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# IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF THE DETERMINANTS OF BRAND IMAGE IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGES INDUSTRY IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** Most studies on brand image and corporate entities, especially in Nigeria, seem to focus on the effect of brand image on corporate performance with little consideration for the factors that determine or shape such images ab-initio. This study therefore seeks to identify some of the factors or brand characteristics that customers consider in making their brand image preference and determine how important each of these factors is in brand image formation in the Nigerian food and beverages products industry. Based on responses from 348 customers; data were analyzed using principal component analysis (PCA) with confirmatory Factor Analysis; (CFA) specifically. Results show that ten factors determine customers' brand image of food and beverages products in Nigeria. Results also show that three of these ten factors; (i) awareness or popularity of the brand name itself, (ii) availability (convenience) and (iii) social image, (prestige) account for about 85% of brand image formation in the food and beverages products industry in Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that marketers should endeavor to improve, especially on these three aspects of their brands; to enhance their brand images and improve their corporate performances.

**KEYWORDS**: Brand image, Convenience, Awareness, Prestige, Social image.

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#### INTRODUCTION

A large array of research works have been done in Nigeria, on the concept of brand image and its relation with corporate performances. These include Yaro (2005), Horsfall and MacKingsly (2018), Horsfall and Udoka (2018), among others. Other works, outside Nigeria, include Wang and Tsai (2014), Adil (2012), Anslemsom, Bondesson and Johansson (2014). Notwithstanding this, a very important aspect of brand image does not seem to have received adequate research attention in Nigeria or elsewhere; that is, the determinants of brand image. Brand image as, observed by Farhat and Khan (2012), Kotler and Keller (2006), and Macanu (2013) among others is like a personal or person's image and therefore depends on some attributes or characteristics; those specifics things, characteristics or attributes; that customers evaluate or (take into account), when deciding their brand image preferences.

This should be of utmost importance to producers and marketers. It will enable them to decide what to include and or emphasize in their 4Ps, (product designs, pricing, promotion and place (distribution) strategies.

According to Aeker (1991), customers' view or image of a brand is a major factor in their purchase decisions. Therefore, from promotion and marketing communication perspective, food and beverage products makers and marketers need to know what attributes or factors customers evaluate during their buying decisions which are based on customer's brand image perception of the product and or of the organization itself.

Food and beverages products are daily convenience goods (Murphy & Evis, 1986; IRS, n.d), which people buy without much rigor. From literature, attributes like popularity of a brand (awareness, brand name itself), convenience, availability, quality, price consideration and social image are among factors that influence customers' brand image preferences.

## **Research Objectives**

The twin objectives of this study are to identify the factors or attributes that customers of food and beverage products in Nigeria consider in making their brand-image decisions, and evaluate how important customers consider each of these factors while making their brand image decision and subsequently purchases decisions.

## **Research Questions**

The aim of the study is to determine the brand factors, characteristics or attributes that customers make use of their brand image formation as well as to evaluate the extent to which each of such characteristics or attributes contribute to brand image formation. The research questions are therefore:

- Are there factors or characteristics that determine a customer's brand image? (i)
- Is there a statistical significant difference between the factors that influence customers' brand images?

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## **Research Hypothesis**

To effectively prosecute this study, the following hypotheses are:

Hoi Customers' brand images are not determined by any particular factors or attributes.

Hai Customers' brand images are determined by any particular factors or attributes.

Hoii There are no statistically significant differences between the factors that influence customers' brand images.

Haii: There are statistically significant differences between the factors that influence customers' brand images.

Therefore, we can state this as:

Pxi...n < 0.05

 $q \ge 0.05$ 

#### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

## **Conceptual Review**

## **Branding/Brand Name**

The term brand is originally used to describe a mark or sign, inscribed on some objects or items to identify them as belonging to a common owner or group of owners and to distinguish them, as a class, from similar objects. In its modern business usage in marketing, in particular, a brand is defined as 'a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (American Marketing Association (AMA), 2016). According to Raut and Brito (2014), brand is the name, logo or trademark of a product or organization.

Brand is also seen as the link between consumers' perception of functional and emotional elements of products vis-a-vis sellers' marketing (promotion) activities (Sweeney & Chew, 2002).

