

**INFLUENCE OF CONSUMER PERCEPTION ON BRAND PREFERENCE IN
NIGERIA'S CLOTHING INDUSTRY**

**ENIOLA MODUPE OLAYEMI
MGS2104999**

**DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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BENIN IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc) DEGREE IN MARKETING OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

NOVEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I, ENIOLA MODUPE OLAYEMI, with Matriculation Number MGS2104999, hereby declare that this project work is the original product of my effort and has not been previously submitted by any other person for the award of any degree or certificate in this or any other institution. All sources of information used in this work have been duly acknowledged.

ENIOLA MODUPE OLAYEMI
(DECLARANT)

Date: _____

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by ENIOLA MODUPE OLAYEMI with Matriculation Number MGS2104999 in the Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Science, University of Benin, Benin City under the supervision of Dr. Princess O.U Akenzua, in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) Degree in Marketing

Dr. Princess O.U Akenzua
(Project Supervisor)

Date

Prof. E.P. Oseyomon
(Project Coordinator)

Date

Dr. Samuel J. Osifo
(Head of Department)

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project work first and foremost to Almighty God, whose grace, wisdom, and strength have guided me through every step of this journey. Without His blessings, none of this would have been possible.

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First and foremost, my heartfelt appreciation goes to the Almighty God for His divine protection, provision, guidance, wisdom, and knowledge throughout the period of this research. Without His grace, this project would not have been possible.

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to investigate the influence of consumer perception on brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. The specific objectives were to determine the relationship among product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence and cultural on brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. The study adopted the survey research design; data was collected through the aid of a questionnaire.

The finding shows that product quality, emotional connection and cultural relevance have significantly positive effects on branding preference in Nigeria's clothing industry, However, branding strategies and social influence were found to have no significant effect on brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. The questionnaire was structured according to the research questions and distributed to a sample population of four hundred (400) respondents. Descriptive statistics technique was used to analyze the quantitative data, coding was done in the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS20) and the output was interpreted in mean scores and standard deviation. Correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to estimate the relationship among variables.

The study recommends that clothing manufacturers should prioritize high quality materials, they should re-evaluate their promotional strategies to make them more engaging and credible, Brand managers should develop campaigns that foster emotional attachment, clothing brands should focus more on genuine customer advocacy and integrate Nigeria cultural motifs into their designs.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Nigerian clothing industry has undergone significant transformation over the past decade, growing into one of the most vibrant and influential sectors in the country(Adebayo & Ojo,2021). In major Nigerian cities like Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, Enugu, and Port Harcourt, the clothing scene has become a powerful expression of Nigeria's cultural identity, youth creativity and entrepreneurial spirit(UNESCO, 2021). Nigerian designers are making waves globally, blending traditional fabrics like adire and aso-oke with modern design to attract both local and international markets(Vogue Business,2024). The rise of events such as Lagos Fashion Week, Arise Fashion week, and GTBank Fashion Weekend has brought Nigeria's clothing brands into the spotlight, increasing their visibility and competitiveness (Balogun & Usman,2022).

Consumer perception plays a central role in this rapidly evolving industry, influencing not only brand preference but also purchase intentions and loyalty(Kotler & Keller, 2022). Consumers do not purchase clothing items, they buy into the image, identity, and emotional experience a brand offers(Etuk& Udonde,2022).Consumer perception refers to the mental process through which individuals interpret and make sense of marketing stimuli such as brand messages, advertisements and product features(Adebayo & Olayinka, 2021; Nwankwo & Ugochukwu, 2023). It involves the selection, organization, and interpretation of information to form meaningful impressions that guide consumer

attitudes and behavior(Solomon, 2020). This process plays a critical role in shaping how consumers evaluate brands, influencing their purchasing intentions, satisfaction, and loyalty (Narong, 2020).

In the Nigerian context, brand perception is shaped by several interlinked factors such as product quality, price, reputation, cultural relevance and accessibility(Yusuf & Adeola, 2022). A major issue affecting local brand performance is the enduring belief that foreign clothing brands are superior in quality and status compared to local alternatives(Adetunji & Osotimehin, 2021). Historical biases linked to colonial legacies have cultivated an enduring preference for foreign-made clothing, which is often associated with higher quality, modernity, and social prestige(Onwuka & Ezeugwu, 2022).In the clothing industry,even Nigerian brands meet high standards in design and quality, they often struggle to gain the same level of consumer trust as their foreign counterparts(Adeola & Ezenwafor, 2022).

