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Brand Reputation, Product Durability and Consumer Preference for Locally Assembled Motorcycles In Nnewi Anambra State: Evidence From Nigeria's Auto-Manufacturing Hub

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ABSTRACT: The main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between brand reputation, product durability and preference of consumers to locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State. The research design was correlational research design. The population of the study included motorcycle consumers and market players in the Nnewi region, which included motorcycle owners, commercial riders, dealers, mechanics, sellers of spare parts and potential buyers who were conversant with the motorcycles that were assembled locally. The Cochran formula was used to calculate the sample size of 384 respondents, who were a large population. Three structured questionnaires were used to collect data and they included Brand Reputation Questionnaire, Product Durability Questionnaire and Consumer Preference Questionnaire. Expert validation of the instruments and reliability by Cronbach Alpha was done. The data collected was analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.05 level of significance. The results indicated that there was a strong positive and significant relationship between brand reputation and consumer preference of locally assembled motorcycles. The finding also found to have a strong positive and significant relationship between product durability and consumer preference. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that brand reputation and product durability significantly influenced customers preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended among others that local motorcycle assemblers in Nnewi should build strong brand image by maintaining consistent quality, honest marketing, strong dealer networks and responsive after sales services. It further suggested that assemblers need to enhance the durability of products using more durable components, quality checks, road tests, warranty services, and sufficient supply of spare parts.

Keywords Brand Reputation, Product Durability, Consumer Preference, Locally Assembled Motorcycles, Auto-Manufacturing Hub.

INTRODUCTION

The automobile manufacturing market has become one of the most obvious indicators of the level of the industry of a country since it unites the elements of the design, production of components, assembly, logistics, after-selling service, financing and consumer confidence. All over the globe, the manufacture of vehicles is no longer considered as simply the manufacturing of a complete car. The International Organization

of Motor Vehicle manufactures (2025) reported that the world motor vehicle production was about 92.5 million vehicles in the year 2024, with International Energy Agency (IEA, 2025) reporting that in the same year, 17.3 million electric cars were produced across the globe.

In developing economies, the manufacturing market of the automobile industry is usually initiated with assembly instead of actual manufacturing. The reason is that assembly enables the firms to start with semi-knocked-down or even completely knocked-down kits before gradually transiting into local parts production, skills transfer and component fabrication. This route is particularly significant in Nigeria as the country has a huge mobility market yet remains highly reliant on imports. Agarwal et al. (2023) reported that Nigeria is still a net importer of vehicles and automotive components, despite a motorcycles and two-wheelers offering a viable path to local production due to their lower unit cost, wider use in the public transport system and low entry barrier to assemblers.

This ambition is reflected in the policy direction of the country. The Nigerian Automotive Industry Development Plan aims to enhance the local production of vehicles, increase local content and expand assembly capacities through incentives and industry support (IEA, 2025). In this national portrait Nnewi has a special place. The town is well known as one of the strongest indigenous automobile business clusters in Nigeria due to its history in the trade of spare parts, fabrication, repair services, the distribution of motorcycle parts, and the distribution of local assemblies.

The recent efforts to develop the Nnewi Auto Industrial Park indicate that the stakeholders in the automotive sector and the government now consider the town as the strategic location to produce automotive components, assemble vehicles and other manufacturing activities (Michael, 2024).

The motorcycle business assembled locally in Nnewi is based on a blend of imported materials, local technical expertise, family structures of business, motorcycle spare parts markets and informal engineering knowledge. Most of the operators are not just selling motorcycles or spare parts; they are also involved in assembling, adapting, repairing and modifying the motorcycles to suit the Nigerian roads and consumer budgets. This provides Nnewi with a business identity that is not similar to the normal retail markets. However, the imported motorcycles and imported motorcycle parts continue to exert pressure on this ecosystem. Ojeme (2024) stated that the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDC) reported that Nigeria spends close to 19 million dollars annually on importing motorcycles spare parts. This is sadly a loss of local manufacturing and job creation opportunities. The key question to local assemblers in Nnewi is not just whether or not motorcycles can be assembled locally, but whether or not consumers actually prefer these locally assembled products.

The marketing literature has elucidated consumer preference in various ways. Solomon (2020) considers consumer behaviour as the study of what consumers do prior to, during and after purchase, which implies preference is the study of what consumers do after considering the available alternatives. Kotler and Keller (2021) noted that consumer preference could be influenced by the value that a consumer sees in a product compared to other competing products. Hoyer et al. (2024) consider consumer choice as influenced by motivation, perception, memory, attitude and decision processes.