## **Brand Image**

Brand image is the image that is brought to the customer's mind by the brand association (Keller, 1993). That is, the feeling that is evoked in customers' mind upon encounter with the product (or organization) in question, either in physical form or with its name, logo, symbol or any other means of association. According to Aeker (1991), this can be very significant to customers.

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Brand image is also described as the configuration of the whole field of the object of advertising. More importantly, it shapes the customer's disposition and serves as the screen through which the customer observes a product (Dichter, 1985).

Brand image elements include product name package, (main physical features and appearances) (Adil, 2012). Thus, brand image, according to the author, is a key question in how customers choose among alternative brands after information gathering and evaluation.

#### **Price**

Price is the amount of money or its equivalent that one gives in exchange for a product or service. According to (Anslemson et al., 2014; Yi, Zhao & Jang, 2018; Murad & Ali, 2015), among others. Price is an important aspect of a brand that customers take into consideration when making their purchases decisions. It also borders on price competitiveness, price stability and price alignments among the different products or services offered by the organization. Price therefore does not only mean how much a product costs at a given time. It also encompasses price relatives; that is, price vis-à-vis offering or quality.

## **Perceived Quality**

Perceived quality has to do with how the customer views the performance of a brand, as superior, excellent or inferior, compared to competing brands. This has to do not just with attributes and features like beauty, durability or functionality but an overall assessment of all these characteristics compared to other brands in the same product or service class or among organizations. Perceived quality may be viewed from two angles: intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2007). Intrinsic implies inherent quality or functionalities while extrinsic has to do with users' or peers' view of the brand such as prestigious or otherwise.

### **Package**

Package refers to the container or outer covering of a product. This normally carries many messages: name, date of make, some other messages and sometimes price-tags. According to Yaro (2005) and Adebisi and Akinruwa (2019), packaging is one very useful feature by which products are distinguished. Packages include bottles, tins, cartons or other containers, colors, labels, among others. In many cases nowadays, packaging is as symbolic as the product name. The quality of a product's package sometimes is a promise of quality of the content. Sometimes a product's package is synonymous with the product or its maker.

## **Social Image (Prestige)**

As said earlier, there are so many issues or characteristics that can contribute to customers' brand image formation. According to Parterson (1999), some of these attributes are inherent in the product while others are only created and associated with brands via marketing communication. Brand social image is one in the later group of attributes.

According to Kotler and Keller (2006), a product or brand conveys some image or personality. Customers patronize brands that match the personality they wish to cultivate.

Social image (prestige) describes how the customer wishes to be seen or sees him or herself when patronizing a particular brand. Brand social image seems to be closely related or resemble

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brand identity. In most cases social image is directed at increasing or improving customers 'ego or prestige' by their patronage of the brand.

## **Country of Origin**

In many cases, country of origin matters in customers' purchasing decisions. According to Saxena and Dhar (2021), the country of origin of a product is usually of cardinal importance in customers' purchase decisions. This case is of particular importance in Nigeria. The issue of the country of origin of most products has become perhaps the most important consideration in customers' purchase decisions. The clamor for 'patronize made in Nigeria products' has been on for so long but does not seem to be achieving the desired result.

The above are among the factors or brand attributes that have been identified as important in customers' brand image formation.

## **Empirical Review**

As said earlier, studies into the determinants of brand image and into determinants of brand image in the food and beverages industry are limited and almost non-existent. The few that exist include: Chin, Salimi, Suleiman, Lai and Tat (2018), Alhaddad (2015), Dib and Alhaddad (2015), among others.

The work of Chin et al. (2018) was on the determinants of the brand image of GRAB; a ride hailing platform in Syria (Something like Uber or Bolt in Nigeria). Data were collected from ninety-five respondents via a questionnaire. The study investigated customer response to the use of electronic referral (e-Referral) via-a-vis word-of-mouth Referral or e-MOMom in the formation of brand image perception by customers. The study reported that both e-Referral and e-Mom contributed positively to the customer's brand image of Grab. The study which adopted the survey method recommended the development of strategies by corporate organizations to enhance their brand images.

