may trigger multisensory images and the process of consuming these items needs emotional involvement and mental effort, hence, classic cognitive focused approaches will fall short in

explaining consumers' selection process of these products (Turel et al., 2009; Low & Lamb, 2000; Davis et al., 2009).

The theory of consumption values had been used and empirically tested in over two hundred consumer choice situations (Sheth et al., 1991). The theory has been applied to understand why consumers use or do not use specific products, product type choices and brand choices (Sheth et al., 1991). The study utilises the theory of consumption values to explain a consumer's choice of mobile phones. The theory incorporates models from numerous consumer behaviour research and makes the assumption that consumer brand selection is a product of several consumption values (Turel et al., 2009). These value components serve as a basis for consumers to make their choices of brands (Turel et al., 2009).

Customer value is acquired from several sources including a person's exposure and interaction with a brand (Turel et al., 2009). Findings from previous studies indicate that there are two main motives that influence consumer choice, the first is functional needs, which is linked to the cognitive dimension of brand image and it includes customers perceived functional values and conditional values (Turel et al., 2009; Lin, Sher & Shih, 2005; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). The second motive is the non-functional wants, which is linked to the affective dimension of brand image and it includes a customers perceived emotional, social and epistemic values (Turel et al., 2009). Some previous studies that applied the theory have added extra value dimensions to explain consumer choice (Lin et al., 2005; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003), hence the current study introduces consumer brand trust as another value dimension that mediates the connection between value dimensions (cognitive and affective dimension of brand image) and brand choice.

The importance of the theory of consumption values dwells on postulating that buyers make evaluations before making knowledgeable, inherently and extrinsically inspired consumption

decisions (Kim, Chan & Gupta, 2007). The current study views brand image as a composition of values made up of two broad dimensions (namely, cognitive and affective dimensions), which influence consumer brand selection.

2.2 Evolution of Branding

Branding, like any other concept, has evolved over time (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011). From the period where sheep from one flock began to be labelled in order to differentiate them from that of other herds, to the current era where almost every commodity from water to flowers is branded. A number of scholars in the marketing discipline are of the view that the term brand emerged from the Norse expression “brandr”, which relates to the branding of cattle (Riezebos, Riezebos, Kist, & Kootstra, 2003).

Emblematic branding was highlighted conspicuously in the design of pub signs in Great Britain during the Shakespearian period onwards (Roper & Parker, 2006). Roper and Parker (2006) assert that the actual beginning of the growth of contemporary brands and brand management was the industrial revolution. Low and Fullerton (1994) attribute the reasons that permitted companies to develop the fundamentals of a current brand strategy to enhancement in transportation and communication, which made it a lot easier to distribute products nationwide.

Low and Fullerton (1994) further assert that improvements in mass production processes and consistency in the quality of production processes permitted manufacturers to influence patrons and to convince them that they could continually depend on their offerings. Improvements in packaging also enhanced protection of products and made products easily recognised by consumers, which led to repeat purchase due to easy recognition of brand names (Low & Fullerton, 1994). According to Roper and Parker (2006), the improvement in mass communication through newspapers and the establishment of advertising agencies as well as enhancements in the

distribution channel and the growing middle class created by the industrial revolution guaranteed there was a progressive class of sophisticated customers ready to try new brands. Legal issues like the acknowledgement of trademarks assisted the growth of brands. With the passage of time, the trademark law has gone beyond the protection of brand names, trademarking and copyrighting to covers, shapes and colours used in packaging, which has protected the transformation and value addition of branded goods (Roper & Parker, 2006).

Branding gained greater popularity in the 1970s and 1980s and was firmly established: this made it an essential aspect of marketing practice and an important research area for academia (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011). In the 1970s, branding was mostly linked to large scale production and mass communication and firms used advertisements to distinguish their products based on quality and functionality. The era between 1970 and 1990 witnessed a dramatic swing to a strong service sector and businesses began to promote intangible features their products offered (Roper & Parker, 2006). The products of that time were positioned to become “story telling brands” with the aim of achieving a meaning for their consumers. Contemporary customers associate with brands and currently, brands communicate their symbolic benefits to consumers in many ways and brands have become a major part of the life styles of consumers in several jurisdictions (Roper & Parker, 2006).

In the 1990s and 21st century brands are now documented on the balance sheets as assets in the same way tangible assets such as buildings are assigned values (Roper & Parker, 2006). Other alternatives to calculating the value of brands have been proposed. Keller (1993) and Shocker, Srivastava and Ruekert (1994) introduced a more customer-oriented perspective to measure brand equity and this has received great acceptance by scholars in the marketing discipline (Keller, 1993; Shocker et al., 1994). Table 2.1 summarises the stages in the evolution of branding.

Table 2.1: Phases in the Growth of Brands and Branding

Era	Macro-environmental changes	Purpose	Example	phases in the development of branding
200 BC	Use of tools development of trade	Identification of traders with craft	insignia	identification
476 BC – 1492 AD	Increasing mobilisation of and regulation on population	Symbol of ownership	Brand marks	
1760 – 1830	Industrialisation of production	Identification of manufacturer	Names	
1830 – 1970	Mass production and development of distribution, infrastructure and mass communication	Differentiation of product (quality and functionality)	Brand advertising	Differentiation
1970 - 1990	Development of the service sector	Communicating added value (intangible differentiation)	Brand narratives	
1990s	Globalisation and post modernism	“Emotionalise”, build relationships	Micro marketing	Personification

Source: (Roper & Parker, 2006)

2.2.1 Branding defined

The word branding has been misinterpreted and misunderstood by several entities as the term is usually viewed as endowing entities and products with brand elements and other external attributes (De Chernatony & Cottam, 2006). There seems to be a lack of consensus on the definition of the term branding and various scholars have proffered their own definition based on their research focus (De Chernatony & Cottam, 2006). In this regard, Casey and Daniel (2013) assert that branding has a brand problem due to this lack of consensus on its definition. Some authors have defined branding based on the aim of branding. Field et al. (2012) defined branding as the process of publicly differentiating a product, service or concept from similar offerings so that they can be easily communicated and marketed. Similarly, Ballantyne and Atiken (2007) defined branding as the skill of marking out a product, service, idea or event in order to differentiate it.

Casey and Daniel (2013) argue that brands cannot be defined as trademarks and risk reducers and they are neither merely names. Casey and Daniel (2013) defined brands as a “definition of a particular company or product”. Based on this definition of brands, they defined branding as the process of locating a company or product in the proper category, which involves establishing awareness and identification of the brand and then differentiating it from the rest of the offerings in that category. According to Keller and Kotler (2016), “branding is the process of endowing products and services with the power of a brand and it involves giving a meaning to a specific product by creating and shaping a brand in the minds of consumers”. Enterprises use branding to help people to quickly identify their products and organizations and give them a reason to choose their products over competitors offering by clarifying what the brand stands for (Keller & Kotler, 2016). Paranschi (2008) described branding as “the intangible sum of the attributes of a product including its brand elements, price, history and reputation and how it is advertised”. In the current

study, branding is defined as the process of endowing an offering with brand elements for identification purposes and then generating and sustaining a distinctive connection between the brand and consumers of that brand.

2.2.2 Relevance of branding to organizations

Branding provides numerous benefits to the organisation, service or product that is being branded and the general public (Keller & Kotler, 2016). The benefits organisations derive from branding are enumerated and discussed below:

- **Creation of Identity**

Branding enables an organisation to create a unique identity for its self through brand elements and other aspects of its corporate visual identity (Low & Fullerton, 1994). Branding enables businesses to position themselves in the hostile competitive environment and it enables an organisation to be recognised and differentiated from organisations offering similar products or services to consumers (Keller, 1993). Balmer (2008) asserts that corporate transcends giving names to organisations and encompasses all visual and non-visual identity elements, which establishes the organisations visibility and separates it from other organisations.

- **Legal Protection**

Branding gives businesses the advantage of legally protecting some unique features of products and organisations. In today's cluttered business environment, organisations utilise branding to legally protect the unique features of their products to avoid imitation by competitors (Keller & Kotler, 2016). According to Keller (2000), branding permits businesses to have rights to intellectual property thus empowering the brand owner to have a means of protection. This legal protection gives the business the right to take legal action against any competing firm

that attempts to unlawfully imitate the brand (Low & Fullerton, 1994). Acquiring legal protection for brands allows businesses to prevent competitors from imitating the special attributes of the brand in order to take away some of the equity the brand has been able to build over time (Casey & Daniel, 2013).

- **Mark of Quality**

Casey and Daniel (2013) are of the view that branding offers a signal of quality to consumers. The perceived quality of brands is important for businesses as buyers make choices normally on the basis of their perceptions of product quality (Chen, Tseng, & Lin, 2011). Branding can be employed as a means by organisations to counter any reservations consumers might have with respect to quality (Keller & Kotler, 2016). Organisation can utilise their marketing and corporate communications avenues to communicate the quality of their offerings to customers (Aaker, 1996). Branding is important for businesses in the 21st century as it is a medium of assuring customers about the quality of products and services (Hackley, 2005).

2.3 Relevance of Branding to Consumers

The relevance of branding to consumers cannot be over emphasised. Branding offers consumers numerous advantages ranging from simple tasks like ease of identification and tracking to more complex emotional advantages like building bonds (Keller & Kotler, 2016). This section enumerates and discusses the advantages of branding to consumers.

2.3.1 Simplifies the identification of products and their origins

The importance of branding to consumers lies in its ability to allow consumers to easily identify a product and to trace its source (Keller, 2012). Without the name of brands and other brand elements

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on the labels of products, it would be extremely difficult for consumers to select products they like and to be able to trace the source of the product in the case of any negative consequence consumption of the product might have had on them (Keller, 2012). Consumers are very concerned about the origins of the products they consume and they have favourable or unfavourable perceptions about products based on where they were manufactured (Pappu, Quester & Cooksey, 2006).

2.3.2 Reduction of consumers perceived risk

Branding reduces consumers' perception of risk by offering them the confidence that they know what they are getting and by establishing the presumption of quality (Casey & Daniel, 2013). Keller (2012) asserts that consumers perceive six different types of risks when buying or consuming product. These risks include functional risk, time risk, financial risk, social risk, physical risk and psychological risk (Keller, 2012). Branding enables consumers to overcome some of these risks as the selection of a good brand offers the guarantee that they would obtain satisfaction from the consumption of a product.

2.3.3 Promises or contracts with manufacturers

Branding enables consumers to view brands as promises in which they believe (Casey & Daniel, 2013). Branding establishes a bond between consumers and manufactures of products (Kim, Lee & Lee, 2007). Contemporary businesses aim to establish sustainable bonds with customers to win their trust and to create a favourable brand image perception (Cho, Fiore, & Russell, 2015). Knapp (2000) asserts that the creation of bonds between firms and customers results in joint benefits for both parties, these benefits include assurance of quality, a positive brand image and excellent

customer service. Similarly, a study conducted by Ghodeswar (2008) indicates that consumers attach importance to the affiliation with branded products and the organisations behind these brands; and this attachment simplifies their decision-making process. Extant literature on branding reveals that successful brands develop and sustain valuable relationships with consumers and this creates a strong feeling of dedication, sense of belonging and love for the brands (Low & Fullerton, 1994, Ghodeswar, 2008). Furthermore, branding is associated with creating links between firms and consumers and this forms the foundation for current and future dealings that will result in generating value for both consumers and businesses (Casey & Daniel, 2013).

2.3.4 Means of reducing search costs

Another important benefit of brands to consumers is that it reduces the time consumers spend in searching for the product they want (Low & Lamb Jnr, 2000). According to Schiffman, Hansen and Kanuk (2008), consumers usually go through a series of stages in making their final purchase decision. In this regard, branding enables consumers to minimise the unpleasant stress linked with the decision-making process (Kuliviwat, Guo & Engchanil, 2004).

Branding allows consumers to make a distinction between the products offered by various firms and, hence, the apprehension associated with searching is reduced to the barest minimum. The differentiation feature that branding endows on products make it less stressful for customers to know the particular product they are searching for, its origin and the quality associated with the product (Casey & Daniel, 2013). This offers protection for consumers against the challenges they would have passed through in making their choices if products were not branded (Keller, 2012).

2.4 Definition of Brand Image

Transferring a positive brand image to the public is considered a crucial marketing activity (Bian & Moutinho, 2011). According to Bian and Moutinho (2011), brand image is relevant because it influences consumers' brand choices and purchase decisions and contributes to brand equity. A positive brand image aids to position a brand, protect the brand from competition and improves market share (Keller, 1993). Brand image has been a pertinent notion in consumer behavior studies since the early 1950s and the definition of the concept has not been stable for decades (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). It comes as no surprise that there is limited accord with regards to how the construct should be operationalised (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Brand image has been defined variously depending on the aim of the research as a result of unavailability of a firm foundation on which the construct can be operationalised. Various definitions have been provided for brand image by different authors in the extant literature. While some defined brand image as a composition of all perceptions consumers have about a brand in memory (Aaker, 1991; Keller 1993; Martinez & Pina Perez, 2009), other scholars are of the opinion that it is a product of emotional components consumers associate with brands (Dobni & Zikhan, 1990; Faircloth, Capella & Alford 2001), while others defined it as a composition of both physical and emotional attributes linked to a brand (Low & Lamb, 2000; Plummer, 2000; Corbu, 2009; Davis, Golicic, & Marquardt, 2009; Aranda, Gomez & Molina, 2015). Table 2.2 summarises the various definitions provided by various authors.

Previous studies have defined brand image either from the affective perspective or cognitive perspective or both. Aranda et al. (2015) defined brand image "as the attributes related to consumer behavior and a holistic concept that includes cognitive components such as visual representation and functional features as well as affective components such as emotions and or impressions".

This study explains brand image as the insight consumers hold about the brand in memory and it is driven by both affective and cognitive dimensions of brands.

Table 2.2: Definition of Brand Image by Various Authors

Author	Definition of brand image
Dobni and Zinkhan (1990)	“Brand image is the consumers’ mental picture of the offering and it constitutes the symbolic meanings consumers associate with the specific attributes of the brand”.
Aaker (1991)	“Brand image is the series of brand associations stored in a consumer’s memory”.
Keller (1993)	“Brand image is the set of perceptions about a brand the consumer forms as reflected by the brand associations”.
Low and Lamb (2000)	“Brand image is the reasoned or emotional perceptions consumers attach to a specific brand”.
Plummer (2000)	“Brand image consists of three major components; the product attributes, perceived product benefits and the brand personality”.
Davis, Golicic, and Marquardt (2009)	“Brand image is a product of physical and emotional attributes consumers associate with brands”.
Corbu (2009)	“Brand image is a combination of physical and emotional attributes linked to the brand”.
Aranda, Gomez, and Molina (2015)	“Brand image comprises attributes related to consumer behavior and a holistic concept that includes cognitive components such as visual representation and functional features as well as affective components such as emotions and or impressions”

2.4.1 Brands and Brand Image

The values that a brand is made up of exist because these values are perceived (Aaker, 1991). Brand values are assessed “positively or negatively” by buyers and prospective customers and these assessments in their totality form a brand’s image (Keller & Kotler, 2016). One key characteristic of brand image is that it depends on perceptions and it does not need to essentially be a fact as customers may not have full knowledge of a brand in a factual sense (Aaker, 1991). Buyers usually assume what they do not know about a brand without any objective evidence, hence, they hold opinions, and these opinions are as genuine as the ones made on the basis of harder evidence and in many instances these perceptions influence purchase decisions (Aaker, 1991). According to Keller (2012), brands have touch points with their markets that serve as a basis for customers’ perceptions.