Inoni and Ogundare (2024) defined consumer brand preference as a condition precedent to the final purchasing decision since it indicates the product or brand that a consumer is most willing to buy of all the available alternatives. Consumer preference in the context of this study is the degree to which the motorcycle users, dealers and buyers in Nnewi use locally assembled motorcycles as opposed to foreign assembled motorcycles after taking into consideration price, reliability, availability of spare parts, brand name, cost of maintenance and the expected life of the products.

Even though consumers are attracted to locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi due to affordability, availability and the presence of mechanics and spare parts, there are still those consumers who find it preferable to automobiles and motorcycles assembled in other countries. The reason behind this choice is commonly linked to the fact that the products assembled in foreign countries are thought to be better finished, have stronger engines, more reliable parts and are of higher social value. Damian-Okoro (2025) discovered that advanced Nigerian consumers tend to prefer imported products since they relate to them as being of high quality and prestige in the global market. In another product market in Nigeria, Obayelu et al. (2022) also demonstrated that preference to local products might be lower when consumers believe that imported alternatives are cleaner, more reliable or better finished. Agarwal et al. (2023) and the International Trade Administration (2025) in the automobile industry reported that imported vehicles and parts continue to make a significant contribution to satisfying the demand in Nigeria, in part due to the limited local production capacity and a lack of consumer finance options. It has been postulated by scholars that price alone does not form such preference pattern. This could be as a result of concerns for brand reputation and product durability.

Brand reputation is the overall perception that the stakeholders develop towards a brand over a period of time. Aacikgöz et al. (2024) defined brand reputation as the perceptions that a brand and its products and services create in the mind of consumers regarding what the brand and its products and services can do to meet consumer expectations. Nuortimo et al. (2024) mention reputation as a component of corporate brand perception, which is formed due to how stakeholders make sense of the identity, behaviour and communication of the organisation. The corporate reputation was perceived by Bigus et al. (2024) as the degree to which a firm is considered to perform better than its competitors in meeting the expectations of the stakeholders. Kotler and Keller (2021) linked reputation with brand equity since a respected brand makes consumers less likely to take a risk and more willing to choose that brand. In this research the brand reputation refers to the level of confidence, recognition and trust that motorcycle consumers in Nnewi place in locally assembled motorcycle brands based on their past experience, word-of-mouth, visibility in the market, after-sales support, perceived technical competence and public image.

Durability of products is the capability of a product to be useful, reliable and functional over a reasonable lifespan of the product. Mesa et al. (2022) defined product durability as a design and performance characteristic correlated to product life extension, repair, reuse and long-term functionality. According to Jetti and Dhar (2024), the concept of product durability is multidimensional and thus it comprises physical endurance, emotional value, repairability and resistance to early obsolescence. According to Milios (2023), the information about the durability of

the product can affect the purchaser. Chen et al. (2025) opined that consumers can build durability perceptions based on product cues and that these perceptions can influence preference and purchase intention. In our research, product durability would be the perceived and actual capacity of locally assemblies motorcycles in Nnewi to survive Nigerian road conditions, frequent commercial use, low maintenance culture as a result of bad fuel quality and long-distance operation without repeated breakdown.

Nnewi has established a robust identity as an automobile and motorcycle business hub in Nigeria, but the expansion of locally assembled motorcycles still relies on the desire of consumers to repeatedly choose them. The technical culture, the networks of spare parts and entrepreneurial base required to support local assembly are available in the town. The proposed Nnewi Auto Industrial Park, in particular, also suggests that stakeholders in the government and industry see Nnewi, as a strategic centre, in the production and assembly of automotive components (Michael, 2024; Ojeme, 2024). The issue though is that production capacity does not necessarily equate into consumer preference.