Dib and Alhaddad (2015) investigated the determinants of brand image in the social media in Syria. The study was based on a sample of 373 respondents who are social media users. The study identified three kinds of awareness as it relates to social media usage: brand awareness, advertising awareness and price awareness. The study seems to suggest therefore that awareness about these factors or characteristics: brand (name), advertising and prices, are the major drivers of brand image in social media.

A closely related work is Alhaddad (2015), which examined the role of quality, brand image, and brand trust as determinants of brand loyalty. The study was based on a questionnaire, administered on 473 students. The study revealed that customer's loyalty is achieved when quality and trust are achieved in relation to customers' expectations. The study also revealed that loyalty is based on how customers see their own image reflected in a brand.

Okpanachi, Ezeji and Asemah (2017) investigated the determinants of brand loyalty on two hundred female students of University of Lagos on their loyalty to cosmetic brands. The study showed that corporate reputation, satisfaction, quality, switching cost and brand trust are the determinants of brand loyalty.

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#### **Theoretical Review**

The theoretical framework for this study is the information integration theory developed by Aeker (1971). The theory states that attitudes are formed and modified as people receive information, interpret and evaluate them and key them into their existing understanding of the issue or item in order to form, change or reshape their opinions about things or life in general. It is in this regard that Carson and White (2008) opined that the root of marketing communication is in the intention to form or change attitudes in the minds of customers. This theory, as can be seen, is very relevant to this study. The two issues in this study are what are the factors that shape the attitudes of customers towards a brand; and therefore what factors or communication or information will help change those attitudes; and how important is each of these factors in the customers' brand image formation of food and beverages products in Nigeria.

Other theories that may be relevant to this study include stakeholders' theory by Freeman (1984), consumer sovereignty theory by Hutt (1940), among others. Since this study is aimed at identifying the factors that shape customers' brand image, the information theory will better help marketers and promotion experts, in recognising what information they should place in the customers' domain in respect of each factor or all the factors to enable customers cultivate and or maintain favorable dispositions towards their brands.

#### DATA AND METHODOLOGY

#### **Research Design**

This study adopted a survey design with data sourced via questionnaires from a sample of three hundred and eighty-four respondents. The geographical focus of this study is Nasarawa State in North Central Nigeria with a population of approximately 2.6 million people (2022 est). However, because not all of these people are food and beverages products consumers. The target population is not known for certain and therefore treated as large to be described as infinite. This study therefore adopted the Cochran formula, for sample determination. This formula is suggested for an unknown infinite unknown population, to select the study sample.

The Cochran formula is as follow:

Where:  $NS=Z^2PQ/e^2$ .

NS = Desired Sample size

Z = Z-score

P = Expected percent of the population with the defined attribute. Q = value e = desired levelof margin of error.

$$=\frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.50 (1-0.50)}{(0.05)^2}$$

Cochran (1977) = 385

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By this formula, the study sample size is 385. Five hundred (500) copies were distributed using cluster sampling method. The questionnaires were distributed in ten (10) classes of adult education centers in 3 different institutions where the researcher facilitates studies. A total of 348 copies of the questionnaire were returned and found suitable for analysis.

#### **Research Variables**

**3.2.1** The independent variables were identified from the works of Bearden and Etzel (1982), Aaker (1996); Appelbaum (1999), Srivastava and Kamdar (2009), AMA (2016), Abidin and Borhan (2016), among others. The following nine (9) characteristics or attributes (variables) as shown in Table 3.0 were commonly cited in the above works and were therefore selected as independent variables for this study:

To this, we added a 10<sup>th</sup> factor, 'nothing, in particular', as shown in the Table, to cater for people who do not go through much rigorous choice making process to form brand image opinion.

**Table 3.0 BRAND IMAGE FACTORS** 

Availabili	Brand	Country	Manufacture'	Package	Prestige	Price	Popular	Quality	Nothing
ty	(Product)	of	s		(Social		ity		in
	Name	Origin	Name		Image)		(Aware		Particular
							ness)		

Source: Author's Creation

The dependent variable for the study is factor weight (FW). That is, the rank from 1-10 of each customer attaches to each characteristic. In Table 4.1, we show the purchase history of the brands.

Apart from the bio-data question, only one research question is asked. Respondents were required to rank the above (ten) factors from 1st to 10th in descending order of importance in the respondent's brand image perception.

## METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with a specific model of Factor Analysis (FA). Factor Analysis is among the statistical techniques developed by Hotelling (1933).

Factor Analysis is used in identifying the few among a large number of independent variables that account for the material part of the dependent variable (Ather & Balasundaram, 2009). In most true life cases, the 80/20 Rule applies. The 80/20 Rule states that 80% of results often come from 20% of the causal factors. In this case, although, ten factors have been identified as determinants of brand image, in keeping with the 80/20 Rule; only a few of these factors will account for a large proportion of purchase intensity. Factor analysis will help to identify those

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few of them that account for eighty percent or more in shaping customers' brand image preference as is reflected in their three previous purchases.

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULT

#### **DATA PRESENTATION**

In Table 4.1, the rows contain the ten attributes that have been identified as characteristics or factors that customers use to form brand image opinion.

In the columns are the weights, that is, how important each factor is in such a decision. The number in each cell represents the number of respondents who rate the attribute as  $1^{st}$ ,  $2^{nd}$ ,  $3^{rd}$  – or  $10^{th}$  as the case may be.

**Table 4.1** 

S/N	Factor/Attribute	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10
1	Availability	84	32	34	41	42	38	26	23	12	16
2	Brand (Product) Name	62	43	16	21	38	17	12	17	8	14
3	Country of Origin	18	27	14	33	17	23	31	18	64	103
4	Manufacture's Name	61	24	32	39	21	48	33	36	22	32
5	Package	54	31	33	36	26	38	42	29	36	23
6	Prestige	24	24	27	26	21	28	36	32	48	82
7	Price	76	43	32	24	53	27	31	32	28	28
8	Popularity	83	41	58	27	32	26	19	19	26	17
9	Quality	58	76	24	36	28	33	21	31	13	28
10	Nothing in Particular	32	68	46	37	33	41	22	19	36	14

Source: Questionnaire Analysis

# **Principal Component Analysis (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)**

The data in Table 4.1 were used to run a confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), as explained earlier, using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and results presented below:

Table 4.2.1 shows the correlation between the variables considered in the analysis. Correlation between availability and brand name is 0.845. availability and country of origin are negatively correlated with -0.531. (see table below for the rest).

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Table 4.2.1: Correlation Matrix<sup>a</sup>

		Availa bility	Brand (Product) Name	Countr y of Origin	Manufact ure's Name	Parka ge	Presti ge	Price	Popular ity	Qualit y	Nothing in Particular
	Availability	1.000	.845	531	.735	.697	555	.825	.821	.528	.160
ation	Brand (Product) Name	.845	1.000	408	.398	.421	476	.926	.749	.787	.341
	Country of Origin	531	408	1.000	256	377	.958	373	440	284	403
	Manufacturer's Name	.735	.398	256	1.000	.730	190	.397	.513	.283	176
	Parkage	.697	.421	377	.730	1.000	398	.491	.616	.230	.069
	Prestige	555	476	.958	190	398	1.000	386	444	368	548
	Price	.825	.926	373	.397	.491	386	1.000	.779	.540	.111
	Popularity	.821	.749	440	.513	.616	444	.779	1.000	.495	.371
	Quality	.528	.787	284	.283	.230	368	.540	.495	1.000	.596
	Nothing in Particular	.160	.341	403	176	.069	548	.111	.371	.596	1.000

The values in the extraction column indicate the proportion of each variable's variance that can be explained by the retained factors. Variables with high values are well represented in the common factor space, while variables with low values are not well represented. In this study, we do not have any particularly low values, they are the reproduced variances from the factors that we have extracted.

Eigenvalues are the variances of the factors. Because we conducted our factor analysis on the correlation matrix, the variables are standardized, which means that each variable has a variance of 1, and the total variance is equal to the number of variables used in the analysis, in this case, 10. This column contains the eigenvalues. The first factor will always account for the most variance (and hence have the highest Eigenvalue), and the next factor will account for as much of the left-over variance as it can, and so on. Hence, each successive factor will account for less and less variance. The column of % of variance contains the percent of total variance accounted for by each factor. The cumulative % column contains the cumulative percentage of variance accounted for by the current and all preceding factors. The third row shows a value of 85.3%. This means that the first three factors together account for 85.3% of the total variance.