Keller and Kotler (2016) assert that a positive brand image serves as a shield for a company and will keep on working for the business in bad times. A brand with an outstanding brand image and reputation may witness occasional impediments, however, a good image usually influences customers to forgive these occasional setbacks because the brand had always delivered in the past (Aaker, 1991). Conversely, a brand with a poor brand image would be criticized and abandoned for any failure and it would have no pardon (Aaker, 1991). Kotler and Keller (2016) recommend that the attainment of a positive brand image based on core values and any other values that differentiate it should be of vital importance to every business.

2.4.2 Benefits of a positive brand image

A brand with an appreciable level of brand awareness and a positive image increases the profitability of a company and it minimizes vulnerability of the brand to competitive offerings.

The benefits of a positive brand image are discussed below:

- **Premium Prices**

A brand with a good image will enable a company to charge premium prices (Keller, 2012). A brand with a positive brand image will gain a huge profit margin and will be less prone to competitor's actions (Aaker, 1991). There will not be the need to offer products at a cheaper price or to give price discounts as the brand is sought for because it is really wanted (Keller & Kotler, 2016). The company can take advantage of the positive image it commands to charge premium prices (Aaker, 1991).

- **Improvement in customer satisfaction**

A positive brand image improves customer satisfaction, which increases a customer's confidence in buying a product (Aaker, 1991). If a brand with a positive brand image meets or exceeds customer's perception about the brand it would lead to satisfaction or enhanced satisfaction (Aaker, 1991). A brand with a positive brand image tends to satisfy customers; and this customer satisfaction it generates acts as a barrier to customers switching to competitor brands (Keller, 1993). Hence, a positive brand image enhances customer satisfaction that acts as a defense and which is permanently erected (Aaker, 1991).

- **Opportunities for brand extension**

A positive brand image creates opportunities for brand extensions (Keller, 2012). The positive brand image can be used to add new products to the product line (Aaker, 1991). The positive perceptions generated by the brand can be leveraged on to introduce new products (Keller &

Kotler, 2016). A brand that is well known with a positive image and reputation acts as a medium brand extension since some facets of the positive brand image will be leveraged by the new brand and will aid in introducing new products (Aaker, 1991).

2.4.3 Dimensions of brand image

The term brand image has been used to explain severally on concepts, products and services (Buhalis, 2000). To excel in business, branding of businesses should have a link with the demands, values and life styles of consumers in a manner that the brand meanings give added worth and differentiation to consumers (Dadzie & Boachie-Mensah, 2011). Dadzie and Boachie-Mensah further assert that a brand in its totality could be termed as an attribute that transfers an assurance and this assurance include hedonic and utilitarian features that consumers link with the brand. Affective features are those that satisfy internally created needs for personal benefits, recognition, acceptance or ego satisfaction, while functional features resolve an externally created consumption related problem (Dadzie & Boachie-Mensah, 2011).

Keller (1993) views brand image as the “set of perceptions about a brand the consumer forms as reflected by the brand associations”. Similarly, Martinez and Pina (2009) argue brand image is the result of concepts and associations consumers attach to a brand. For decades, different scales have been developed by academia and practitioners to measure brand image. While some authors argue brand image comprises emotional attributes and measures the concept based on the affective attributes of brands (Aaker, 1996; Faircloth, Capella & Alford, 2001), others are of the view that brand image is made up of the functional or cognitive attributes and emotional attributes of brands (Alwi, 2009; Corbu, 2009; Martinez & Pina, 2000). Aaker (1996) generated a measure for brand image using brand personality, the model has been criticized for including brands that ranked high

as a result of their functional advantages. Functional or cognitive dimension of image is linked to tangible aspects such as quality and price; affective or emotional dimension relates to the brand personality (Aranda et al., 2015).

The mobile phones market is one of the markets facing a turbulent market environment due to increased competition and fast changing technology that makes products obsolete within a short period of time (Dadzie & Boachie-Mensah, 2011). Cell phones have increasingly turned out to be a significant part of modern communication for numerous people globally; hence, apart from the cognitive dimensions of phones in providing smooth communication for users, consumers form emotional attachments to their phones as well (Dadzie & Boachie-Mensah, 2011).

Keller (2003) asserts that, despite the fact that intangible parts of branding such as affect aid in illuminating consumer facets of knowledge about brands, other dimensions of brand knowledge like cognitive features of brands are also vital in comprehending a brand's image. Keller (2003) further asserts that integrating both cognitive and affective aspects of brands in comprehending brand image would enhance the capacity of academia to model buyers' reactions and of the practitioner to target their marketing activities. Malhotra (2005) confirms Keller's (2000) assertion and he argues that, for years, buyers' purchase decision studies tended to focus on cognitive components and he called for future research to integrate affective or emotional components in fully comprehending consumer decision making.

Da Silva and Alwi (2005) argue that individuals vary in their opinions of reality contingent on their own experiences and circumstances, and when forming their perceptions about brands these differences account for the subjective view of each individual about reality. This bias of reality has major implications for marketing theory and practice as it demonstrates that every person has a specific consumer brand representation (Da Silva & Alwi, 2005). The findings from previous

studies indicate that customer brand knowledge could be gained from numerous means, which could be based on consumer experience (objective reality), messages from marketing communication activities constructed reality and from the word of mouth from friends and families (Da Silva & Alwi 2005; De Groot, Antonides, Read, & Van Raaij, 2011).

A consumer's brand image perception may be comprised of both cognitive and affective elements (Alwi & Kitchen, 2014). Da Silva and Alwi (2005) assert that attempts have been made by researchers to investigate the effect of cognition and affect in brand image studies. A study by Agarwal and Malhotra (2005) revealed that total attitude as well as buyer purchase decisions is a combined product of dimensional attitudes and significant brand features and holistic affect emotions and feelings. The model proposed by Agrawal and Malhotra (2005) makes an important contribution to understanding consumer choice behavior as Da Silva and Alwi (2005) emerged with a model for understanding brand image based on this premise.

Studies undertaken by Grimm (2005) on the relative significance and interaction effect of affective, conative and cognitive behavior with respect to the capacity of each to forecast preferences for brands, revealed that the full component of attitudes towards the brand is distinctive and important in clarifying brand preferences with cognitive brand features having the major important influence on preferences for brands.

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The findings in literature on brand image point to the fact that affective and cognitive attributes are essential in the formation of brand image by consumers (Keller, 2003; Agarwal & Malhotra, 2005; Malhotra 2005; De Chernatony, 2002). Unfortunately, there seems to be a paucity of empirical studies on how each dimension of brand image influences brand choice, particularly studies on brand choice of mobile phones (Merrilees & Fry, 2003). Past empirical studies have usually focused on either the affective basis (Aaker, Benet-Martinez, & Garolera, 2001) or the

cognitive dimension usually found in many brand image studies irrespective of context (Thang & Tan, 2003; Van der Heijden & Verhagen, 2004). To examine brand image perceptions of consumers, Low and Lamb (2000) argue that deciding on a scale to measure brand image should be informed by the product category and the research problem. In line with this assertion this study utilizes the conceptualization of brand image provided by Aranda et al. (2015). The current study consequently views brand image as a multi-dimensional construct comprising both affective and cognitive brand attributes.

2.5 Cognitive Component

Malhotra (2005) argues that the principal issue concerning the affective dimension of brand image continues to be the issue of how it influences consumer decision making and choices. Rakshit (2009) argues that provision of quality products to customers is not only important for the success of businesses but to their survival as well. Earning and sustaining a positive cognitive evaluation from consumers is important in influencing a consumer's choices and satisfaction (Rakshit, 2009). Examining the cognitive dimension of brand image is rudimentary in designing customer centered strategies to ensure long-term survival for businesses (Alwi & Kitchen, 2014). A study by Aaker (1996) suggests that features associated with a product cognitive element may be the key determinants of brand image. De Chernatony and Christodoulides (2004) argue that consumers typically appraise the cognitive part of the brand first in making choices about brands.

Some proponents of cognitive evaluation of brand image argue that a positive cognitive evaluation depends on the customer and it occurs when organisations provide products that meet customers' specifications. The cognitive dimension of image constitutes the reasoned impressions buyers associate with a specific brand (Low & Lamb, 2000). The cognitive dimension is inferred to as

“views and knowledge about the physical or functional attributes of a brand” (Hosany, Ekinici & Uysal, 2017). The current study utilizes cognitive dimension of brand image in assessing consumer’s brand choice because previous studies indicate that they are important primary drivers of a consumer’s purchase decision (Sheth et al., 1991; Alwi & Kitchen, 2014). In line with Sheth et al.’s (1991) theory of consumption values, the current study views functional and conditional values as cognitive dimensions of brand image since they are based on reasoned perceptions of consumers.

2.6 Affective Component

The growing saturation of the cell phone industry in addition to the aggressive competition within the business environment has made it impossible for companies to succeed solely based on the products and services they offer (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Although the core function of producing goods and services is still very relevant in today’s business, other aspects such as consumers affective evaluation of brands is essential and has grown in comparative prominence in influencing the capacity of the organization to compete effectively (Keller & Richey, 2006). Keller and Richey (2006) assert that the products an organization offers and how these offers are presented to customers influences consumers’ affective evaluation of brands.

Davis, Chun, Da Silva and Roper (2004) argue that consumer affective evaluation is a useful evaluative criterion that needs to be explored further in order to create a favorable image for brands and increasing the likelihood of selection of brands. Davis et al. (2004) assert that the affective component of brand image serves as a source of brand differentiation and brand strength. Similarly, Keller (2000) posits that the affective dimension of brand image provides a meaningful foundation of brand equity and could give important points of difference with respect to

positioning. A study conducted by Alwi and Kitchen (2014) found the affective component of brand image tends to have a greater bearing on customer satisfaction than the functional component. The affective dimension of a brand's image relates to "the emotional perceptions consumers attach to a specific brand" (Low & Lamb, 2000). The affective aspect of brand image is manifest in feelings and emotions towards the brand (Nguyen & Le Blanc, 2001).

The significance of the affective dimension of a brand image cannot be overemphasized. For instance, Pitman (2000) argues that, in order to increase a brand's differentiation and image, the affective dimension of a brand's image should be given priority. In addition, Biel (1991) asserts that consumers come into contact with several brands that all make functional promises hence the affective dimension of a brand's image is important in influencing customer purchase decisions. Other scholars argue that it is challenging to maintain functional advantages with technological progress as most products competing in similar categories have equivalent functional attributes (Lambin, 1997; De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998). Grounded on the theory of consumption values, the current studies views emotional values, epistemic values and social values as the affective component of a brand's image since they are based on emotional opinions buyers associate with a particular brand.

2.7 Brand Choice

Consumers usually choose brands as a means of expressing their distinctiveness and the products they select are usually a symbolic illustration of their dispositions and way of life (Walker, 2011). Consumers take critical consideration before choosing a brand. Consumers' brand choice has become a daunting task especially in product categories that are cluttered with diverse brands, marketing communications and price in addition to other factors (Hennessy & Tol, 2011). Brand

preference is significantly connected to brand choice and it can influence the purchase decisions of consumers and trigger brand selection. Understanding the factors that influence consumers' brand choices normally commands the most appropriate and effective marketing programs that can be utilized to attract customers.

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There has been a heightened interest among marketing scholars and practitioners in the factors that influence consumers' brand choice to enable them to understand the brand selection process of consumers (Narteh et al., 2012). Branding literature has revealed that brands can be dominant symbolic products that have enormous social effect that evoke a tremendous sense of loyalty (Holt, 2004). In the mobile phones market, as product attributes are increasingly becoming the same, consequently buyers are not able or not willing to distinguish between products on the basis of rational qualities alone (Alwi & Kitchen, 2014). This commoditization arises partly due to marketing and technology (Munir & Philips, 2002; Munir & Philips, 2002). This phenomenon creates the necessity for resilient brands so that these brands can influence consumers to choose their brands and develop strong long-term bonds. A striking difference between consumer goods and the mobile phone industry is that brands in these industries do not concentrate on the link between product brands and the corporate brand but instead emphasise brand image associations (Hamman, Williams Jr, & Omar, 2007).

Investigating the issues that impact consumers in choosing a brand of cell phone is vital in today's high-tech era (Petruzzelis, 2010). A study by Petruzzelis (2010) on cell phone choice in the Italian market revealed the selection of mobile phones is influenced by income, past experience, occupation and work status. The study of Petruzzelis (2010) further revealed that product quality was not the major critical element influencing consumer brand selection and concluded that the success of cell phone brand choice was not just related to technical features but also on several

individual and shared factors. Similarly, Mokhlis and Yaakop (2012) studied consumers' brand choice of mobile phones in the Malaysian market: their findings indicate that mobile phone choice is influenced by innovative features, price, image, durability, recommendation from family and friends, the media and after sales service. Another study conducted in the Finnish mobile phone industry revealed that the factors that influence mobile phone brand choice include price, brand image interface and features (Karjaluo et al., 2005).

Studies on brand choice in other product categories have also revealed major determinants of brand choice. Narteh et al. (2012) studied the determinants of consumers' brand choice in the Ghanaian automobile industry and the findings revealed attributes, emotional connection, external influences and brand image influenced brand choice of automobiles in Ghana, while studies by Ahmed, Zaman and Irfan (2013) on the automobile industry in the United Kingdom revealed safety, quality, performance, design and technology were important factors in determining consumers' brand choice of cars. Brand choice in institutions of higher learning has also been examined: the findings revealed determinants of brand choice include price, views of others, size of the institution and location.

Results from extant literature indicates brand image is a major determinant of brand choice among most product categories. Brand choice has been examined in different contexts across different product categories. Petruzzellis (2010) argues that consumer attitudes are consumer context-specific dispositions that connect individual standards to real buying behaviours. However, there seem to be fewer studies that have examined brand choice of mobile phones in emerging countries like Africa. Brand image components comprising cognitive and affective attributes have ample prospects for progressing the comprehension of buying behaviour and consumer brand choice (Petruzzellis, 2010). In the mobile phones market, differentiation has moved from product

novelties that are easily copied by competitors to extra attributes that bring value addition. According to Petruzzellis (2010), the formation and conservation of a good brand image provides products an escape mechanism from the commoditisation spiral. When the core product as a driver of consumer choices is copied, a positive brand image creates value and promotes discrimination to ensure the brand is chosen by consumers when they make a purchase decision.