Local assemblage of motorcycles is patronised by many consumers since these are easily accessible and relatively cheap coupled with ease of maintenance in the Nnewi spare parts and mechanic ecosystem. Meanwhile, there is still a section of buyers who feel that the foreign-assembled motorcycles are more durable, reliable in their performance and stronger brand assurance. This poses a big challenge to local assemblers of motorcycles in Nnewi. These businesses are faced with a market with a well-defined demand but must compete against products that have the symbolic advantage of foreign origin and the practical advantage of established brand recognition. The evidence provided by the automotive sector demonstrates that imported motorcycles and components still dominate the demands in the automotive sector of Nigerian economy (Agarwal et al., 2023; Damian-Okoro, 2025; International Trade Administration, 2025). It is against this background that the present study empirically investigated the relationship between brand reputation, product durability and consumer preference towards locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study was based on the Signalling Theory and is reinforced by the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The Signalling Theory was propounded by Spence (1973). The theory is used to explain how individuals make decisions in situations where they lack complete information about a product or service or market offering. In those cases, buyers rely on cues that can enable them to make judgments as to what the quality of what they wish to buy will probably be. Consumers might not be aware of the actual long-term performance of locally assembled motorcycles prior to purchasing them. Due to this, they can rely on such cues as brand name, reputation, availability of spare parts, warranty, testimonies of users, credibility and recommendations of dealers and mechanics respectively. A motorcycle brand that has a good reputation can give the consumers confidence that the product is reliable and worth purchasing. A poor or unfamiliar brand can cause suspicion, even in case the product is inexpensive. The Signalling Theory is applicable in this study since the reputation of the brands and the product durability can be used as market signals. When consumers think that a motorcycle brand with local assembly is a

reputable and durable brand, they will be more inclined to choose it. In a location where the signals are weak, consumers can instead purchase motorcycles assembled in foreign countries.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour was developed by Ajzen (1991). According to the theory, intention influences human behaviour, and attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control affect intention. Attitude is the feeling of a person towards a behaviour. Subjective norms are those which are affected by other individuals. Perceived behavioural control is the belief of the person that he or she can effectively execute the behaviour. The theory has been applied in this study to explain why consumers might either like or dislike locally assembled motorcycles. This could result in a consumer having a positive attitude towards the motorcycle; the motorcycle will be perceived to be durable, affordable and easy to maintain. The source of subjective norms might be a friend, commercial rider, mechanic, dealer and family members who in turn might recommend or discourage locally assembled motorcycles. Perceived behavioural control can be the belief of the consumer that he/she can get spare parts, they can maintain their motorbikes and they can use the motorbikes to fulfil their intended purpose. The Theory of Planned Behaviour is applicable since the consumer preference is not established based on product features. It is also influenced by social influence, personal judgement and confidence of the consumer in using and maintaining the product. Thus, the theory contributes to the study by showing how the perceptions of the consumers toward brand reputation and product durability can influence the choice of locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi.

Empirical Review

Ilodigwe et al. (2023) xamined the attitude of consumers towards products made in Nigeria in Awka, Anambra State. The research design embraced a survey research design where 228 of the 250 questionnaires distributed in five zones in Awka were used to collect the data. Findings indicated that the quality of the products played a significant role in determining the preference of made-in-Nigeria products by consumers to foreign-made products.

Oladejo (2022) examined the consumer preference in local and imported rice in the Ifako-Ijaiye Local Government Area of Lagos State. The study used a two-stage sampling technique to select 360 respondents and analysed the data with descriptive statistics and logit regression. The outcome was that 63.33 percent of the respondents favored local rice, 36.67 percent favored imported rice. The research also discovered that preference was influenced by price, availability, taste and absence of stones or debris.

Damian-Okoro (2025) examined how consumer sophistication impacts preference towards imported goods in Nigeria. The quantitative design was used in the study and data were collected by 773 consumers using online and offline questionnaires. Data analysis was done using regression analysis. The results indicated that more knowledge, awareness and discernment among the Nigerian consumers resulted in increased preference of imported goods as these consumers associated the imported goods with better quality, innovation, reliability and global prestige.

In Denpasar City, Indonesia, Marto and Sukaatmadja (2024) examined the impact of the quality of products and the image of brands on repurchase intention to the Yamaha motorcycles. The researchers involved 200 study participants who had bought Yamaha

motorcycles and compared the results with the help of SEM-PLS. The results indicated that the quality of a product and brand image significantly positively affected repurchase intention, and brand trust mediated the relationship.

Aczikgoz et al. (2024) analyzed customer reviews of HP-branded computers as the measure of brand reputation and trust. The paper examined 2,012 customer reviews of Hepsiburada, an online store in Turkey, using text mining and sentiment analysis and machine learning techniques. The researchers discovered that brand reputation signifies such issues as quality, reliability, innovation and usability, and that a good reputation contributes to consumer trust and loyalty.