The narrative is gradually shifting as Research And Scientific Innovation Society International (RSIS,2023) notes that the growing sense of cultural pride and interest in Afrocentric fashion among Nigerian youth has led to increased recognition and value for locally made clothing brands. Designers now integrate cultural elements into trendy urban styles, appealing to a youthful demographic seeking to express identity through fashion(Akinwumi, 2021). This trend is not only contributing to economic growth but also reshaping the narrative around what constitutes stylish and desirable clothing in Nigeria(Ezeh & Chukwu, 2022). Recent studies shows a persistent gap between Nigerian

consumers' admiration for local clothing brands and their actual purchasing behavior (Okonkwo & Chima, 2021; Ibrahim & Lawal, 2023). Despite the visible cultural pride and appreciation for indigenous designs, factors such as quality concerns and lack of innovative strategies often deter consumers from patronizing these local products (Chukundah & Acee-Eke, 2025). Many consumers praise Nigerian designers on social media, however, their spending patterns often favor international brands, especially in categories like ready-to-wear and premium street wear (Adeyemi, 2022). This contradiction highlights the complexity of consumer behavior in Nigeria's clothing sector. (Emmanuel, 2023)

Social influences such as celebrity endorsements, peer recommendations and social media presence have become increasingly important in shaping consumer perception (Osei & Aidoo, 2021). In today's digital age, influencers and celebrities act as intermediaries between brands and consumers, showcasing clothing styles and dictating trends through curated online content (Adebayo & Soyemi, 2021), they highlighted that these figures significantly impact brand perception by framing products within aspirational lifestyles. A brand that is seen on a favored celebrity or endorsed by a trendsetter often gains legitimacy in the eyes of potential consumers, regardless of its origin or objective quality (Okorie & Adeola, 2020). It is also essential to note the role of affordability and accessibility. As the International Institute For Global Development Publishers (IIGD, 2024) explained, for many middle and lower income consumers, the

perception of value for money is just as important as the brand image, local brands face the dual challenge of meeting aesthetic expectations while keeping prices competitive.

Affordability is another decisive factor influencing perception and brand preference in the Nigerian clothing market (Adebayo, 2022). Many consumers, especially those in the middle and lower income classes, make fashion choices based not only on style but also by cost-effectiveness(Okonkwo, 2020). Local brands must therefore navigate the delicate balance between quality and affordability(Adeleke & Aminu, 2020). A brand perceived as expensive without delivering superior value risks alienating cost-conscious consumers(Opute & Madichie, 2021). Ewuzie, Anetoh, Nwangene, and Anetoh(2020) emphasize that competitive pricing, when combined with strong branding and consistent quality, can significantly enhance consumer trust and loyalty.

In Nigeria's clothing sector, limited accessibility continues to hinder consumer outreach as many local brands operate in restricted geographic locations or depend on informal distribution channels, which reduce their visibility and availability(Olutayo & Akanle, 2021). This often fosters the perception that local clothing brands are niche or difficult to obtain, discouraging potential customers(Uche & Adegbile, 2020). Building a stronger online presence through e-commerce platforms and improving logistics infrastructure could help address these challenges by making homegrown clothing brands more visible and accessible nationwide (Onyekwelu, 2024; Onyemachi, 2023).

In summary, the Nigerian clothing industry stands at a pivotal moment in its development, driven by innovation, cultural creativity, and increasing consumer awareness, but also

challenged by structural and perception-related barriers(Eze & Ogechukwu, 2022). As there is a growing admiration for local brands and an increasing embrace of cultural identity through fashion, perception-related challenges such as foreign brand bias, pricing concerns, accessibility issues and weak branding strategies continue to hinder the sector's progress(Adeola & Eze, 2021; Uche & Fayemi, 2022). Addressing these perception gaps, local brands could foster stronger consumer relationships and expand their market share in urban centres like Benin City and beyond.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The Nigerian clothing industry is caught in a paradox(Olawole & Salami, 2020). Despite its rapid growth, global recognition, and increasing innovation, many Nigerian consumers continue to exhibit a strong preference for foreign brands(Ezenwafor & Okoli, 2021). Nigerian clothing brands struggle with the challenge of translating local admiration into actual purchasing power(Joseph,2021).This disconnect raises critical questions about the factors that shape consumer perceptions and how these perceptions, in turn, influence brand preference(Ajibola & Musa, 2021).