2.8 Brand Trust: Mediator of the Connection between Brand Image and Brand Choice

In spite of the amplified interest and importance that branding principles have received both in theory and practice over the years, the application of trust at the brand stage has been minimal (Fournier, 1998). The absence of theoretical and empirical research on brand trust is surprising as relationship paradigm directs current brand management activities to influence the connection between consumers and brands, particularly due to intense competitive pressure (Shocker, Srivastava, & Ruekert, 1994). Moreover, on a theoretical level, comprehending brand trust has great importance for the understanding of brand management and consumer behavior theories (Miller, 1995). Delgado-Ballester (2001) asserts brand trust has consequences on other important aspects such as brand loyalty and brand equity. Fournier (1998) described the bond consumers have with brands as multidimensional and it includes aspects like commitment, intimacy, love, interdependence, self-connection and brand partner quality. However, Delgado-Ballester (2001) contends that Fournier's (1998) conceptualization has missed an important characteristic of consumer brand relationship, which is brand trust.

From the perspective of sociologists and psychologists trust is the foundation and a vital quality in any relationship (Rotter, 1980; Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985). Researchers in management and applied disciplines such as marketing and management share similar views, as numerous authors in these branches of knowledge suggest that trust is a vital element of relationships in a business

environment (Gabarino & Johnson, 1999; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust is an important element that affects human interactions at every stage, hence, it should be analysed as another part of the relationship consumers have with brands (Delgado-Ballester, 2001). Unfortunately, brand trust has not received enough attention in studies relating to consumer brand choice.

Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) defined brand trust as “the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function”. On the other hand, Dawar and Pillutla (2000) defined brand trust on the basis of reliability and dependability. The current study adopts the definition of brand trust posited by Delgado-Ballester (2001). Delgado-Ballester (2001) defined brand trust as “the feeling of security held by the consumer in his/her interaction with the brand that is based on the perceptions that the brand is reliable and responsible for the interests and welfare of the consumer” (Delgado-Ballester, 2001, p. 11). This definition was chosen because it is in line with the significant aspects of past research on trust. Firstly, brand trust comprises a readiness of consumers to put themselves at risk through the value that the brand represents (Delgado-Ballester, 2001). Secondly, brand trust is including feelings of confidence and security in the brand. Thirdly, brand trust entails an expectancy as trust cannot happen devoid of some likelihood of making an error. Fourth, brand trust is associated with positive consequences. Fifth, it requires building dispositional attributions to the brand such that it is regarded as reliable, dependable etc.

2.9 Dimensions of Brand Trust

Brand trust is made up of two major dimensions - fiability and intentionality. These two broad dimensions are discussed in detail below:

2.9.1 Fiability dimension

The fiability aspect of brand trust is technical in nature because it deals with the view that a brand can fulfil consumers' desires. It entails the consumer's conviction that the brand achieves its brand promise. This aspect of brand trust is significant for trusting in a brand. This is because brands are viewed as the promises for future performances, the attainment of these promises enables the customer to trust in the occurrence of future satisfaction (Deighton, 1992). Fiability is rooted in the probability that the brand meets the individual's needs in a consistent positive manner. Delgado-Ballester (2001) argues that the fiability dimension of brand trust plays an important role in guiding everyday business, however it is only the beginning of giving a meaning to brand trust.

2.9.2 Intentionality dimension

This aspect of brand trust exhibits an emotional safety on the side of consumers. The intentionality dimension makes persons feel the guarantee that the brand is going to be accountable and considerate notwithstanding the chances of problematic circumstances in future with regards to the consumption of the product. These opinions are held and acted on by the consumer currently with the confidence that events in the future will also be accurate. The intentionality dimension is based on the conviction that the brand will not take advantage of the buyer's vulnerability.

2.10 Hypotheses Development

The study assesses the link between brand image and consumers' brand choices. It further assesses the mediating effect of brand trust in this link. Although there have been numerous studies on brand image, none of the research has sufficiently measured the influence of the components of brand image on brand choice. The current study adopts the conceptualization of Aranda et al.

(2015) and theory of consumption values to test the connection between brand image and brand choice.

The study presents brand image as a two-dimensional construct made up of cognitive and affective brand attributes. The study assesses the direct effect of brand image on a consumer's brand choice, and it further examines the relative significance of cognitive and affective dimensions in influencing a consumer's choice of mobile phone brands. The mediating effect of brand trust in the relationship is also assessed.

2.10.1 Brand image and brand choice

Brand image has been acknowledged as an essential concept in marketing (Keller, 1998). Although brand awareness is essential, it is not often an adequate phase in building brand equity: other vital aspects like the image of the brand are very crucial. Studies by Keller (1993) and Chen (2010) illustrates that brand equity is influenced by brand image. Aaker (1991) refers to brand image as a "set of brand association that consumers link in memory to a brand, usually in some meaningful way and can be defined as the perception about a brand as echoed by the cluster of associations that consumers associate to the brand name in memory". Furthermore, Kotler and Armstrong (2013) defined brand image as "a set of beliefs held about a particular brand and this set of beliefs plays an important role in the buyer's decision-making process when customers evaluate different brands".

Contemporary consumers have been characterized as having a problem of "over choice" and "choice fatigue" (Ballantyne, Warren & Nobbs, 2006). Therefore, customers have now established "phased decision-making strategies" in order to streamline their brand selection process (Ballantyne et al., 2006). A pertinent dimension of these "phased decision-making strategies" is

the generation of reduced subsets of brands of a downsized subset of brands, the consideration set, from which brand choice is made, which represents the consideration set from which consumers select brands (Azad, Eghbali, Moshkelati, Bagheri, & Asgari, 2013). Out of the brands held in memory within the consideration set, likeness of brand attributes have driven brand image as a distinguishing factor in aiding brand selection. It is clear that brands need to develop close emotional and symbolic bonds with customers in order to succeed in the hostile business environment (Ballantyne et al., 2006).

Preceding studies on the determinants of brand choice for different product categories has revealed that brand image has a positive effect on brand choice (Martinez & De Chernatony, 2004; O’Cass & Frost, 2002). Ghose, Heiman and Lowengart (2017) conducted a study on emerging markets to identify which brand attributes local and foreign products benefited from and how this influences consumers’ choice of brands. Their findings revealed that international brands influenced brand choice by advertising the image \attributes of their products while local brands benefit on advertising based on functionality.

A study conducted by Diallo et al. (2015) on the influence of brand image on store brand choice in the Brazilian market revealed that brand image is an important predictor of consumers’ choice of stores. Their study further revealed store price image are also important determinants of choice of stores. Based on the above discussion of the literature, it is hypothesized that:

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Hypothesis 1: Brand image has a significant and positive relationship with consumers’ brand choice in the Ghanaian telecommunication industry

2.10.2 Affective component of brand image and brand choice

Although there seems to be wide agreement among marketing scholars with respect to the relevance of brand image in informing consumer brand choices, brand image literature has seldom discriminated among the importance of various image components (Pike & Ryan, 2004; Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002). This lack of discrimination is a relevant gap in branding studies due to the fact that it could be argued that brand image dimensions do not have the same impact on consumer brand choices (Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007). According to Nguyen and Le Blanc (2001), an affective image comprises emotional aspects that are demonstrated by mental states and attitudes towards a brand. Nguyen and Le Blanc (2001) further asserts that these mental states are generated from personal experiences with the brand and information processing.

Alwi and Kitchen (2014) assert that linking products to emotional attributes or the total value that the brand represents is essential in enhancing the image of a brand. Biel (1991) argues buyers use several brands and all of these brands make functional promises. Lambin (1997) opines it is often challenging to maintain functional benefits with the rapid changes in technology. This, according to De Chernatony and Dall Olmo Riley (1998), is as a result of several brands competing in the same category and becoming very functionally similar. According to McEnally and De Chernatony (1999), marketers should concentrate on integrating emotional values into their brands: in this regard he suggested that businesses should portray emotional images by creating strong personalities in order to influence the choice of brands consumer's make in their purchase decisions. Omar, Williams and Lingelbach (2009) argue that competitive advantage is generated basically through abstract competencies as well as brand image and reputation.

Patterson (1999) argues that brand image is more a symbolic meaning buyer link to a brand and described brand image as “consumer’s perceptions of brand attributes and associations from which those consumers derive symbolic value”. Abratt and Kleyn (2012) likewise lend support to the importance of including an affective or emotional component of image in understanding brand image: they argue that powerful brands and images must be uncommon and tough to emulate. consumer’s make their choices not just based on products but on their emotional evaluation of brands as well. Based on the above discussion of the literature it is hypothesized that:

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H2: The affective component of brand image has a positive and significant relationship with a consumer’s choice of mobile phone brands in the Ghanaian telecommunication industry

2.10.3 Cognitive component of brand image and consumer brand choice

The importance of cognitive image in influencing a consumer’s brand choice cannot be over emphasized. Dabholkar (1996) argues that, in the technology-based brands sector, consumers appear to favor cognitive dimensions like reliability, control and ease of use rather than affective evaluation. Dabholkar (1996) further asserts that, although affective evaluations are significant, they do not contribute additional explanatory power to a model. The findings of Wilde, Kelly and Scott (2004) revealed that characteristics like the technical product and service features are the ones that constitute the main images of retailers who sell online. Da Silva and Alwi (2006) argue that buyers utilise cognitive evaluations thought/reasoning instead of affective evaluations emotions/feelings. Aaker (1996) argues that utilizing the cognitive component of image is more effective since functional attributes perform a vital role in consumers’ brand selection and the users’ experience.

The findings of Aaker (1996) further indicated that consumers easily evaluate physical benefits because they are rational and this reassures marketers that buyers assess brands by utilising a

reasonable model, and this means that their purchase decisions are easily predicted. Furthermore, earlier studies reveal that cognitive attribute-related evaluations of brands constitute the main aspect of assessment in consumers' minds although affect type evaluations might be present in their mental maps (Zimmer and Golden, 1988 as cited in Da Silva & Alwi, 2006). A study conducted by Maathius, Rodenburg and Sikkel (2004) revealed that consumers' personal experiences with the brand that they emphasized is cognitive in nature is very essential in assessing brand image and its impact on consumer purchase decisions. Based on the above discussion of the literature it is hypothesized that.

H3: The cognitive component of brand image has a positive and significant relationship with a consumer's brand choice in the Ghanaian telecommunication industry

2.9.4 The mediating role of brand trust

Brand trust is predisposed to a customer's assessment of direct or indirect contact with that brand (Delgado-Ballester, 2001). These evaluations are based on a consumer's brand image perceptions.

Delgado-Ballester (2001) further asserts that different exposures a consumer has had with a brand influences the perceptions that the consumer holds in memory about the brand, and this further influences the trust the consumer has in a brand, and hence the consumption experience is an important source of brand trust.

According to Krishnan (1996), positive image perceptions positively affect brand trust, which engenders associations and feelings that are more salient and accorded more certainty. Selnes (1998) opines that a positive brand image implies the brand has been consistent in the fulfillment of its promise and that it is a source of trust as it protects and takes care of buyers.

With respect to consumer brand choice and brand image, brand trust has been found to mediate the effect brand image has on brand choice (Anderson et al., 1994). Gabarino and Johnson (1999)

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argue that brand trust was important in developing positive attitudes about a brand, which in turn influence consumers' purchase. Consequently, Hess (1995) argues that trust leads to affective responses to a brand that influences a buyer's brand choice for a long period of time.

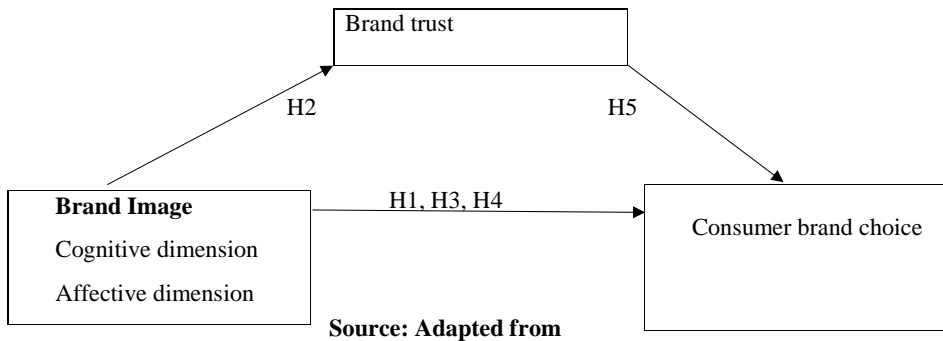
H4: Brand trust partially mediates the relationship between brand image and consumers' brand choice in the Ghanaian telecommunication industry

2.11 Conceptual Framework

As indicated earlier, this study assesses the connection between brand images of mobile phones and a consumer's brand choice, paying attention to the mediating role of brand trust. Even though there is a preponderance of literature on brand image, arguably none has adequately assessed the impact of the disaggregated components of brand image against a consumer's choice of brands. In this study the conceptualizations of Aranda et al. (2015), Nguyen and Le Blanc (2001) and Alwi and Kitchen (2014) is adopted as far as brand image is concerned.

The conceptual framework that is exhibited conceptualizes brand image as a two dimensional variable comprising cognitive and affective components of image. The conceptual framework considers the direct relationship between brand image as an aggregated component on consumers' brand choice. Furthermore, the mediating effect of brand trust in this link would be examined. The framework further examines the impact of affective and cognitive dimensions of image on consumers' brand choices.

Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework



Source: Adapted from

Aranda et al. (2015) and Sheth et al. (1991)

2.12 Chapter Summary

The chapter gave the theoretical background of the study and explained the key variables of the study. The chapter further elaborated the scholarly discourse on the topic under investigation and developed the research hypotheses. A conceptual framework was developed based on the review of relevant literature.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

3.0 Introduction

This section of the study discusses of the telecommunications industry globally and locally. It further examines mobile phone penetration globally and in the African sub region. It further examines the trends in the cell phone sector in Ghana with specific emphasis on the usage of cell phones among the Ghanaian populace.

3.1 The Global Telecommunication Industry

Telecommunication is defined “as, any transmission, emission or reception of signs, signals, writings, images and sounds or intelligence of any nature by wire, radio, optical or other electromagnetic systems” (International Telecommunications Union, 2001). Telecommunication facilities may depend on one technology or multiple technologies (International Telecommunication Union, 2010). Odylyzko (2001) asserts that the word telecommunications were originally used to denote to wire telephone system. Presently, the term is applied to both wired and wireless telephony, mobile services and different forms of voice and data transmissions and Integrated Services Digital Networks (Bhalla & Bhalla, 2010). Previously, telecommunications technologies comprised pictorial signals (Ajisola & Awodun, 2014). Other forms of ancient telecommunications consists of coded drum beats, lung-blown horns and loud whistles (Ajisola & Awodun, 2014). Contemporary telecommunications technologies consist of electrical and electromagnetic telecommunications technologies.