The columns under this heading are the rotated factors that have been extracted. Three factors were extracted based on eigenvalues. These are the factors that we are most interested in and try to name. In this study, the first factor might be called "Brand" because items like "brand name", "price", "quality" and "popularity" load highly on it. The second factor might be called "Availability" because items like "Manufacturer's name", "availability" and "package" load

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highly on it. The third factor can be called "Prestige" because "country of origin" and prestige are highly loaded on it. Another relevant statistical outcome is in Tables in Appendix.

## **Test of Hypothesis**

Because of the rather lengthy and rigorous procedure of hypothesis testing in PCA, hypothesis testing in survey studies is not often pursued. From our analyses however, we can observe that with our null hypothesis; Hoi; 'customers' brand images are not determined by any particular factors or attributes'. From Table 4.2.4 (Total Variance Explained), we can see that variables 1-9 each explained variance greater than 0.05: variable i explained 55.27%, variable ii; 17.62%, down to variable ix which explained 0.06. On the other hand, variable x; 'nothing in particular' accounts for only 0.02%. By this, we can accept our alternative hypothesis (Hai) that 'there are factors that determine brand images of food and beverages products in Nasarawa state.

Based on Table 4.2.4, (cumulative % column), we observe that variable i accounted for 55.27% the variance, ii accounted for 17.62% iii and account for 12.38% (totaling 85.27%), while the remaining 7 variables account for only 14.73% of the variance.

By this we can again accept our alternative hypothesis (Haii), that there are statistically significant differences among the contributions of the brand image factors to brand image formation in the food and beverages industry in Nasarawa.

#### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

From the above analyses, we have identified nine factors plus 'nothing in particular' making ten; that influence customers' brand images. Of these and based on the PCA/FA, we isolated three factors: brand name, availability (convenience) and prestige (social image) being the three most impactful brand image determinants.

## **5UMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

## **Summary**

This study was undertaken against the backdrop that although brand image has become a major contributor to corporate performance, most studies in its regard seem to assume that brand image is a simple phenomenon. In reality, brand image, like a personal image or personality, is a complex issue depending on so many different factors, attributes or characteristics, each of which may have different magnitude or importance to different customers. The twin objectives of the study were to identify the factors that shape customers' brand image in the Nigerian food and beverage industry and to determine how impactful each of these factors is in shaping customers' brand image opinion.

The study adopted the survey design with a sample size of 384 responses. The study identified nine (9) factors or characteristics plus 'nothing in particular', that shape customers' brand image perception in the Nigerian food and beverage industry. Of these, and based on the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), three factors: brand name, (itself), availability (convenience) and prestige (social image), in that order, are

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confirmed as the three most influential factors determining about 85 percent of customers' brand image preferences.

This is exactly in tandem with the 80/20 Rule, only three (out of ten) factors account for most of the effects of brand images on companies sales. Based on the above analysis, we can conclude that: popularity of a brand name, availability (convenience), and social image (prestige) are the three most important, out of the nine or ten factors that shape customers' brand image of food and beverages products in Nigeria.

#### RECOMMENDATION

The study therefore recommends that manufacturers and marketers in the Food and Beverages Industries in Nigeria should improve their corporate performances by focusing on popularizing their brands, ensure availability and convenience as well cultivate social image (prestige or class), for their brands to attract and retain customers favorable disposition and therefore patronage. This will help to sustain customers interest and therefore boost sales and enhance corporate performance.

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## **APPENDIX I**

# **QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Sir/Ma,

This PhD student of the Nasarawa State University, Nasarawa Keffi, (NSUK) is conducting a study on the Identification and Evaluation of the Determinants of Brand Image in the Food and Beverages Industry in Nigeria.

Kindly assist in completing this questionnaire to enable the researcher get relevant information on the issue.

Thank you for your	time and attention	on.		
Audu Yusuf				
BIO DATA:				
A (i) Age Bracket Ma (ii) Gender	18 ale	19 – 30 31 –  Female unspecifie		
(iii)Marital Status	Single	Married Other		
(iv) Education Qualification	SSCE 30	Dip/NCE 31-60 61-100	Degree 101- 250	PG and other 250+
(v) Income Bracket	 ∴ ( <del>N</del> 6000)			

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## **APPENDIX**

Please rank the following factors in accordance to how important is to you in forming your brand image of product/organization.