Consumer perception plays a pivotal role in this dynamic, noting that perceptions of quality, prestige and status associated with foreign brands often overshadow the appeal of local products (Okeke 2020). Amadi (2018) highlights that local brands struggle with inadequate marketing strategies and inconsistent product quality, which further contribute to the erosion of consumer confidence. The situation creates a paradox where, despite increased patronage of Nigerian fashion on social media and at fashion events, actual

purchasing behavior does not fully reflect this enthusiasm (Oladele, 2022). This gap between consumer interest and buying behavior has led to concerns about the sustainability and competitive positioning of the Nigerian clothing industry in a globalized market (Omoniyi, 2021). As noted by Bello and Musa (2022), understanding the underlying factors influencing consumer brand preference is critical to developing effective strategies that can bridge this divide and foster stronger loyalty towards Nigerian brands.

Given these challenges, this study seeks to investigate the specific factors that shape Nigerian consumers' perceptions of local versus foreign clothing brands and how these perceptions influence their brand preferences. The insights from this research are expected to contribute valuable knowledge for designers, marketers, and policymakers aiming to boost the domestic fashion industry's competitiveness and growth.

1.3 Research Questions

To guide the study and ensure focus, the following research questions are posed;

1. How does the perception of product quality affect brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry?
2. To what extent does branding strategies (advertising, packaging, influencer marketing) shape brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry?
3. How does emotional connection influence brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry?

4. What role does social influences (celebrity endorsements, peer recommendations) play in shaping brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry?
5. How does cultural relevance influence brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry?

1.4 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the influence of consumer perception on brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. To achieve this aim, the following specific objectives have been outlined;

1. To examine how product quality perception influences brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.
2. To analyze the effect of branding strategies (advertising, packaging, influencer marketing) and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.
3. To investigate how emotional connection influences brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.
4. To analyze the role of social influences (such as celebrity endorsements and peer recommendations) on brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.
5. To explore how cultural relevance affects brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The research work would be testing the following hypothesis;

H1: There is no significant relationship between product quality perception and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

H2: There is no significant relationship between branding strategies (advertising, packaging, influencer marketing) and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

H3: There is no significant relationship between emotional connection and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

H4: There is no significant relationship between social influences (celebrity endorsements, peer recommendations) and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

H5: There is no significant relationship between cultural relevance and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study examines the factors influencing consumer perception and brand preference in the Nigerian clothing industry, with a specific focus on Benin City, Edo State. The research is geographically confined to Benin City due to the researcher's location and accessibility to respondents.

Data will be collected from selected key commercial and residential areas in Benin City known for their active clothing markets and consumer traffic. These areas include

Ugbowo, Aduwawa, Upper mission extension, and Ring road ,chosen for their concentration of clothing retailers and fashion boutiques.

This focused scope is intended to provide valuable insights into consumer preferences within a typical Nigerian urban environment, contributing to strategies that can enhance the competitiveness and growth of indigenous clothing brands.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research will be significant to several groups:

Fashion Entrepreneurs and Brand Managers: The study will offer valuable insights into how consumer perception influences brand preference, assisting local fashion businesses in developing effective branding, marketing, and perception management strategies.

Marketers and Advertising Professionals: The findings will help advertising practitioners understand the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements and social media influencers in influencing consumer perceptions.

Academias: This study will contribute to existing academic literature on consumer perception and brand preference, serving as a useful reference for students and researchers conducting similar studies.

Industry Consultants and Analysts: Business consultants and analysts can use the findings to assess consumer behavior trends within Nigeria's fashion industry and advise clients on strategies for improving brand image and market positioning.