Up until the 1980's, the telecommunications subdivision was regarded as a monopoly as a result of extremely high infrastructure investment (Ajisola & Awodun, 2014). This led to the charging of outrageous fees to gain abnormal profits and this raised the need for price regulation (Griffiths, Jensen, & Webster, 2011). This brought about the establishment of state-owned monopolies that provided telecommunications services (Waverman & Sirel, 1997). State owned companies faced numerous challenges, which led to their reorganization through restructuring and privatization (Waverman & Sirel, 1997).

The United States of America championed the reformation of state-owned monopolies with the restructuring of its telecommunication giant AT & T in the 1980s (Bowman, Singh, Useem, & Bhadury, 1999). This caused the dissection of the company into a number of smaller companies (Bowman et al., 1999). It also led to the liberalization of the telecommunication sector and this allowed other companies to participate in the provision of telecommunication services (Bowman et al., 1999). Private businesses were also offered the chance to start businesses in the broadcast and communication market concurrently (Waverman & Sirel, 1997). Later on, the United Kingdom restructured its telecommunication giant British Telecom. Other European countries followed suit by liberalising their telecommunications sectors (Bressie, Kende, & Williams, 2005).

As at 2008, the universal mobile telecommunications service income generation stood at US \$912.1 billion, overtaking key sectors like the pharmaceutical and semi-conductor sectors (Eastern Carribean Telecommunications Authority, 2009). Although dealers in the software and services sector made more income than the mobile telecommunication sector, the mobile telecommunication segment gained the highest growth and it was the only sector that achieved a double-digit growth of 17.4% between 2007 and 2008 (Cagemini, 2011).

The telecommunication sector is a major income generating sector for many economies across the globe (Mahadevan, 2000). Data from the International Telecommunication Union (2014) indicates that fixed telephone penetration has been declining for the past five years. It is expected that cell phone subscribers globally will total about 8.5 billion getting to the close of year 2016 (Mobithinking, 2014). It is also estimated that Africa and the Middle East will overtake Europe as the second largest region for mobile subscribers, while the Asia Pacific region will maintain the lead as the largest region for mobile subscribers by the end of 2016 (Mobithinking, 2014).

3.2 The Telecommunication Industry in Ghana

The maiden telegraph line in Ghana was installed between the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles (Allotey & Akorli, 2000). This telegraph line extended over a distance of 2.5 miles (Salifu & Yeboah, 2014). It was laid between Christianborg and Accra (Salifu & Yeboah, 2014). Around 1887 and 1889, the telegraph lines were extended to serve key coastal towns like Prampram, Accra and all colonial forts and castles as well as commercial ports and fishing centers (Allotey & Akorli, 2000). In 1886, these telegraph lines were installed to the Southern and Northern parts of Ghana (Huq, 1989). In order to improve communication, the first manual telephone exchange made up of seventy telephone lines was fixed in Accra in the year 1892. An additional manual exchange comprised of thirteen lines was set up in 1904 in Cape Coast (Salifu & Yeboah, 2014). In the colonial period, telecommunication infrastructure was extended to boost social, economic and political administration (Overa, 2006). As at the end of 1912, one thousand four hundred and ninety-two (1492) telegraph lines had been created to connect forty-eight (48) telegraph offices all over the nation. As at the commencement of the First World War, there were about one hundred and seventy telephone subscribers in Ghana (Allotey & Akorli, 2000). By 1930, the entire quantity

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of telephone lines had increased to one thousand five hundred and sixty and this connected the coastal, central and northern sectors of the country (Salifu & Yeboah, 2014). The worldwide recession after World War Two reduced the development of the communications sector in Ghana (Allotey & Akorli, 2000). The first automatic telephone exchange with two hundred (200) lines was mounted in Accra around 1953 and it substituted the manual ones created sixty-three years ago (Allotey & Akorli, 2000).

Ghana launched a seven-year development plan after it achieved independence in 1957 and this led to innovation in the telecommunication industry (Aryeetey, Harrigan, & Nissanke, 2000). This led to the rapid finishing of a novel automatic exchange in Accra in 1957 (Allotey & Akorli, 2000). Around 1963, Ghana had sixteen thousand (16,000) telephone subscribers and the fast surge in commercial activities in the agricultural sub-sector resulted in the development of new manual exchanges in Ho, Sunyani, Swedru, Kumasi and Tamale (Allotey & Akorli, 2000).

The administration of Ghana's telecommunication organizations was originally given to the Public Works Department and it was later moved to the Post Office after the passing of the Post Office Ordinance in 1886 (Falch & Anyimadu, 2003). Administration of Ghana's telecommunications was then allocated to the government's Post and Telecommunications Department. The Post and Telecommunications Department was responsible for telecommunication until 1970 (Falch & Anyimadu, 2003). The Post and Telecommunications Department was confirmed a public corporation in 1974 and it was controlled by the Ministry of Transport and Communication, which was in charge of policy making and administration of the telecommunications sector (Salifu & Yeboah, 2014). Falch and Anyimadu (2003) assert that, in 1975, the Post and Telecommunication Department began negotiating loans from multi-lateral and bilateral financial institutions in order to modernise and boost communication in Ghana. The project was called the First

Telecommunication Project (FTP). This project was planned to last from 1975 to 1979 and it cost seventy-six million dollars that was raised by the government of Ghana, the World Bank, Japan, the Africa Development Bank and Canada (Falch & Anyimadu, 2003). The key achievement of the project was that it raised Ghana's telephone line capacity by 50% (Salifu & Yeboah, 2014).

Ghana's idea to have a long term telecommunication development project led to the introduction of the eight years Second Telecommunication Project (STP) in 1987, which was targeted at reformation of the Post and Telecommunication Department (Frempong, 1996). This project cost Ghana an amount of one hundred and seventy-three million dollars. The execution of the Second Telecommunication Project (STP) resulted in the reform of the satellite earth station and the cable networks in parts of Accra (Frempong, 1996). It also boosted subscriber circuit in the rehabilitated areas and reduced fault rates significantly (Haggarty, Shirley, & Wallsten, 2003). Furthermore, it increased the total number of direct exchange lines from sixty percent in 1987 to eighty-nine percent in March 1992 (Haggarty, Shirley, & Wallsten, 2003). The Second Telecommunication Project resulted in the development of the International Direct Dial in twelve exchange areas and encouraged international business (Haggarty, Shirley, & Wallsten, 2003). These rapid changes in the telecommunications sub-sector resulted in more utilization of satellite technology (Boateng, 2009).

Osiakwan and Foster (2005) indicate that, in the latter part of 1990, Ghana opened up the telecommunication industry to draw investments from both indigenous and overseas companies and to enhance competition. Around 1996, the telephone density for Ghana stood at 0.26%, which implied there were 2.6 telephones for every one thousand people (Osiakwan & Foster, 2005). Around that same time, Ghana had thirty-five pay phones out of which thirty-two were located in Accra (Osiakwan & Foster, 2005). Data from the National Communications Authority (2009)

suggests, as at 2009, sixty-five percent of Ghanaians had access to voice or data communication. The substantial improvement in the telephone density was partially as a result of the formation of the National Communication Authority in 1996 and the deregulation of the telecommunication sector, which attracted private operators (Alhassan, 2003). This had a positive impact on the progress of wireless telephony (Alhassan, 2003).

The implementation of the Accelerated Development Programme resulted in the restructuring of the telecommunication sector and, consequently, enormous progress in the sector (Frempong & Atubra, 2001). The telephone density moved from 0.26 lines per every one thousand inhabitants in 1996 to 1.16 lines per every one thousand in 2000 (International Telecommunication Union, 2001). The programme also led to significant alterations such as the partial privatisation of Ghana Telecom, the formation of the National Communications Authority in 1996 and the liberalization of the telecommunications sector (Alhassan, 2003). The liberalisation of the telecommunications sector augmented the progress of the mobile telecommunications sector (Alhassan, 2003).

In 1990, a group of Ghanaians were given a license to start a mobile cellular company with a brand name Mobitel (Dowuona, 2014). It was the maiden mobile cellular company in Ghana that operated an analogue system. Sending a text message under the analogue network was not possible (Zachary, 2004). In 1993, license was granted to another Ghanaian to start a mobile cellular company known as Celltel Limited (Dowuona, 2014). Celltel limited operated an Advanced Mobile Phone System, which was an analogous network and was converted to CDMA around 2005 (Dowuona, 2014).

In 1995, a GSM license was given to Scancom Limited and they were the first to start a GSM service, which was named Spacefon (Dowuona, 2014). In the same year Ghana Telecom got a mobile cellular license and they started their GSM network in the year 2000 under the name

Onetouch (Dowuona, 2014). However, around 1998, the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation collaborated with a US-based Western Wireless and acquired a license for the Wireless Local Loop (WILL) and International Gateway (Dowuona, 2014). They formed a company called Western Telesystems Limited (Westel) (Brammah & King, 2006). The company offered services in the fixed line and International gateway sector (Dowuona, 2014). The government of Ghana purchased the company and acquired a GSM mobile license, but commenced no GSM service (Dowuona, 2014). Zain bought 65% shares of the company and commenced a GSM service in 2008 (Dowuona, 2014). The company was bought by Bharti Airtel in 2010. A GSM license was issued to Globacom Limited in 2008 and the company launched its GSM operations in Ghana in 2012 (Dowuona, 2014).

3.3 Overview of the Global Mobile Phones Market

Developments in the cell phone industry was a comprehensive story of novelty, and cell phones are among the devices that have witnessed the fastest adoption rates by households more than any technological device in global history (Mesay, 2013). According to Donner (2008), around year 2002 the sum of mobile phones used by people worldwide surpassed the total number of land lines and present forecasts depict there would continue to be more mobile lines than fixed lines.

According to the International Telecommunications Union (2016), the next billion new phone users will primarily use mobile phones. Donner (2008) asserts that both the developed and least developed economies are participating in this boom. In 2013, 56.5% of the global population used a mobile phone (Statista, 2018). As at 2016, about 62.9% of people had a cell phone (Statista, 2017). The mobile phone penetration rate is estimated to grow to a tune of 67% by 2019 (Statista, 2018). According to reports by ICT Facts and Figures (2015), there were about seven billion

mobile phones in use worldwide and ninety-six mobile phone connections per 100 inhabitants (ICT facts and figures, 2016).

3.4 The Mobile Phone Market in Africa

Bauer (2016) asserts that in Sub-Saharan Africa, over 60% of people currently have access to a mobile phone. Bauer (2016) further argues that mobile phones are dominating other forms of communication as the technology of choice for individuals searching for superior interconnectedness and they are also integrating other methods in the provision of content. According to the GSMA (2017), Sub-Saharan Africa has about 420 million unique mobile subscribers. The number is expected to exceed half a billion by 2020, making Africa the fastest growing mobile market (GSMA, 2017). The findings from the GSMA (2017) report further reveals that there were 731 million sim connections in Africa as at the end of 2016, and this was also expected to rise to approximately one billion by 2020. Furthermore, smartphone connections have doubled in Sub-Saharan Africa over the past two years to nearly 200 million.

The most populated mobile phones market in Sub-Saharan Africa include Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania (GSMA, 2017). The reasons for this rapid surge in the use of mobile phones in Africa have been attributed to affordability of new devices and growing market for second hand devices (GSMA, 2017). According to the GSMA (2017), there had been a downward trend in revenue growth by mobile service operators due to messaging services like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. Mobile penetration in West Africa was highest in Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire; in Eastern Africa, it is highest in Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania; while in Central Africa, it is highest in Gabon, Congo and Sao Tome and Principe and

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in South Africa, Seychelles, Mauritius, Botswana and South Africa top the list of highest mobile penetration (GSMA, 2017).

3.5 The West African Mobile Market

The West African sub region accounts for 320 million mobile connections and as at the end of the year 2016, there were 172 million unique subscribers in the sub region (GSMA, 2017). The Mobile Economy Report (2016) reveals that the subscriber penetration rate in West Africa stood at 49%: this figure was slightly higher than that of the wider Sub-Saharan Africa Region, which was at 47%. It is estimated that in four years, West Africa will see an average subscriber growth of 6%, which is one of the fastest growth rate globally and this will lead to a surge of an additional 45 million subscribers by the year 2020 (GSMA, 2017). It is also estimated that the biggest market in the sub region, Nigeria, will account for two thirds of this growth whereas about a quarter will come from Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Senegal (GSMA, 2017).

The findings of the GSMA (2017) Mobile Economy Report revealed that macroeconomic trends across the sub region affected revenues from the mobile phones sector and it is expected to continue to decline. Reasons attributed to this decline includes continued downward pressure from key markets such as Nigeria and slow growth in other countries within the sub region (GSMA, 2017). In spite of these challenges, Capex on networks and services will remain stable, mobile operators invested a sum of \$2.7 billion in 2016 and they are further expected to invest a total of \$12.6 billion between 2017 and 2020 (GSMA, 2017). Furthermore, mobile services operators' investments in high-speed networks (with 14 4G network launches in the sub-region in the beginning of 2016) and the declining costs of smartphones are both driving the shift to mobile broadband; and 3G and 4G connections will exceed 2G by the middle of 2019. This would account

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for two thirds of the total connections base by the end of 2020. Table 3.1 below summarizes the number of unique subscribers, the penetration rate and smartphone adoption in the various countries in West Africa.

Table 3.1: Mobile Penetration Rates and Smartphone Adoption in West

	Unique Subscribers	Penetration	Smartphone Adoption
West Africa	172 million	49.0%	28.5%
Benin	5.3 million	47%	28.5%
Burkina Faso	7.5 million	39.6%	25.5%
Cabo Verde	359,000	66.0%	44.2%
Cote d'Ivoire	12.5 million	52.9%	27.1%
Gambia	1.4 million	66.6%	27.5%
Ghana	18.9 million	66.8%	23.4%
Guinea	6.0 million	45.8%	22.5%
Guinea-Bissau	743,000	38.9%	29.7%
Liberia	1.7 million	37.2%	26.2%
Mali	11.1 million	60.5%	35.6%
Niger	5.3 million	24.9%	19.5%
Nigeria	86.0 million	45.4%	29.9%
Senegal	9.6 million	60.5%	35.6%
Sierra Leone	2.9 million	43.3%	28.5%
Togo	2.9 million	38.2%	25.5%

Source: GSMA Intelligence (2016)

3.6 The Mobile Phones Market in Ghana

A study conducted on mobile phones and non-formal traders and their commercial practices in Ghana revealed the acceptance of modern technology improves the building of trust in trade networks trading (Overa, 2005). Waverman, Meschi and Fuss (2005) assert that the positive impact of cell phones on the growth of economies in developing countries may double that of advanced countries. In 1994, Ghana deregulated its telecommunications sector, during that period of 1994, about 0.3 land lines were available for each hundred residents (Overa, 2006). After ten years of deregulation, there were almost 1.5 landlines, 8 mobile phone subscribers and 1.8 internet users per 100 inhabitants (ITU, 2004). The first cellular phone service provider was Mobitel in the year 1992 and around that period 19,000 people in Ghana had cell phones (Dadzie & Boachie-Mensah, 2011). By 1998, the total number of people with cell phones in Ghana had risen to 43,000 representing an increase of over a 100%.