Availabil ity	Brand (Product) Name	Country of Origin	Manufactur e's Name	Package	Prestige (Social Image)	Pric e	Popularity (Awareness	Qualit y	Nothing in Particula r
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## **APPENDIX II**

# (a) Table 4.2.2: Factor Analysis

# **Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
Availability	34.80	20.054	10
Brand (Product) Name	24.80	17.210	10
Country of Origin	34.80	27.959	10
Manufacture's Name	34.80	12.336	10
Parkage	34.80	8.829	10
Prestige	34.80	18.317	10
Price	37.40	16.084	10
Porpularity	34.80	20.922	10
Quality	34.80	18.648	10
Nothing in Particular	34.80	15.383	10

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# (b) Table 4.2.3: Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Availability	1.000	.947
Brand (Product) Name Country of Origin	1.000 1.000	.947 .925
Manufacture's Name	1.000	.795
Parkage	1.000	.754
Prestige	1.000	.969
Price	1.000	.821
Porpularity	1.000	.773
Quality	1.000	.804
Nothing in Particular	1.000	.793

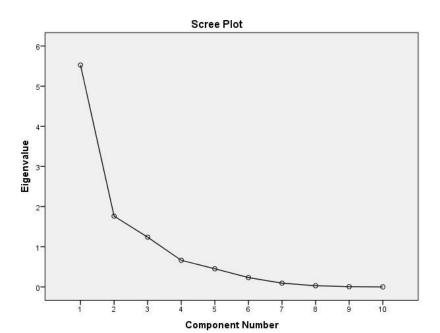
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

# (c) Table 4.2.4: Total Variance Explained

Compone nt	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulat ive %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.527	55.267	55.267	5.527	55.267	55.267	3.196	31.963	31.963
2	1.762	17.623	72.891	1.762	17.623	72.891	2.951	29.513	61.475
3	1.238	12.378	85.269	1.238	12.378	85.269	2.379	23.794	85.269
4	.662	6.622	91.891						
5	.451	4.506	96.397						
6	.233	2.329	98.726						
7	.093	.929	99.655						
8	.029	.290	99.945						
	.006	.055							
9	-2.577E-	-2.577E-	100.000						
10	016	015	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.





(d) Figure 4.2: Component Number

(e) Table 4.2.5: Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Component					
	1	2	3			
Availability Brand (Product) Name	.938 .890	.258 008	028 .394			
Country of Origin	662	.415	.561			
Manufacture's Name	.607	.613	225			
Parkage	.691	.404	337			
Prestige	697	.507	.475			
Price	.836	.190	.293			
Porpularity	.866	.109	.109			
Quality	.684	280	.508			
Nothing in Particular	.412	776	.148			

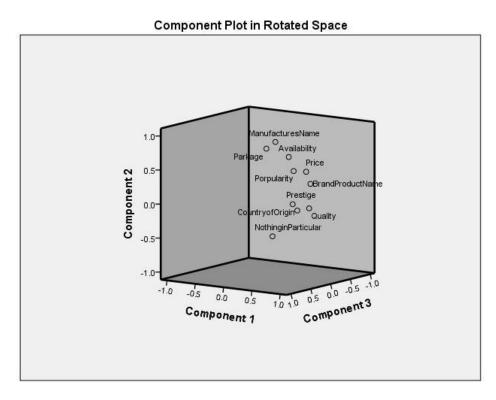
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. a. 3 components extracted.



# (f) Table 4.2.6: Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Component				
	1	2	3		
Availability	.567	.741	.277		
Brand (Product) Name	.883	.365	.183		
Country of Origin	114	287	911		
Manufacture's Name	.141	.880	.006		
Parkage	.153	.818	.250		
Prestige	214	208	938		
Price	.741	.514	.086		
Porpularity	.642	.540	.263		
Quality	.874	.006	.201		
Nothing in Particular	.517	381	.617		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.



(g) Figure 4.3: Component Plot in Rotated Space