Policy Makers and Fashion Industry Stakeholders: The results of the study may guide policies and industry initiatives aimed at promoting indigenous fashion brands and supporting the Nigerian fashion sector's sustainable growth.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study is confined to Benin City, which may limit the extent to which its findings can be generalized to other regions within Nigeria, given the country's diverse cultural and economic landscape. The reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for response bias, which may affect the accuracy of the information collected. Despite these limitations, the study provides important insights into consumer behavior and brand preference within a significant urban market.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature related to consumer perception and brand preference, with specific focus on the Nigerian clothing industry. It explores the major concepts, theories and past empirical studies that explains how consumers form opinions about clothing brands and how these opinions influence their preferences. The chapter provides a foundation for understanding the key issues surrounding branding and consumer behavior in Nigeria's clothing market.

2.2 Conceptual review

The conceptual review provides a clear understanding of the key variables examined in this study by defining and discussing relevant concepts and their relationships in the Nigerian clothing industry. It focuses on the dependent variable (brand preference) and the independent variable (consumer perception) as well as the determinants that influence them. This review draws from existing literature to explain how these variables interact and shape consumer behaviour, particularly in the clothing sector. Establishing this conceptual foundation is essential for understanding the theoretical arguments and empirical evidence that underpin the study.

2.2.1 Brand preference

Brand preference refers to the extent to which consumers consistently choose one brand over competing alternatives, based on the perception that it better satisfies their needs,

desire and expectations (Adeyemi & Adetunji, 2022). It reflects a consumer's favourable attitude towards a brand and their likelihood of purchasing it repeatedly despite the availability of alternatives (Sari, Artha, & Hadi, 2023). In the Nigerian clothing industry, brand preference is often shaped by a blend of functional factors such as product quality, price fairness and durability, alongside emotional factors like brand image, cultural identity and social status signalling.(Akpotu & Eze, 2025).

In Nigeria's clothing industry, brand preference is particularly significant because the market is saturated with a mix of international labels, emerging local designers and fast fashion alternatives(Ogunleye & Adebayo, 2023). As there are many competing offerings, consumers are more likely to stay loyal to brands that they perceive as stylish, culturally relevant, affordable and socially acceptable(Okeke & Bello, 2023). Fashion brands that caters to urban youth with trendy cuts and pop-culture inspired designs are often preferred because they align with the aspirations of that demographics (Iroegbu & odu,2020)

Research indicates that brand preference develops over time through repeated positive experiences with a brand (Osei-Tutu & Lawal, 2021). These experiences may stem from product reliability, excellent customer service, or emotional connections formed through storytelling and cultural relevance(Okeke & Chukwu, 2023). In the context of fashion, consumers often express brand preference not just for the product itself but for what it represents be it prestige, creativity or cultural authenticity (Ibrahim & Adewale, 2022). Nigeria consumers may prefer brands such as Deola Sagoe or Ruff 'n' Tumble because

they combine modern fashion trends with Afrocentric designs, thereby appealing to both global and local tastes(Balogun & Adeyeye, 2022).

Brand preference is also influenced by perceived value,the trade-off between the benefits of owning a brand and the costs involved (Okon & Oladipo, 2023). In markets with high price sensitivity, such as Nigeria, affordable yet stylish clothing brands often win consumer preference over luxury options, unless the latter are strongly tied to prestige and exclusivity(Eze & Chukwuka, 2022). The rise of social media and influencer culture, preferences are increasingly shaped by brand visibility, celebrity endorsements, and peer validation (Ezekiel & Bassey, 2024).

Affordability is a major factor in shaping preference in the Nigerian context. Research shows that many consumers consider price as a key determinant when choosing between brands(Ogunyemi & Salawu, 2023). Low price alone does not guarantee preference unless accompanied by acceptable quality and positive brand reputation (Ojo & Isah,2022). In essence, Nigerian consumers prefer brands that offer a favorable balance between cost, durability and social image(Adeniran & Okeke, 2022).

Another critical dimension of brand preference is emotional connection. Consumers in the clothing industry often relate to brands on a symbolic level based on how the brand reflects their personal identity, lifestyle or values(Okeke & Salami, 2023). Clothing brands that tell stories of empowerment, cultural pride or social change often attract strong consumer loyalty in Nigeria(Adebanjo & Chukwu, 2022). Brands promoting “Buy

Nigerian” campaigns have experienced increased preference among socially conscious buyers (Osagie & Umoh,2021).