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In 1999, the number of mobile phone users rose to 68,000, the figure almost doubled to 132,000 by the end of year 2000 and by June 2008, mobile subscriptions in Ghana was 9.4 million (Dadzie & Boachie-Mensah, 2011). Records from the National Communications Authority (2017) indicates total mobile voice subscriptions as at September 2017 stands at 37,445,048 while the penetration rate within that same period was 130.91%.

3.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the telecommunication industry globally and locally. It further gave highlights of the mobile phones market both locally and globally.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology. It aims at elaborating the methodological approach used in the study. It describes, among other things, the research paradigm, the research approach, the study's population, sampling size, sampling technique and data collection instrument.

4.1 Research Paradigm

Kuhn (2012) describes a research paradigm as “a set of beliefs, values and techniques that is shared by members of a scientific community, and which acts as a guide or map, dictating the kinds of problems scientists should address and the types of explanations that are acceptable to them”. According to Johnson and Duberly (2000), research paradigms can be viewed as a continuum ranging from objectivism on one end to subjectivism on the other end. Myers and Avison (2002) argue that in between the two extremes there are various classifications that distinguish paradigms. Chan (2015) asserts that, in social science research, the commonly used paradigms include positivism, critical realism, interpretivist and relativism. Research paradigms perform an important function in conducting research as research paradigms offer opinions that serve as a basis for the researcher to develop the methodology for a study (Kuhn, 2012). Each research paradigm has its unique epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions that function as a structure for explaining and distinguishing them from each other.

The current study adopted the positivist paradigm. Dash (2005) is of view that the positivist methodology of assessing social reality depends on the philosophical thought of the French philosopher Auguste Comete, who concentrated on observation and reason as methods of understanding human behavior. There is a general agreement among most philosophers that the positivist paradigm is the basis for contemporary management research (Johnson & Duberly, 2000). The positivist paradigm operates within principles and assumptions of pure science. These scientific principles include determinism, empiricism, parsimony and generality. Dash (2005) indicates that determinism refers to events that are caused by numerous circumstances, thus seeing the linkages is relevant in controlling such events. Empiricism refers to the collecting of empirical evidence that can be verified in order to back a hypothesis (Dash, 2005). Parsimony, on the other hand, relates to the explanation of the phenomenon in the most comprehensible manner while generality deals with the method of summing up the views on a particular phenomenon to the world at large.

The current study considered the positivist paradigm as most appropriate for the study as it sought to assess the nexus between brand image and brand choice and verify stated hypotheses through primary data collected through a survey of a large sample of respondents to make generalizations. Table 4.1 summarizes the different types of research paradigms, their epistemology and methodology.

Table 4.1: Research Paradigms

ONTOLOGY (What is the nature of reality?)	EPISTEMOLOGY (What is the nature of knowledge generated?)	Methodology (How is knowledge created?)
<p>POSITIVISM “There is a single, tangible and objective reality”</p>	<p>“Value free. Knowledge generated is objective, free of time impacts and context free as well”</p>	<p>“Researchers formulate research questions and hypotheses that are tested empirically under carefully controlled circumstances. Deductive reasoning”</p>
<p>INTERPRETIVIST “Multiple realities exist subject to human experiences and interpretations. Reality is socially constructed”</p>	<p>“Value laden. Knowledge generated is subjective, time bound and context dependent”</p>	<p>“Knowledge is made through researchers recognizing the different interpretations and constructions of reality that exist, and endeavoring to establish patterns. Inductive logic and emergent design”</p>
<p>REALISM “Reality is “real” yet just incompletely and probabilistically understandable, so triangulation from different sources is required to attempt to know it”.</p>	<p>“Value cognizant/value-aware. Findings are probably true. Researcher needs to triangulate any perceptions collected”.</p>	<p>“Social phenomenon is understood through hypotheses that are tested to establish patterns of associations and hence the most possible explanation. Hypothetico-deduction”.</p>
<p>RELATIVISM “Multiple realities exist. Reality as truth is not “absolute”, it is relative, it is dependent on something and it does exist”</p>	<p>“The interpretation of the world requires some form of human processing”</p>	<p>“The construction of knowledge is influenced by the world view and research paradigm of a researcher. Researchers should focus more on building new useful theories – useful solutions to specific problems”</p>

CRITICAL REALISM

“Two worlds – transitive and intransitive. Transitive is what we observe and learn with our mind – the perceptions or reality. Intransitive embodies the reality which is independent of what the mind thinks”

“Transitive world is value laden and it is changing continually. Intransitive world has underlying structures and mechanisms that are ‘relatively’ enduring, that is what we want to study”

“Researchers seek to deconstruct and understand that structures and mechanisms underlying the subjective realities that exist. Triangulation from several sources is required to know it. Reproductive reasoning”

Source: Boateng (2016)

4.2 Research Approach

The philosophical methods selected for a study informs the research approach. Bryman (2015) categorizes the approach to research into three, namely, quantitative, qualitative and the mixed method approach.

Qualitative research offers insights and comprehension of the problem setting (Malhotra & Dash, 2013). The objective of qualitative studies is to acquire a detailed appreciation of the reasons and motivations about a phenomenon and it normally utilizes a small sample size, which may either be representative or non-representative of the target population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Qualitative studies usually begin with general research problems and it uses instruments such as interviews and observations for data collection. A key advantage of the qualitative research approach is that it is more flexible in all activities of the research process (Boateng, 2016).

The mixed method approach integrates the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to conduct research (Boateng, 2016). The current study used the quantitative research approached and it utilized structured questionnaires with predetermined responses in the data

collection. The quantitative research approach was selected because it is appropriate for testing hypotheses and making generalization and it reduces researcher bias (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

According to Boateng (2016), using the quantitative approach helps to identify the prevalence of a relationship or a problem between aspects of a phenomenon by quantifying the variation. Again, the quantitative approach usually refuses to agree to a hypothesized relationship or supports the relationship between two or several aspects of the phenomenon.

4.3 Research Purpose

According to Saunders and Lewis (2012), the purpose of a research could be explanatory, exploratory or descriptive. Saunders and Lewis (2012) further assert that a research purpose could be multi-dimensional just as research questions can be. Hence, the purposes for which a research is carried out may be exploratory and descriptive, descriptive and explanatory or exploratory and explanatory.

4.3.1 Explanatory research

An explanatory research seeks to establish causal relationships between variables (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Explanatory studies aim to assess the causal relationships between variables and indicate how these relationships determine a specific outcome (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001). The current study examines the relationship between brand image and brand choice; hence it could be categorized as explanatory. An important characteristic of explanatory studies is that it allows researchers to gain fresh insights and perspectives on a new research problem in an attempt to solve the research problem.

4.3.2 Exploratory research

Studies by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), exploratory research is usually carried out to examine a new issue or to shed light on novel concepts. According to Saunders et al. (2012) exploratory research requires the researcher to develop an understanding of a research problem, clarifying the issues and offering direction for organising further research.

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4.3.3 Descriptive research

The main objective of descriptive research is to describe or profile events or phenomena (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Hair Jr, Babin and Anderson (2014) assert that descriptive studies give highlights of what is happening but do not give detailed explanation of why it is happening. Robson (2002) asserts that descriptive studies reveal a precise profile of persons, events or situations. Due to the importance of descriptive studies in presenting a rich picture of a phenomenon, it is sometimes combined with other forms of research such as exploratory or explanatory.

4.4 Research Design

According to Cooper and Schindler (2011), a research design serves as a blue print for achieving the research objectives and obtaining knowledge to answer the research purpose. Yin (2003) identifies five different strategies of collecting and analyzing data to provide empirical evidence, namely experiments, surveys, archival analyses, history and case studies. Yin (2003) further asserts that each of the strategies could be used for descriptive, exploratory and explanatory studies. The survey approach was selected for the current study as it is appropriate for verification of the hypotheses. The survey design was also selected because it fits well with the study's objectives and it is widely used in quantitative research (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.4.1 Surveys

A survey is one of the commonly used strategies that allows a researcher to gather a large volume of data at a reasonable cost (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Hair et al. (2014) assert that quantitative surveys are used to provide facts from a representative sample of respondents. Conducting surveys involves gathering data from respondents through the use of questionnaires that usually enables the researcher to use descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse data. According to Saunders and Lewis (2012), surveys have the advantage of giving the researcher more control over the research process and it further allows generalization of findings at a reasonable cost. Survey research designs may be categorized as cross-sectional or longitudinal dependent on whether they include an explicit thoughtfulness regarding a period measurement (Robson, 2002)

4.4.2 Case Studies

Hair et al. (2014) asserts that case studies are normally exploratory research methods that rigorously investigate one or more cases in-depth. Robson (2002) asserts that case studies involve empirical studies of a specific issue in its actual setting by utilizing numerous means of proofs. Case studies are particularly helpful in researches where the researcher aims to gain a deeper understanding of the context of the research and the process being undertaken (Morris & Wood, 1991). Data collection techniques for case studies include interviews, observations, documentary analysis and questionnaires (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Two main types of case studies exist namely, single and multiple case studies (Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) asserts that single case studies are used in circumstances where the theme being studied is special and it needs unique attention to comprehend and interpret the research phenomenon. Multiple case studies are utilised in

situations where it is necessary for findings to be confirmed among numerous cases to authenticate and to substantiate that findings are the precise causes of the issue (Saunders et al., 2012).

4.4.3 Experiments

Experimental research designs generated their roots from the natural sciences. However, in recent times the research design is becoming popular among social scientist. Experiments are causal research designs that are utilized to assess the cause and effect relationships among constructs and to determine why events occur (Hair et al., 2012). The aim of an experimental research design is to examine causal links and to identify how a change in an independent variable influences a dependent variable (Hakim, 2000). Simple experimental designs aim at uncovering the link between two variables while complex experimental designs focus on the magnitude of the change that exists between two variables and the comparative significance of multiple predictor variables. Marketers who are interested in controlling the research situation and examining the causal variables thoroughly can utilise experimental research designs to achieve this aim (Hair et al., 2012).

4.4.4 Archival Research

Archival research design seeks to explain the progression of a research phenomenon over time through the past and present records (Saunders et al., 2012). The main source of data used in archival research design is administrative records and documents. According to Saunders et al. (2012), archival research designs are vital where the focus of the research is on bridging the gap between the present and the future.

4.5 Study and Target Population

Neuman (2005) opines that a target population denotes the total set of units for which a research study's findings are meant to generalize. The population for this study consisted of users of mobile phone devices who live in the Accra and Tema metropolises respectively. Accra and Tema were selected due to the heterogeneity of these metropolises. The rationale for selecting these population is that respondents from the Accra and Tema metropolis can to some extent be generalized to other users of mobile phones in Ghana in particular because of the heterogeneity of these two metropolises. Second, the study acknowledges that there are different types of telecommunication devices, yet the study chose mobile phone devices as it is the most widely used telecommunication device worldwide. In general, having established this background, the current study considered the views of cell phone users living in Accra and Tema as the preferred study population.

4.6 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling involves the selection of some elements in the population as the population will be too enormous for the researcher to attempt to study all its elements (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Thus, a sample is the reflection of the features of the population and it could be used to draw conclusions about the entire population (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). With regard to sample size, a sample of four hundred (400) users of mobile phones was used for this study. According to Hair et al. (2010), utilizing a sample size of two hundred (200) or more is enough to provide statistical power for data analysis.

Two broad sampling techniques exist, namely probability and non-probability sampling techniques (Malhotra & Dash, 2005). According to Malhotra and Dash (2005), probability

sampling techniques “give each member of the population an equal chance of being selected to form part of sample”. Some probability sampling techniques include “simple random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling and stratified sampling”.

According to Saunders et al. (2012), “non-probability sampling involves selection of a sample based on the researcher’s discretion and judgement”. Malhotra and Dash (2005) assert that “in non-probability sampling, all members of the population do not have an equal chance of being selected to constitute the sample”. Non-probability sampling techniques include purposive sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling (Saunders et al., 2012). Malhotra and Dash (2005) assert that, in instances where it is impossible to get an appropriate sampling frame to undertake a study, non-probability sampling techniques are ideal. Non-probability sampling techniques offers researchers the opportunity to choose from a variety of choices that facilitate the choosing of respondents based on subjective judgement (Saunders et al., 2012). In line with this, this study chose a non-probability sampling technique due to lack of a suitable sampling frame.

The researcher relied on the convenience sampling technique to select four hundred users of mobile phones. Convenience sampling is a form of non-probability sampling where the researcher draws samples based on convenience by selecting samples who are easily accessible (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

4.7 Source of Data

Two main sources of data exist, that is, primary and secondary sources (Malhotra, 2007). “Secondary data refers to data that has been gathered for purposes other than the present research” (Malhotra & Dash, 2005). Primary data relates to data collected for the “purpose of tackling the

research problem at hand² (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The study made use of primary data, which were attained through self-administered questionnaires distributed to four hundred (400) mobile phone users.

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4.8 Questionnaire Design and Administration

The data collection instrument selected for the study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire for the study was developed based on review of literature, specifically the works of Aranda et al. (2015) and Choo and Fiore (2015). The questionnaire contained forty-three (41) items and it was divided in to two sections. The first part was made up of ten (10) close ended questions about the demographic characteristics of respondents, the brand of phones they used and the number of years they had use their phones. This part required respondents to provide answers by ticking the answers applicable to them.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of statements that required respondents to select their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement using a five point Likert scale. This part was comprised of questions on cognitive dimension of image, affective dimension of image, brand choice and perceived quality. One (1) was the lowest point on the scale representing strongly disagree, two (2) represented disagree, three (3) neutral responses, four (4) represented agree and five (5) was the highest point and it represented strongly agree. The questionnaires were self-administered to users of mobile phones in the Accra and Tema metropolis through convenience sampling.

4.8.1 Scale development

The scales for the various variables in the research were adapted from previous studies. The scale for cognitive and affective dimensions of brand image were taken from Sheth et al. (1991). The

questions for brand choice were taken from studies by Erdem and Swait (2004), Baek, Kim and Yu (2010) and Alvarez and Vazquez Casielles (2005). The questions on brand trust were taken from studies by Delgado-Ballester (1998) and Delgado-Ballester (2001).

4.8.2 Pretesting of questionnaires

The initial literature review facilitated the researcher to adapt questions from literature to address the research objectives. The questions were then pre-tested with twenty-five (25) users of mobile phones. The sample was constituted by students of the University of Ghana. During the pretest, the researcher realized there were difficulties in answering some of the questions and further suggestions made by the respondents were noted and were taken into consideration generating the final questionnaire for the survey. After the pretest, the questionnaire was refined and agreed on with the supervisor for the study.