Prabakaran and Sudhahar (2024) examined the brand preference and customer loyalty to home appliances in the Dharmapuri District, India. The respondents were sampled (250 respondents) using a structured questionnaire. The results indicated that product quality, trustworthy service, value and money, customer satisfaction and consistent brand performance were the key factors that influenced brand preference of consumers.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational research design. The study was conducted in Nnewi, Anambra State, Nigeria. Nnewi was selected because it is directly connected with the subject of the study. The population of the study comprised motorcycle consumers and market participants in Nnewi, Anambra State, who had knowledge of locally assembled motorcycles. These included owners of locally assembled motorcycles, owners of foreign-assembled motorcycles, commercial motorcycle riders, motorcycle dealers, motorcycle mechanics, motorcycle spare parts sellers and prospective buyers familiar with motorcycle brands in the Nnewi market. The sample of the study comprised 384 respondents. Since the exact number of motorcycle consumers and related market participants in Nnewi was not precisely known, Cochran's sample size formula for large or unknown populations was used to determine the sample size. The formula is stated as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2\, pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

n = required sample size
Z = standard normal value at 95 percent confidence level, which is 1.96
p = estimated proportion of the population, taken as 0.5
q = 1 minus p, which is 0.5
e = margin of error, taken as 0.05
Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{\downarrow 604}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 384.16$$

The calculated sample size was therefore approximately 384 respondents. To reduce the possible effect of non-response and improperly completed questionnaires, 420 copies of the questionnaires were administered. The final analysis would be based on the number of properly completed and retrieved copies. A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. This technique was suitable because the respondents were drawn from different motorcycle-related groups and locations within Nnewi. The instrument for data collection was through a researcher-structured questionnaires divided into three titled: Brand Reputation Questionnaire (BRQ), Product Durability Questionnaire (PDQ) and Consumer Preference Questionnaire (CPQ), structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)-3, Disagree (D)-2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1. The three instruments were subjected to face and content validation. The reliability of the instruments was established through a pilot test and analyzed through Cronbach Alpha. Cronbach Alpha, that yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.84 for BPQ, 0.81 for PDQ and 0.86 for CPQ. The researcher with the help of three research assistants administered the questionnaires on the respondents directly. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Decision Rule

A positive correlation coefficient indicated a positive relationship between the variables, while a negative correlation coefficient indicated a negative relationship. A correlation coefficient close to zero indicated little or no relationship. The strength of the relationship was interpreted as follows:

Correlation coefficient	Interpretation
±0.00 to ±0.19	Very weak relationship
±0.20 to ±0.39	Weak relationship
±0.40 to ±0.59	Moderate relationship
±0.60 to ±0.79	Strong relationship

±0.80 to ±1.00	Very strong relationship

For the hypotheses, the decision rule was based on the p-value. If the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This meant that there was a significant relationship between the variables. If the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This meant that there was no significant relationship between the variables. For hypothesis one, the null hypothesis would be rejected if the p-value for the relationship between brand reputation and consumer preference was less than 0.05. For hypothesis two, the null hypothesis would be rejected if the p-value for the relationship between product durability and consumer preference was less than 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question One

What is the relationship between brand reputation and consumer preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State?

Table 1; Relationship between brand reputation and consumer preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State

Variables	N	r	Remark
Brand Reputation	384	0.68	Strong positive relationship
Consumer Preference			

Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient between brand reputation and consumer preference is 0.68. This indicates a strong positive relationship between brand reputation and consumer preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State. This means that as consumers' perception of brand reputation improves, their preference for locally assembled motorcycles also tends to increase.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between product durability and consumer preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State?

Table 2: Relationship between Product Durability and Consumer Preference for Locally Assembled Motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State

Variables	N	r	Remark
Product Durability	384	0.72	Strong positive relationship
Consumer Preference			

Data in Table 2 indicated that the correlation coefficient between product durability and consumer preference is 0.72. This indicates a strong positive relationship between product durability and consumer preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State. This means that consumers are more likely to prefer locally assembled motorcycles

when they perceive them as durable, reliable and capable of withstanding regular use.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between brand reputation and consumer preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State.

Table 3: Pearson correlation Test of Significance of Relationship between Brand Reputation and Consumer Preference in Nnewi, Anambra State

Variables	N	r	p-value	Level of significance	Decision
Brand reputation consumer preference	384	0.68	0.000	0.05	Significant

Data in Table 3 revealed that the relationship between brand reputation and consumer preference is positive and significant, r = 0.68, p = 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between brand reputation and consumer preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between product durability and consumer preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State.