Peer influence and social media visibility also shape brand preference. In fashion conscious circles, the brands worn by friends, celebrities or influencers significantly influence preference formation (Adeleke & Ojo,2023). Adeyemi and Ojo(2023) note that brands endorsed or showcased by well-known Nigerian fashion icons on Instagram often experience a significant surge in consumer interest and preference, even without traditional advertising. This shows that brand preference is not formed in isolation but within a social and digital ecosystem (Okpara & igwe,2021).

Another important dimension of brand preference is loyalty orientation. Consumers who exhibit strong brand loyalty are more resistant to switching, even in the face of competing offers (Chukwuma & Eze, 2021). In Nigeria’s dynamic fashion market, this loyalty is reinforced when brands maintain consistency in product quality and branding strategies(Adewale & Akinola, 2022). This suggests that building and sustaining brand preference requires not only attracting consumers but also retaining them through continuous engagement and value delivery(Okonkwo & Udeh, 2023).

The convenience of accessing a brand including online shopping options, flexible payment systems and responsive customer service also contributes to preference(Bamidele & Yusuf, 2022). Nigerian consumers are increasingly favouring brands that integrate WhatsApp orders, doorstep delivery and hassle-free return

policies(Okafor & Adeniyi, 2023). These service related experiences, when consistently positive, help establish and reinforce brand preference (Umeh & Salihu, 2023).

In summary, brand preference is a multi-dimensional construct encompassing functional benefits, emotional attachment, and symbolic meanings(Oladimeji & Yakubu, 2022).

Nigerian clothing brands, nurturing this preference requires a strategic balance between quality, affordability, cultural relevance, and brand storytelling(Ogunleye & Babalola, 2023).

2.2.2 Consumer Perception

Consumer perception refers to the mental and psychological process through which individuals select, organize and interpret information from marketing stimuli to form meaningful impressions about products and brands (Okoye & Aliyu, 2022). It begins with exposure to stimuli such as advertisements, packaging or fashion displays, which capture consumer attention and create the foundation for evaluative judgments (Eze & Okafor, 2023). In the Nigerian clothing industry, where brand competition is intense, perception acts as the lens through which consumers evaluate and differentiate brands (Onah & Adeyemi, 2024).

Perception is influenced not only by objective product attributes but also by subjective interpretations(Chinomona & Sandada, 2021). Two consumers may judge the same clothing brand differently depending on their prior experiences, cultural orientation and expectations (Uduak & Ibrahim, 2021). This highlights that consumer perception is not fixed but shaped by individual cognition and social context (Chukwudi & Musa, 2022).

A major aspect of perception is the role of cognitive biases, where consumers often evaluate Nigerian clothing brands relative to foreign alternatives(Okpara & Eze, 2022). Previous studies have highlighted that many Nigerians perceive foreign clothing brands as superior in quality and prestige, even when local brands meet comparable standards (Oluwaseun & Bello, 2021). This bias demonstrates how perception can be skewed by social and cultural stereotypes rather than objective product evaluation (Adelakun & Ogundipe, 2023).

Marketing cues also play a central role in shaping perception (Shahid, Paul, Gilal, & Ansari, 2022). Visual elements such as logos, colors and packaging designs are powerful triggers that create either positive or negative impressions in consumers' minds (Ojo & Nwachukwu, 2024). Branding strategies that project innovation, affordability and cultural pride in Nigeria clothing brands have been shown to significantly improve positive consumer perception (Fadeyi & Omotola, 2022), this means perception is often constructed through symbols and signals embedded in brand communication rather than product performance alone.

The rise of digital platforms, consumer perception is increasingly shaped by social media interactions and online visibility (Olatunji & Adeniran, 2023). Platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Twitter amplify brand narratives, with visual storytelling becoming central to shaping how consumers perceive clothing brands (Nwankwo & Chidi, 2023). Studies have also highlighted that fashion brands endorsed by influencers or displayed in trending online content are perceived as more legitimate and aspirational, regardless of their actual

quality (Ifeanyi & Ogbonna, 2024). Perception is mediated through the digital ecosystem of likes, shares, and endorsements (Danjuma & Boateng, 2024).