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4.8.3 Administration of questionnaires

Four hundred (400) questionnaires were distributed face to face to those who were willing to participate in the study. Out of the four hundred respondents contacted only three hundred and eighty five agreed to participate in the study, and of these twenty four (24) were rejected due to incomplete responses and missing data leaving a final of 361 data sets for further analysis. This represented ninety three point eight percent (93.8%) of the respondents. The respondents were drawn from various suburbs in the Accra and Tema metropolis.

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4.9 The Reliability and Validity of the Scale

The reliability and validity of scales is essential as it facilitates the acquisition of most accurate results in research. Read (2013) opines that “reliability and validity are means of assessing the dependability of the measurement to ensure they are free from distortion and bias”. Reliable and valid questionnaires are those that would give similar results if the study was to be repeated (Hair et al., 2010).

4.9.1 Reliability

Reliability indicates the accuracy, precision and consistency of the measurement (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Reliability can also be described as an indicator of a measurement of internal consistency, that is, how well the items on the test measure the same construct or idea (Zikmund, Banin, Carr & Griffin, 2012). Internal consistency is usually measured with the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (Pallant, 2007). The study further utilized the reliability values, which is mostly used in structural equation modelling to further check for reliability (Hair et al., 2012).

4.9.2 Validity

The validity of a scale describes the suitability of the measurements to measure the variable it claims to measure (Burns & Burns, 2008). The study construct validity was assessed with the intention of identifying how well the outcome obtained from using the measurement scale fits theoretical expectations (Hair et al., 2012). Construct validity was assessed using both convergent and discriminant validity. Discriminant validity exposes to what extent a construct differs from others (Rezaei, 2015). Convergent validity is used to confirm whether the constructs identified are truly reflected by their indicators (Rezaei, 2015). Discriminant validity was measured by utilising

the construct correlations and cross-loading criterion whereas convergent validity was tested by utilising the average variance extracted (AVE) and factor loadings (Rezaei, 2015).

4.10 Ethical Consideration

A letter granting permission to collect data was taken from the Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship, University of Ghana Business School. The rationale for the study and its objectives were elucidated to participants to avoid possible misunderstanding. Respondents were given the assurance that the answers they provide would be confidential.

4.11 Data Analysis Techniques

Data was organized and processed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 22) version 22 and AMOS version 22. The IBM SPSS was used for descriptive statistics, frequency tables, measures of central tendency and regression analysis. The IBM SPSS was further used to generate the Cronbach alpha values. AMOS 22 was used to perform confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was chosen for this study as a result of the fact that it enables researchers to model relationships among several independent variables and dependent variables (Chin, 1998).

4.12 Limitation of the Study

The study considered the perceptions of mobile phone users living in the Accra and Tema metropolis only. The generalization of the findings to the general population should be done with

this in mind.

4.13 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the research methodology, mode of data collection, sampling technique and sampling size. The design and administration of the questionnaire was also discussed. The chapter also explained the reliability and validity of the measurement scale and the ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This section seeks to explain the analysis of the data collected and present a discussion on the findings on brand image and consumer brand choice and the mediated effect of perceived quality in this relationship in the telecommunication sector. The data gathered were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 22 (SPSS22). Structural Equation Modelling was used for the structural analysis through AMOS version 22.

5.1 Data Editing

Baumgartner and Homburg (1996) postulate that data editing ensures that data is free of errors arising during their collection, coding, entry and is coherent and consistent, to ensure smooth running of the analysis. This suggests that data editing is important to ensure an error free process that helps to maximize the usefulness of data. Saunders et al. (2012), in their study, also confirmed the assertion that data cleaning, coding and entry are required before actually analysing the data. The data were assessed to identify outliers, omitted data and wrong inputs. An examination of the useable questionnaires showed no missing data.

5.1.1 Data entry and analysis

Data entry forms part of the significant phases in data analysis. Therefore, the accuracy and efficiency that is required to enter information, is of utmost importance. It was postulated by Sekaran (2000) that a questionnaire with a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) completion should be administered for analysis. In view of this, the researcher administered four hundred

questionnaires to users of mobile phones in the Accra Metropolitan Area. Out of this, a total of three hundred and sixty-one (361) questionnaires were returned representing about 90.25% of the respondents.

Examination of the returned questionnaire of 361 met all the thresholds required to perform analysis. Against this background the working data for this study emanates from a sample of three hundred and sixty-one.

5.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

This chapter of the study looks at the demographic profile of the respondent. The study used descriptive statistics with the aid of SPSS to calculate the frequencies on respondents' age, gender, educational status, marital status, nationality, employment status, income, number of mobile phones used, the name of main mobile phone brand and number of years they had used their main phone brand. The outcome is provided in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Profile of Respondents	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Age	under 20 years	25	6.9
	21-30	190	52.6
	31-40	119	33
	41-50	25	6.9
	above 50years	2	0.6
Gender	male	197	54.6
	female	164	45.4
Educational Status	No-formal education	7	1.9
	SHS	17	4.7
	diploma	99	27.4
	Degree holders	166	46
	post-graduate	72	19.9
Marital status	single	235	65.1
	married	121	33.5
	separated	4	1.1
	widowed	1	0.3
Nationality	Ghanaian	354	98.1
	other	7	1.9
Employment status	unemployed	107	29.6
	salaried worker	225	62.3
	self-employed	26	7.2
	retired	1	0.3
	other	2	0.6
Income	below Gh 1000	127	35.2
	1001-2000	178	49.3
	2001-3000	34	9.3
	above 3000	22	6.1
Number of phones	1	180	49.9
	2	168	46.5
	3	12	3.3
	more than 3	1	0.3
Name of brand	Samsung	136	37.7

	iPhone	37	10.2
	techno	46	12.7
	infinix	61	16.9
	others	81	22.4
Number of years	3 years or less	308	85.3
	4=7	50	13.9
	8=11	2	0.6
	12years and above	1	1.3

Source: Field Survey 2018

The information from the analysis indicated that the majority of the respondents who participated in the survey fall within the age bracket of 21-30years representing 52.6 percent. The majority of the respondents were male, representing 54.6%. The study intended to find out respondents' educational status. The results revealed that seven (7) people representing 1.9% of the respondents had no formal education, seventeen of the respondents representing forty-seven percent (47) had completed senior high school. Out of the remaining number, 27.4% had a diploma, 46% had degrees and 19.9% had post graduate degrees. The next item on the demographic variable list was marital status of the respondents. The results revealed that most of the respondents were not married and represented 65.1% of the respondents.

Regarding the nationality of the respondents, the results indicated that most of the respondents were Ghanaians representing 98.1%, while other nationals constituted 1.9% of the sample. The study also intended to find out respondents' source of income through their employment status. Most of the respondents were salaried workers representing 62.3% of the respondents. Concerning the number of phones used by respondents, the results show most of the respondents had one phone representing 49.9% of the respondents while 46.5% of the respondents had two phones. The results further indicated that Samsung was the dominant brand of phone respondents used representing 37.7%. The last item on the demographic variable list was the number of years' respondents have

used their mobile phone. The results of the analysis indicate that 84.5% of the respondents choose three (3) years or less as the number of years they have used their brand of mobile phone.

5.3 Descriptive Statistics for Scale Items

Table 5.2 below displays descriptive statistics and standard deviation of the various scale items. A critical review of the descriptive statistics outcome indicates that Two scale items (I buy phone brands based on perceive country of origin, and I buy phone brands I perceived to have good brand image) had the highest mean 4.29 each. The results of the descriptive statistics further indicated that the lowest mean on the table was 3.36 (I select mobile phones used by my family friends). This suggests that, within the mobile phone sector, country of origin and good brand image are important to customers in their purchase decision making when confronted with a choice, selecting a phone brand used by family and friends had the lowest mean. This means that the type of phone used by the family of friends of respondents was not important in their purchase decision

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Table 5.2: Descriptive Statistics for Scale Items

Scale Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Conditional Values			
CV1- I buy phone brands that deliver on their brand promise	361	3.65	1.380
CV2- I select mobile phones to suit a specific occasion	361	3.40	1.336
CV3- I consider the country of origin of mobile phone brands before selection	361	3.47	1.376
CV4- I select mobile phone brands that have a strong heritage	361	3.88	1.210
Functional Values			
FV1- I select durable phone brands	361	4.23	1.105
FV2- I consider the quality of the mobile phone in my purchasing decision	361	4.14	1.167
FV3- I think thoroughly when selecting mobile phone brand	361	4.08	1.102
FV4- I compare prices of competing mobile phone brands in my purchasing decision	361	3.96	1.209
FV5- I consider mobile phone brands that offer an array of features	361	3.98	1.230
FV5- I select reliable mobile phone brands	361	4.03	1.200
Social Values			
SV1- I select phone brands used by my family and friends	361	3.36	1.448
SV2- I select mobile phones that are globally associated with a very positive brand image	361	3.65	1.307
SV3- My mobile phone brand is used by people I consider important	361	3.59	1.309
SV4- I buy brands that make me feel accepted	361	3.58	1.358
SV5- I buy brands that make me fit in my social class	361	3.57	1.365
Emotional Values			
EMV1- I have positive feelings for mobile phone brands with attractive features	361	3.86	1.300
EMV2- I like mobile phone brands with a good image	361	3.97	1.188
EMV3- I feel happy when using my main mobile phone brand	361	4.07	1.106
EMV4- I really enjoy using my main mobile phone brand	361	4.05	1.128
EMV5- I consider mobile phone brands I have good memories of	361	3.97	1.164
EMV6- I buy mobile phones brands I consider attractive	361	3.99	1.149
Epistemic Values			
EPV1- I am attracted to mobile phone brand with appealing packaging	361	3.83	1.287
EPV2- I consider mobile phones with innovative features	361	3.84	1.247
EPV3- I select mobile phones to satisfy my curiosity	361	3.86	1.209
EPV4- I select mobile phone brands that are novel	361	3.87	1.289
EPV5- I select mobile phones recommended by friends	361	3.91	1.252
Consumer Choice			
CC1- I consider the quality of the mobile phone brand in my purchase decision	361	4.04	1.234
CC2- I consider the price of mobile phone brands when making a purchase	361	4.01	1.176
CC3- I use country-of-origin as a basis of my mobile phone choice	361	3.78	1.349
CC4- I consider family and friends when buying a mobile phone	361	3.75	1.313
CC5- I consider the availability of the accessories when buying a mobile phone brand	361	3.95	1.206
CC6- I consider my status in society when buying a mobile phone brand	361	3.90	1.294
CC7- I consider the guarantee offered when buying a mobile phone	361	4.05	1.169
Brand Trust			
CT1- With my brand of mobile phone, I obtain what I look for in a mobile phone	361	4.28	1.028
CT2- My brand of mobile phone meets my expectations	361	4.31	1.018
CT3- I feel confident in this phone brand	361	4.31	1.021
CT4- My mobile phone brand never disappoints me	361	4.16	1.108
CT5- This mobile phone brand is constant in satisfying my needs	361	4.29	1.020
CT6- This phone brand offers me constant quality	361	4.29	1.047
Valid N (list wise)	361		

Source: field survey (May 2018)

5.4 The Measurement Model - Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Bagozzi and Yi (1998) postulate that confirmatory factor analysis enables researchers to analyze the underlying nexus in the full structural model. Therefore, the first stage of executing the analysis has to do with determining the causal relationships between the observed variables and the fundamental theoretical constructs. This was to achieve the veracity of the uni-dimensionality of the composite and latent constructs and to ensure that a set of factors achieved their goal of empirically measuring a single dimension.

The factor loadings table represents scores of how well a given set of indicants measure the constructs. Loadings with readings of 0.5 and above are deemed to adequately measure the constructs they have been assigned. Loadings are used in the assessment of convergent and discriminant validity (Sekaran, 2000) and the factor loadings table results showed that there were no issues with respect to the two issues above. The measurement model results (Table 5.3) is presented below:

Table 5.3: Measurement Model Results.

Item description	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Brand image		.839		
FV2	.821		0.72	0.75
FV3	.785			
SV4	.989		0.78	0.0.80
SV5	.524			
EMV4	.992		0.75	0.0.77
EMV5	.515			
EPV3	.586		0.70	0.0.74
EPV4	.687			
Consumer choice		.767		
CC3	.549		0.75	0.0.78
CC4	.573			
Brand trust		.863		
CT4	.798		0.86	0.82
CT5	.835			
CT6	.853			

Table 5.3 above presents summaries of outcome of the CFA done to test various dimensions of the constructs. The results showed that the factor loadings were all within range and meets the threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010).

From the table above, according to Werts et al. (1974), CR is known as construct reliability and in some jurisdiction is known as internal consistency (IC). The CR values are a measurement of unidimensionality and is a better measurement indicator than Cronbach's Alpha (Chin, 1988). The CR scores after the CFA was conducted were 0.72 for functional values that represents the cognitive aspect of brand image. For affective dimension of brand image, the CR values were (sv-0.78, emv-0.75, epv-0.70), consumer choice is 0.75 and consumer brand trust is 0.86. All the values were high and fell within the range of 0.72 and 0.86, which indicates the reliability of the constructs and evidence of unidimensionality and suitability of each of them. The acceptable range for

Cronbach alpha reliability, according to Gliem and Gliem (2003), is between 0 and 1, the closer the value is to 1.0, the higher the internal consistency of the items in the scale. This indicates that the output from the factor loading table shows that both convergent and discriminant validity has been met. The table also reports on the Cronbach alpha scores, which were .839 for brand image, .767 for consumer choice and .863 for consumer brand trust. These values all met the required threshold and represents a strong internal consistency.