Table 4: Pearson correlation Test of Significance of Relationship between product durability and consumer preference in Nnewi, Anambra State

Variables	N	r	p-value	Level of significance	Decision
Product Durability Consumer Preference	384	0.72	0.000	0.05	Significant

Data in Table 4 showed that the relationship between product durability and consumer preference is positive and significant, r = 0.72, p = 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between product durability and consumer preference for locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that brand reputation and consumer preference towards locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State had a positive and significant relationship.. This finding suggests that brand reputation is an important factor in the consumer decision process. The result is not surprising due to the fact that motorcycles are long-lasting products that a consumer is likely to use over a long period of time. Buyers tend to be cautious since when the wrong choice is made, they may end up spending money on frequent repairs, breakdown and wastage of money. Brand reputation is a significant source of confidence in Nnewi, where local motorcycle assembly competes with those assembling foreign-made motorcycles. Consumers will be more likely to select a brand that is associated with reliability, the existence of good spare parts to support the

product, and positive user experience. This finding is consistent with Acikgoz, et al. (2024) who reported that brand reputation enhances customer trust and loyalty. It also substantiates Marto and Sukaatmidja (2024), who reported that brand image and product quality were significant influencing factors regarding repurchase intention of Yamaha motorcycles. Similarly, Damian-Okoro (2025), who found that some Nigerian consumers would favor imported goods due to the association of the imported goods with quality, reliability and prestige. This implies that in their desire to compete more favorably, the locally assembled motorcycle brands in Nnewi must establish stronger reputations that can help them convince the consumers that they have better chances of succeeding in the business environment.

The finding of the study also revealed a positive and significant relationship between the durability of products and the preference of consumers towards locally assembling motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State. The finding of the study indicates that durability is the key to consumer preference in the motorcycle industry. The findings of the study may have resulted because consumers desire motorcycles that will sustain the daily usage, poor roads, long transportation distance, commercial transportation pressure and repetitive mechanical stress. When the consumers are convinced that the local assembled motorcycle has the ability to last, break down less frequently and be useful over time, the consumers are convinced to choose such a product. The finding is in line with Milios (2023) who suggested that the perception of product lifetime by the consumers may contribute to their purchase choices. It also supports Jetti and Dhar (2024), who elaborated that product durability is both a physical endurance and a repairability and resistance to early failure. The result is also consistent with Prabakaran and Sudhahar (2024), who discovered that the brand preference and customer loyalty depended on the quality of the products, the trustworthy service and value for money. When the products turn out to be durable in real life use, these findings indicate that the consumers will be more inclined to prefer locally assembled motorcycles.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that brand reputation and product durability have positive and significant relationship with consumer preference of locally assembled motorcycles in Nnewi, Anambra State. Findings of the study showed that brand reputation has a strong positive correlation with the consumer preference. Findings also revealed that product durability has a significant positive correlation with consumer preference. It is therefore pertinent that measures are put in place to improve brand reputation and product durability among motorcycle assembly business owners in Nnewi, Anambra State. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that:

Local motorcycle assemblers in Nnewi should protect and strengthen their brand reputation through consistent product quality, honest marketing, reliable dealer networks and responsive after-sales service. This can be achieved by ensuring that every motorcycle released into the market carries a clear brand name, contact address, service information and warranty details. Assemblers should also avoid exaggerating product claims and should respond quickly to complaints from buyers and dealers.

Assemblers should improve the durability of locally assembled motorcycles by using stronger components, carrying out proper quality checks and road-testing motorcycles

before releasing them to the market. This can be realised by setting up a simple inspection process where engines, brakes, tyres, frames, electrical systems and fuel systems are checked before sale. Test rides should also be done to confirm that the motorcycles can withstand normal road use.

Dealers and assemblers should provide clear warranty support for locally assembled motorcycles, especially on major parts such as the engine, frame and electrical system, so as to reduce consumers' fear and increase confidence in local brands. This can be done by issuing warranty cards to buyers, stating the parts covered, the warranty period and the service centre or dealer responsible for repairs.

Assemblers should ensure that spare parts are readily available and affordable, because consumers are more willing to buy locally assembled motorcycles when they are sure that repairs can be done easily and at reasonable cost. This can be achieved by partnering with spare parts sellers in Nnewi, keeping common replacement parts in stock and training mechanics on how to repair and maintain the motorcycles properly.

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