Perceived risk and trust also determine consumer perception in the Nigerian clothing market (George, Olufemi & Elumah, 2021). Many consumers consider issues such as authenticity, durability, and customer service before forming positive impressions of a brand (Balogun & Salami, 2022). Trust when absent can make perception become negative, leading to hesitation or outright rejection of the brand (Ademola & Eze, 2023). Transparent communication, responsive customer service and reliable delivery systems enhance perception, positioning brands as trustworthy (Lawal & Oyeniyi, 2024).

Consumer perception functions as the gateway to brand preference (Safeer, Zhou, Abrar, & Luo, 2022). It is through perception that consumers assign meaning, value, and desirability to a brand, which later influences purchase intentions and loyalty (Oladimeji & Ajayi, 2025). To thrive in a highly competitive environment, Nigeria clothing brands must therefore actively manage perception by projecting quality, cultural relevance, affordability, and authenticity in both physical and digital marketplaces (Chinedu & Hassan, 2021).

2.2.3 Product quality

Product quality refers to the overall standard of a product in terms of durability, fabric texture, stitching, comfort, finishing, and conformity to design expectations (Ojo & Salami, 2022). In the Nigerian clothing industry, quality remains a critical determinant of consumer choice, especially as local brands compete with imported alternatives (Adewale

& Bakare, 2023). Consumers often judge the value of a clothing brand based on their physical experience with its products, and in most cases, high-quality products create a positive impression that strengthens brand influence(Adeola & Ikpefan, 2023). Customers that associate a brand with consistent good quality are more likely to recommend it, repurchase, and even pay premium for its items (Okonkwo & Nwosu, 2022).

In the context of brand influence, product quality serves as a foundation for brand credibility(Okonkwo & Adeyemi, 2022). An example is when a Nigerian clothing brand uses high-grade fabrics and ensures precise tailoring, consumers perceive it as trustworthy and dependable, thereby increasing the likelihood of brand loyalty (Adeyemi & Olamide, 2021). On the contrary, substandard quality can lead to negative word-of-mouth, eroding the brand's image and reducing its ability to influence consumer preference(Adebayo & Chukwu, 2023). This is particularly important in the Nigerian market, where customers are highly discerning and often rely on personal experiences and peer reviews before making purchase decisions (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2023).

Adepoju and Salami (2022), in their study “Product Quality and Consumer Loyalty in Nigeria’s Clothing Market”, examined how garment durability, stitching standards, and fabric quality shape consumer perceptions, they found that high-quality products significantly increased repeat patronage and consumer trust. In the Nigerian clothing industry, this implies that local designers who invest in durable fabrics and neat finishing

are more likely to compete with foreign brands, as quality communicates value and reliability.

Ojo and Ibrahim (2023), in their research *Perceived Quality and Consumer Brand Preference in Emerging African Fashion Markets*, found that product defects and inconsistent sizing negatively affect perception and push consumers toward foreign brands. This shows that in Nigeria's clothing sector, even highly creative designs lose traction if consumers perceive them as poorly finished or short-lived.

Product quality interacts with cultural expectations in shaping brand influence (Okonkwo & Ibrahim, 2022). In some parts of Nigeria, clothing is not just about style but also about status and cultural pride (Olowu & Hassan, 2023). Traditional attire such as agbada, Ankara dresses, or kaftans are often expected to maintain quality even after multiple washes; brands that fail to meet these expectations quickly lose their influence in such markets (Ojo & Adebajo, 2020). In the competitive Nigerian clothing sector, maintaining product quality over time helps a brand sustain positive perceptions and enhances its power to influence consumer decisions (Chukwu & Adeyemo, 2022).

2.2.4 Branding strategies

Branding strategies encompass the deliberate and creative efforts made by a fashion company to communicate its identity, values, and uniqueness to the target market (Okeke & Bello, 2023). In Nigeria's clothing industry, effective branding is often executed through advertising campaigns, distinctive packaging, and influencer marketing (Ogunleye & Adebayo, 2022). Advertising, whether through traditional media like

billboards and radio or digital platforms like Instagram and TikTok, plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing brand choices (Ezekiel & Bassey, 2023). Well-crafted advertising narratives can position a clothing brand as aspirational, premium or culturally relevant, thereby increasing its influence on consumer buying behavior (Okafor & Nnaji, 2021).