The study had three constructs, that is brand image, brand trust and brand choice. These constructs were utilised to assess customers' perceptions of brand image (comprised of two dimensions, namely cognitive and affective dimension) and how it influenced their choice of mobile phones either directly or indirectly via brand trust. The measurement model is presented in the figure 5.1 below;

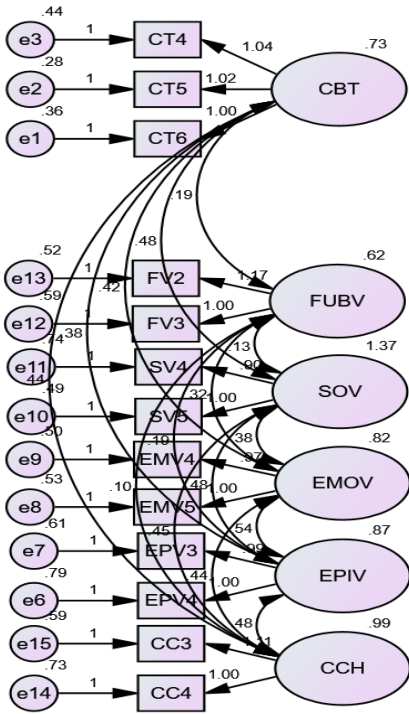


Figure 5.1: Measurement Model

Table 5.4: Measurement Model Fit Indices

	Threshold	values
chi square(CMIN)		89.976
DF		50
CMIN/DF		1.800
Goodness-of -fit indices (GFI)	>_ 90	0.96
RMSEA	< 80	.047
Normed fit index (NFI)	90	0.95
Comparative fit index (CFI)	90	0.97
Tucker Lewis index (TLI)	90	0.97
Relative fit index (RFI)	90	0.92
Incremental fit index (IFI)	90	0.98

The fit indices point to the fact that the data suits the model well. The model attained a chi-square of 89.976, degrees of freedom (d/f) of 50, CMIN/df 1.800. Hu and Bentler (1999) assert that CMIN/df of < 2 or 3 shows an acceptable fitness. The Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.047, and MacCallum, Browne and Sugawara (1996) posit that RMSEA of not more than 0.08 indicates a good fit. The values of Comparative Fit Index was 0.97. They were within the acceptable threshold of greater than 0.9 (Broom, Knight, Joe, Simpson & Cross, 1997).

5.5 Discriminant and Convergent Validity

To establish discriminant validity, the guidelines proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) were utilised. Discriminant validity was established for the constructs by assessing whether the average variance extracted (AVE) of each variable was greater than the maximum shared variance (MSV). The adequacy of discriminant validity was established as each construct's AVE was greater than the MSV. The correlation among constructs was acceptably low: it ranged from 0.13 to 0.64. According to Kline (2005), correlations of less than 0.92 are acceptable: this further justifies the

adequacy of discriminant validity of the measurement model. To assess convergent validity, the significance of factor loadings was assessed, and the results indicates factor loadings for each construct was significant at 0.01, which supports convergent validity of the measure (Bagozzi & Yi, 1998). Table 5.5 below shows the scores for the measures for reliability and validity checks.

Table 5.5: Reliabilities, AVEs and Correlations

	Cr	Msv	Bt	Sv	Cc	Ep	Fv	Em
bt	0.86	0.27	0.82					
sv	0.78	0.24	0.49***	0.80				
cc	0.75	0.27	0.51***	0.38***	0.78			
ep	0.70	0.41	0.44***	0.46***	0.49***	0.74		
fv	0.72	0.20	0.26***	0.15*	0.126	0.25**	0.754	
em	0.75	0.41	0.52***	0.37***	0.49***	0.64***	0.45***	0.77

Note: Bt = brand trust, sv = social values, cc = consumer brand choice, ep = epistemic value, fv = functional value, em = emotional value, CR=Composite reliability, CA- Cronbach’s Alpha and AVE= Average variance extracted

Diagonal elements are the AVEs, off diagonal elements are the squared correlations

5.6 The Structural Model

The second phase of the SEM analysis was based on the structural test. A structural model refers to the aspect of a model that specifies how latent variables interact and are related to each other (Byrne, 2016). The concern in the full structural model is to test the study’s theoretical models, objectives and hypothesis.

The above model indicates that Brand Image is (BI) is conceptualized in this research work as representing two dimensions. These are functional values representing cognitive dimension and affective dimension are represented by social value, emotional value and epistemic value. These brand image dimensions have been hypothesized as having a direct effect relationship on consumer

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brand choice. Consumer brand trust, on the other hand, mediates the relationship between brand image and consumer brand choice.

5.6.1 Analysis of hypothesized relationship

This aspect of the study presents the results for the hypothesized relationships between brand image dimensions and consumer brand choice. Four hypotheses were formulated and all of them were analyzed. The first analysis looked at the direct link between brand image and consumer brand choice; and this was followed by individual dimensions of brand image on consumer brand choice. The figures for the fit indices for the full structural model also indicate an acceptable model fit. The fit indices for the full structural model are tabulated in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6: Fit Indices for Full Structural Model

	Threshold	values
chi square (CMIN)		117.825
DF		59
CMIN/DF		1.997
Goodness-of-fit indices (GFI)	≥ 90	0.95
RMSEA	< 80	0.53
Normed fit index (NFI)	90	0.94
Comparative fit index (CFI)	90	0.97
Tucker Lewis index (TLI)	90	0.96
Relative fit index (RFI)	90	0.92
Incremental fit index (IFI)	90	0.97

5.6.1 Test for mediation

The study utilised the guidelines recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) to examine the mediation effect of brand trust on brand image and brand choice. Firstly, the mediator brand trust

was regressed on the predictor variable brand image, and there was a significant effect (brand image → brand trust, $\beta = 0.67$, $P = ***$). Next, the outcome variable (brand choice) was regressed on the independent variable (brand Image), and there was a significant effect (brand image → brand choice, $\beta = 0.69$, $P = ***$). Next, the outcome variable was regressed on the predictor variable and the mediator and this effect also proved to be significant (brand image → brand trust → brand choice, $\beta = 0.45$, $P = ***$ was gained for the first path, $\beta = 0.36$, $P = ***$, for the second path).

Baron and Kenny (1986) assert that mediation holds if the predictor variable affects the mediating variable in the first regression and it effects the outcome variable in the second equation. In the third equation, the mediating variable should affect the outcome variable. If all these conditions hold, then the impact of the predictor variable on the outcome variable must be lower in the third equation than in the second. For a perfect mediation to hold, the predictor variable should have no effect when the mediating variable is held constant. In this study the independent variable had an effect on the dependent variable when the mediator was controlled, hence brand trust only partly mediates the relationship between brand image and brand choice.

A structural model was developed, with brand choice as the outcome variable, brand image as the predictor variable and brand trust as a mediating variable. The primary objective of the research was to assess the direct effect of brand image on brand choice. The findings revealed that brand image has a significant and positive impact on consumer brand choice ($\beta = 0.83$, $P\text{-value} = ***$). This implies that a positive brand image influences a consumer's choice of brands. It further indicates that, if consumers hold positive perceptions about the social, conditional, epistemic, emotional and functional values of brands, this significantly influences their brand choice.

The second objective of the study examined the effect of the cognitive dimension of brand image on brand choice. The results indicate that the cognitive dimension of brand image has a positive

but insignificant relationship with consumers choice of brand ($\beta=0.70$, $P\text{-value}=0.06$). This shows that the relative effect of cognitive dimension of brand image on brand choice is insignificant. It further indicates that consumers' perceptions about functional values of mobile phone brands do not significantly influence their choice of brands. Hence hypothesis 2 was not supported.

The third objective was to identify the effect of the affective dimension of brand image on consumer brand choice. The results indicate that the affective dimension of brand image had a positive and significant impact on consumer brand choice ($\beta=1.03$, $P=***$). This indicates that the affective dimension of brand image has a larger impact on brand choice. This finding further indicates that, if consumers have positive perceptions about social, epistemic and emotional values of brands, this positively influences consumers brand choice. This provides support for hypothesis 3.

The fourth objective was to identify the mediated effect of brand trust on brand image and brand choice. The results show that brand trust partly mediated the nexus between brand image and brand choice since both the direct ($\beta=0.69$, $P\text{-value}=***$) and indirect path ($\beta=0.45$, $P\text{-value}=***$, for the first path and $\beta=0.36$, $P\text{-value}=***$ for the second path) showed a significant effect. The study further revealed that brand trust partially mediated the relationship between the affective dimension of brand image and brand choice. The direct ($\beta=0.59$, $P\text{-value}=***$) and indirect paths ($\beta=0.33$ $P\text{-value}=***$ was documented for the first path, and $\beta=0.46$, $P\text{-value}=***$ was documented for the second path) were both found to be significant. Furthermore, the cognitive dimension of brand image also showed a full mediation effect on brand choice. The direct path was positive but insignificant ($\beta=0.70$, $P\text{-value}=0.06$), and the indirect path was positive but significant ($\beta=0.20$, $P\text{-value}=***$ was recorded for the first path and $\beta=0.55$, $P\text{-value}=***$ was recorded for the second path). Table 5.7 gives a summary of results and hypothesis testing.

Table 5.7: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

	Model 1 (Direct Paths)		Model 2 (Mediation)	
	β	Pvalue	β	Pvalue
Hypothesised Paths				
Brand image → brand choice	0.83	***	0.69	***
Cognitive → brand choice	0.70	0.06	1.58	**
Affective → brand choice	1.03	***	0.90	***
Medeiation Effects				
Brand image → brand trust	0.67		0.45	***
brand trust → brand choice	0.69		0.36	***
Cognitive → brand trust	0.35		0.20	***
Affective → Brand trust	0.33		0.59	***

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

5.6.2 Discussion of findings

This thesis was conducted to determine the relationship between brand image and brand choice as well as the mediating role of brand trust. Data was collected from respondents who were users of mobile phones in Ghana. The outcome of the full structural model indicates that brand image has a significant and positive impact on consumer brand choice ($\beta=0.83$, P-value= ***). This is indicative of the fact that a positive brand image influences a consumer's choice of mobile phone brands. It further indicates that the more consumers hold positive perceptions about the social, epistemic, emotional and functional values of brands, the higher the influence it has on their brand choice. It was hypothesized that brand image had a positive and significant impact on brand choice. The results of the study provided support for this hypothesis. This finding is in consonance with that of previous studies by Pappu et al. (2005), Bian and Moutinho (2011) and Baek (2010). These

studies revealed the essential role played by brand image in influencing consumer brand choice. This outcome is also in line with that of Ghose et al. (2017). The results of Ghose et al. (2017) showed that the brand choice of international brands was affected by advertisements of the image attributes of the products. Diallo et al. (2015), in their study, identified brand image as a significant determinant of store brand choice in Brazil. The findings of Turel et al. (2010) revealed that social values do not influence consumer choice: this conflicts with the outcome of this study, as the results indicate that social, epistemic, functional and emotional values influence consumer brand choice. The finding of this study further conflicts with the findings of Narteh et al. (2012). The findings of Narteh et al. (2012) indicates that brand image has no significant impact on consumer choice of cars. Narteh et al. (2012) further assert that Ghanaian consumers do not buy a specific brand of car merely due to the fact that it holds a specific image.

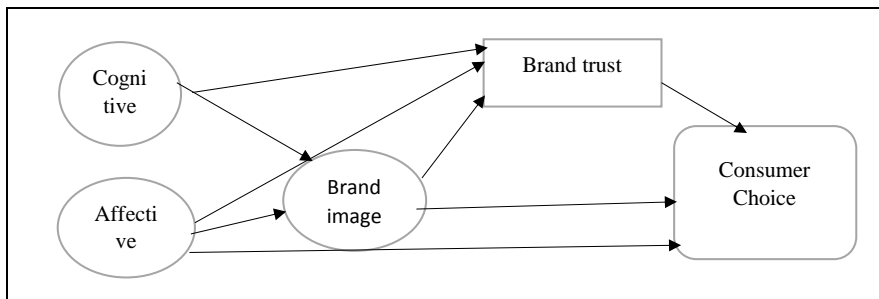
The second objective of the study was to examine the relative effect of the cognitive dimension of brand image on brand choice. This study has revealed that the cognitive dimension of brand image has a positive but insignificant relationship with consumer's choice of brand. This finding indicates that the cognitive dimension of brand image does not significantly affect a consumer's choice of brand. It further indicates that consumers' perceptions about functional values does not significantly influence their choice of brands. This finding conflicts with that of previous studies (Dabholkar, 1996; Wilde et al., 2004; Da Silva & Alwi, 2006). These studies revealed that consumers' evaluation of core product and service attributes represents the central images of brands. This finding is also inconsistent with that of Grimm (2005), who examined the relative relevance of cognitive, affective and conative attitude components with respect to their power to predict brand preferences and the findings indicated cognitive brand attributes had the greatest impact on brand preference.

The third objective was to identify the effect of the affective dimension of brand image on consumer brand choice. The affective dimension of brand image had the greatest impact on brand preference. This finding illustrates that, if buyers hold favourable perceptions about the social, epistemic and emotional values of brands, this positively influences their brand choice. This finding affirms the results of past studies (Alwi & Kitchen, 2014; Abratt & Kleyn, 2012). The study by Abratt and Kleyn (2012) and Alwi and Kitchen (2014) indicates that the affective component of brand image performs a vital role in the understanding of consumers' choices. The finding further affirms that of Delgado-Ballester and Sabote (2015), whose study revealed that the affective dimension of brand image has a greater impact on brand outcomes than the cognitive dimension. However, these finding conflicts with that of Maathius et al. (2004), whose study revealed the cognitive dimension of brand image has the greatest impact on consumers purchase decisions.

The fourth objective was to identify the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between brand image and brand choice. The results show that brand trust partially mediates the relationship between brand image and brand choice since both the direct and indirect paths were found to be significant. The study further revealed that brand trust partially mediated the relationship between the affective dimension of brand image and brand choice of mobile phones. Although the cognitive dimension of brand image does not, to a significant extent, influence consumer choice of mobile phones brand trust partially mediated the effect of the cognitive dimension of brand image on brand choice. This finding is in line with that of Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Aleman (2001) who assert that perceptions about the brand influences brand trust and this, in turn, influences consumers purchase decisions. This finding also affirms that of Lee, Moon, Kim and Yi (2015) whose study revealed brand trust had mediated the relationship between cognitive

dimensions of mobile phone brands such as usability and loyalty. The finding is also consistent with that of Lassoued and Hobbs (2015) whose study revealed that cognitive dimensions such as quality and safety are positively linked with brand trust.

Figure 5.2: Post Study Conceptual Framework



5.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the outcome of data analysis. Major findings from the study reveals that brand image is positively related to brand choice, however, brand trust mediates the relationship between brand image and brand choice. The study further revealed that the cognitive dimension of brand image does not significantly have a direct influence on brand choice whereas the affective dimension of brand image has a direct impact on brand choice. Furthermore, the affective dimension of brand image is more influential in explaining brand choice. Brand trust also mediates the relationship between both the cognitive and affective dimension of brand image and consumer brand choice, although the affective dimension of brand image accounts more for the variance in brand choice. Nonetheless, the affective dimension of brand image accounts more for the variance in brand choice.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

The focus of this study was to investigate the effect of brand image both as an aggregated and disaggregated component; divided into cognitive and affective components on brand choice in the mobile phone sector in Ghana. The study also sought to examine the mediating role of brand trust in this relationship. This chapter sums up the study's findings, implications, conclusions and recommendations for the mobile phone sector in Ghana. This section further proposes directions for future research.

6.1 Summary of the Study

This study created and tested a model that serves as a guide to gaining insights into the relationship between brand image and brand choice in the telecommunication sector in Ghana. The study was aimed at determining the effect of brand image both as an aggregated component and disaggregated component on consumer brand choice and whether brand trust mediated this relationship. To this end, a literature review was conducted and extant literature on brand management and consumer choice were reviewed. The theoretical underpinning of the study was based on the theory of consumption values developed by Sheth et al. (1991). According to the theory, a consumer's choice was a function of five consumption values, namely social, emotional, epistemic, functional and conditional values. The study categorized these five values under two broad dimensions, namely cognitive and affective dimensions of brand image. The cognitive component was made up of functional and conditional values, while the affective component

comprised emotional, social and epistemic values. The review also discussed issues relating to brand trust, brand image and consumer brand choice.

Based on the review of literature, a conceptual framework was developed that informed the development of hypotheses for the study. A survey instrument in the form of a questionnaire was developed based on the guiding theory of the study, review of extant literature and existing scales. The scales for brand image were taken from Sheth et al. (1991). Moreover, the scales for brand trust were taken from works by Delgado-Ballester and Luis Munuera-Aleman (2001). Items for brand choice were taken from studies by Erdem and Swait (2004), Baek, Kim and Yu (2010) and Alvarez and Vazquez Casielles (2005). The conceptual framework was tested through a survey with the aid of self-administered questionnaires to a sample of four hundred (400) respondents drawn from various parts of the Greater Accra Region over a period of four weeks. Three hundred and eighty five (385) questionnaires were returned, out of that three hundred and sixty one (361) representing a response rate of 93.8% were used for the study. Twenty four questionnaires representing 6.2% were not fit for use. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22 and Amos version 22.

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6.2 Major Findings

6.2.1 Brand image and brand choice

The first objective of this study was to examine the direct effect of brand image on brand choice in the telecommunication sector in Ghana. The results of the study indicate that brand image had a direct and positive effect on consumer brand choice. In this study, the values that were successful in operationalizing brand image include functional, social, emotional and epistemic values. Conditional values were not successful in measuring brand image. This implies that brand image

plays a very significant role in the selection of mobile phones in the Ghanaian context. It further indicates that the functional, emotional, epistemic, conditional and social values of mobile phone brands are important predictors of the choice of mobile phones consumers purchased. This finding was in line with studies by Pappue et al. (2005), Bian and Moutinho (2011), Baek (2010), Diallo et al. (2015) and Ghose et al. (2017). This finding implies that retailers of mobile phones should focus on communicating positive image about the brands they market as this will foster strong emotional bonds between consumers and the phone brands. Marketing managers in the mobile phone retail sector should also focus their marketing programmes on enhancing image perceptions as this was a key factor influencing consumer purchase decisions.

6.2.2 Cognitive dimension of brand image and brand choice

The second objective of the study was to examine the relative effect of the cognitive dimension of brand image on brand choice in the telecommunication sectors in Ghana. The findings of the study indicated that the cognitive dimension made up of functional brand values had a positive but insignificant direct impact on consumer's choice of mobile phone brands in the Ghanaian context. This finding is not consistent with that of previous studies by Dabholkar (1996), Wilde et al. (2004), and Da Silva and Alwi (2006). The results of these studies showed that consumer's assessment of core product and service features characterizes the dominant images of brands. This finding likewise conflicts with that of Grimm (2005). Grimm (2005) similarly investigated the relative significance of cognitive, affective and conative attitude components with respect to their power to predict brand preferences and the findings indicated that the cognitive brand attributes had the greatest impact on brand preference. This result is moreover inconsistent with the findings of Narteh et al. (2012). The study by Narteh et al. (2012) indicates that brand image does not, to a

significant extent, influence consumers' choice of cars in developing countries like Ghana. The results of this study reveal that the functional features (quality, price, packaging, durability) of mobile phones alone do not have a significant direct effect on consumers' brand choices. This finding indicates that retailers of mobile phones in Ghana should focus more on building emotional connection between consumers and brands. As the technical qualities of mobile phone brands are virtually the same, it is the emotional link that informs consumers' choice of mobile phone brands.

6.2.3 Affective dimension of brand image and brand choice

The third objective of this study was to examine the relative effect of the affective dimension of brand image on brand choice in the mobile telecommunications sector in Ghana. The outcome of the study indicates that the affective dimension of brand image has a greater impact on consumers' brand choices in the Ghanaian context. The analysis of the study revealed that social, emotional and epistemic values influenced consumers' choice of mobile phones. This finding is an affirmation of previous studies (Alwi & Kitchen, 2014; Abratt & Kleyn, 2012). The research conducted by Abratt and Kleyn (2012) and Alwi and Kitchen (2014) concluded that the affective dimension of brand image plays a vital role in the comprehension of consumers' choices. The result further affirms that of Delgado-Ballester and Sabote (2015), whose study revealed that the affective dimension of brand image had a greater impact on brand outcomes than the cognitive dimension. Conversely, this results conflicts that of Maathius et al. (2004), whose study revealed the cognitive dimension of brand image has the greatest impact on consumers purchase decisions. This finding signals to retailers and marketers of mobile phones that brand communications that focus on technical features of mobile phones only will not influence purchase decisions in the Ghanaian context. Retailers aiming to influence consumer choice of mobile phones in the

Ghanaian context should pay more attention to social, emotional and epistemic values of brands to enhance or significantly influence consumer purchase decisions.

6.2.4 The mediating role of brand trust

The fourth objective was to examine the indirect of brand image on brand choice through brand trust. The results show that brand trust partially mediates the relationship between brand image and brand choice since both the direct and indirect paths were found to be significant. This finding supports that of studies by Ar and Kara (2014) whose study revealed that brand trust was highly correlated with consumers' purchase decisions. The results also showed that brand trust partially mediated the relationship between the affective component of brand image and brand choice. This indicates that brand trust plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchase decisions, as it shows that positive brand image perceptions influence brand trust, which, in turn, influences consumer brand choices. Despite the fact that the cognitive component of brand image does not significantly and directly influence consumers' choice of mobile phones, it has an indirect effect on brand choice through brand trust. This finding affirms that of Delgado-Ballester (2001), whose study showed that perceptions about the brand influences brand trust and this, in turn, influences consumers' purchase decisions. This finding likewise confirms that of Lee, Moon, Kim and Yi (2014) whose study revealed brand trust mediated the relationship between cognitive dimensions of mobile phone brands such as usability and loyalty. Dealers of mobile phones in Ghana should market brands trusted by consumers: the functional features of mobile phone brands will only influence consumers purchase decisions if the brands are trusted. Hence, mobile phone retailers should ensure they stock brands that are reliable.

6.3 Conclusions

This study has revealed brand image perceptions are very important in influencing consumer brand choice. Brand image consists of two main dimensions, that is, the cognitive and affective dimension. In terms of the relative direct effect of these dimensions on brand choice, the current study has revealed that the affective dimension of brand image was the strongest predictor of brand choice of mobile phones in the Ghanaian context. Specifically, the study showed that all the three aspects of affective dimension of brand image influenced brand choice (social, epistemic and emotional values). Regarding social values, consumers are interested in phones that make them fit in their social class and make them feel accepted. With respect to emotional values, consumers were interested in phone brands that were enjoyable to use and brought them good memories. When it comes to epistemic values, the study discovered that consumers selected phone brands that were novel and satisfied their curiosity. The study further revealed that, of the two aspects of cognitive dimension of brand image (conditional and functional values), only functional values influenced consumers brand choice of mobile phones. Specifically, the results of the study revealed that the functional values that influenced consumers' choice of mobile phones were quality and price. Furthermore, the results of the study signifies that brand trust is essential in influencing consumers' choice of mobile phones in Ghana as it has partially mediated the relationship between brand image and brand choice. In addition, the results of this study revealed that the cognitive dimension of brand image does not directly influence consumer choice, however brand trust influenced the relationship between the cognitive dimension of brand image and brand choice.

6.4 Managerial Implications of the Study

This study has highlighted relevant dimensions of brand image and their implications on consumer brand choice. Relevant insights have been obtained from users of mobile phones, which is arguably one of the most commonly used electronic gadget globally and has a market characterized by intense competition. Mobile phone retailers typically utilise various marketing strategies to differentiate themselves from the competition in order to deliver their brand promises to their target markets. In an attempt to deliver their brand promises, mobile phone retailers have resorted to using diverse strategies to enhance brand image perceptions among consumers. The current study has discovered that the affective dimension of brand image is the strongest predictor of brand choice in the Ghanaian mobile phones market. Retailers of mobile phone have to realise that, although the technical or functional qualities of mobile phones are vital, in order to influence purchase decisions of consumers, special attention should be given to communicating the affective dimensions of brand image. Retailers of mobile phones in the Ghanaian context must concentrate their brand image building programmes on communicating affective dimensions of image such that it evokes feelings of curiosity, novelty, enjoyment and acceptance. Furthermore, in order to positively influence consumer brand choices, retailers should highlight cognitive dimensions of image such as price and quality as these were found to be the most significant factor influencing consumers' assessment of the cognitive dimension of brand image.

Brand trust is also critical in influencing the consumer brand choice of mobile phones in the Ghanaian context. Brand trust relates to the feeling of security held by the consumer that the brand will meet his/her consumption expectations (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman, 2001). The current study has shown that the most important predictors of brand trust include mobile phone

brands that never disappoint them and offer them constant satisfaction and quality, and this, in turn, influenced their purchase decisions. The findings have also shown that strong functional attributes without trust does not translate into purchase. Hence, retailers of mobile phones in Ghana should enhance brand trust by selling phone brands with constant quality aimed at constantly satisfying customers with less disappointment. The finding has also shown that brand trust was a partial mediator between the affective dimension of brand image and choice. Retailers of mobile phones should link messages on affective dimension of brand image to brand trust in order to positively influence consumer purchase decisions.

6.5 Implications for Theory

This study was aimed at assessing whether brand image as an aggregated component or a disaggregated component influenced brand choice in the mobile phone industry in Ghana. The study has identified the direct effect of brand image on brand choice. The study has also identified specific brand image dimensions that influence brand choice in the mobile phone industry in Ghana. This finding will assist in clarifying brand positioning and differentiation in future research. The mediated role of brand trust on brand image and brand choice has likewise been established.

From a conceptual perspective, consumers evaluate mobile phone brands based on both a rational thought process cognitive and emotional attributes. This influences the trust consumers have in the brand and it informs their purchase decision. The study highlights the fact that brand positioning of mobile phones should not be based on functional qualities only, which represents the cognitive dimension of brand image, but also through affective elements such as social, emotional and epistemic values. Although the cognitive dimension of brand image is important in influencing brand choice, it is the affective dimension of brand image that significantly influences brand

choice. It is important to note that both dimensions of brand image are essential predictors of brand choice of mobile phones as they are linked to brand choice. The study has furthermore made an important contribution to the theory of consumption values. The findings have revealed that the relationship between the consumption values and consumer choice is not always direct, and that other factors significantly mediate the relationship between the consumption values and consumer choice.

6.6 Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

This study is not without limitations. It was conducted in only one region in Ghana, therefore future research could replicate the work in other regions in order to generalize the results. The study was conducted using a cross sectional research design: future studies could use a longitudinal research design to examine if the results would remain the same over time. Furthermore, cultural and demographic factors were not included in the current theoretical framework. Future research could incorporate cultural and demographic dimensions as it will be useful in explaining brand choices. In this study only a single mediating variable brand trust was used and there were no moderating variables, accordingly future research could examine the effect of other possible mediating variables and moderating variables such as level of income and education.

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APPENDICES

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA BUSINESS SCHOOL

DEPARMENT OF MARKETING AND ENTREPRNEURSHIP

Brand Image and Consumer Brand Choice; The Mediating role of Perceived Quality in
The Ghanaian mobile phone sector

The researcher is a final year MPhil student of University of Ghana Business School (UGBS). The researcher seeks to assess the impact of brand image on consumer brand choice in the Ghanaian mobile phone sector. The-mediating role of perceived quality between brand image and consumer brand choice would be assessed. This thesis is in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Marketing. The information provided will be solely used for the purpose of research and confidentiality is assured. In this regard, kindly take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Section A: Demographic Information of Respondents

1. Age: [] 21-30 [] 31-40 [] 41-50 [] above 50 []

2. Gender: Male [] Female []

3. Educational Status: No formal education [] SHS [] Diploma [] Degree [] Post- Graduate []
4. Marital Status: Single [] married [] Separated [] Divorce [] Widowed []
5. Nationality: Ghanaian [] other []
6. Employment status: Unemployed [] Salaried Worker [] self-employed [] Retired [] others []
7. Income status: below GHS 1,000 [] 1001 -2000 [] 2001-3000 [] above 3000 []
8. Number of phones: 1 [] 2 [] 3 [] more than 3 []
- 9 Name of main brand phone.....
- 10 Number of years with main brand phone. 5 years or less [] 6-10years [] 11-15 years [] 16-20 years [] 21 years and above []

Section B:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Tick or circle the appropriate number on the scale, with 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4=Agree, 5= strongly Disagree.

NO.	Cognitive Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
	Conditional values					
1	I buy phone brands that deliver on their brand promise					
2	I select mobile phones to suit a specific occasion					
3	I consider the country of origin of mobile phone brands before selection					
4	I select mobile phone brands that have a strong heritage					
	Functional values					
5	I select durable phone brands					
6	I consider the quality of the mobile phone in my purchasing decision					
7	I think thoroughly when selecting mobile phone brand					
8	I compare prices of competing mobile phone brands in my purchasing decision					
9	I consider mobile phone brands that offer an array of features					

10	I select reliable mobile phone brands						
	Affective Dimension						
	Social value						
11	I select phone brands used by my family and friends						
12	I select mobile phones that are globally associated with a very positive brand image						
13	My mobile phone brand is used by people I consider important						
14	I buy phone brands that make me feel accepted						
15	I buy phone brands that make me fit in my social class						
	Emotional value						
16	I have positive feelings for mobile phone brands with attractive features						
17	I like mobile phone brands with good image						
18	I feel happy when using my main mobile phone brand						
19	I really enjoy using my main mobile phone brand						
20	I consider mobile phone brands I have good memories of						
21	I buy mobile phone brands I consider attractive						
	Epistemic value						
22	I am attracted to mobile phone brand with appealing packaging						
23	I consider mobile phone brands with innovative features						
24	I select mobile phones to satisfy my curiosity						
25	I select mobile phones brands that are novel						
26	I select mobile phones recommended by friends						

	Consumer Choice						
27	I consider the quality of the mobile phone brand in my purchase decision						
28	I consider the price of mobile phone brands when making a purchase						
29	I use country-of-origin as basis of my mobile phone brand choice						
30	I consider family and friends when buying mobile phone						
31	I consider the availability of the accessories when buying mobile phone brand						
32	I consider my status in the society when buying mobile phone						
33	I consider the guarantee offered when buying mobile phone						
	Brand Trust						
34	With my brand of mobile phone, I obtain what I look for in a mobile phone						
35	My brand of mobile phone meets my expectation						
36	I feel confident with this phone brand						
37	My mobile phone brand never disappoints me						
38	This mobile phone brand is constant in satisfying my needs						

39	I buy phone brands with visually appealing packages						
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