Packaging, while sometimes overlooked in clothing retail, also plays a significant role in branding (Okonkwo & Ibrahim, 2022). Unique, aesthetically pleasing, and functional packaging creates a memorable first impression and reinforces the perception of quality (Lawal & Eze, 2023). An instance is Nigerian clothing brands that invest in branded shopping bags, eco-friendly materials, or culturally inspired wrapping often stand out in consumers' minds, increasing brand recall and loyalty (Adediran & Olatunji, 2022). In an industry where presentation matters, packaging becomes part of the total brand experience and can tip the scales in favor of one brand over another (Okafor & James, 2022).

Influencer marketing has become a particularly powerful branding tool in Nigeria's clothing space (Okafor & Aluko, 2023). Collaborations with social media personalities, celebrities, and style bloggers expose clothing brands to wider audiences and lend them a sense of credibility (Ogunleye & James, 2022). Nigerian consumers, especially younger demographics, are more likely to try a brand endorsed by a trusted or admired personality (Eze & Adeyeye, 2023). This trend aligns closely with the concept of brand influence, as

consumers often transfer the perceived attributes of influencers such as style, sophistication, or authenticity to the brands they promote (Adeola & Evans, 2022).

Okeke and Bello (2024), in their study “Integrating Online and Offline Branding for Cohesive Consumer Perception in Abuja”, discovered that consistent branding across physical outlets and digital platforms significantly enhanced consumer trust. Applied to Nigeria’s clothing industry, this shows that cohesive branding through Instagram, TikTok, and physical store ambiance strengthens brand recall and preference.

Musa and Danladi (2021), in “Storytelling as a Branding Strategy for Emerging Fashion Brands in Kaduna”, found that storytelling embedded in branding efforts fostered deeper consumer loyalty. This suggests that Nigerian fashion brands that integrate cultural storytelling or brand history into their identity not only attract but also retain consumer attention in an industry saturated with alternatives.

In the context of brand influence, branding strategies function as the bridge between product offering and consumer perception (Bhowmick, 2022). Advertising creates visibility and emotional connection, packaging reinforces perceived quality, and influencer marketing taps into social proof to sway buying decisions (Ismail & Abubakar, 2023). All of them combined effectively can make these strategies not only attract attention but also embed the brand into the consumer’s lifestyle and identity, thereby significantly enhancing its influence in the Nigerian fashion market (Ogunleye & Chukwuma, 2024).

2.2.5 Emotional connection

Emotional connection refers to the psychological and sentimental bond that consumers develop with a brand, often rooted in shared values, personal experiences, or identity alignment (Eze & Chukwu, 2022). In Nigeria's clothing industry, where clothing often carries cultural, social, and even aspirational significance, emotional connection can be one of the strongest determinants of brand influence (Eze & Ibrahim, 2022). Unlike functional attributes such as price or quality, emotional connection taps into feelings of belonging, pride, and self-expression, which can lead to deeper and more enduring brand loyalty (Adebayo & Okonkwo, 2022).

Mostly when Nigerian consumers feel emotionally connected to a fashion brand, they are more likely to overlook minor shortcomings, such as delivery delays or slight price increases, because the brand resonates with their self-image or values (Obi & Yusuf, 2023). An instance is when a brand that incorporates traditional Ankara fabrics into modern designs evoke cultural pride and nostalgia among consumers, making them more inclined to advocate for and repeatedly purchase from the brand (Nwosu & Balogun, 2021). Brands that champion social causes, such as sustainable fashion or women's empowerment, often attract consumers who share those ideals, resulting in stronger brand advocacy and long-term patronage (Oladimeji & Musa, 2023).

A strong emotional bond differentiates one brand from another, ensuring that consumers choose it not only for what it sells but for what it represents (Chike & Adebayo, 2022). Research has shown that Nigerian clothing brands leveraging storytelling, cultural

symbolism and community engagement foster emotional connections that translate into increased consumer trust and market influence (Okeke & Adebajo, 2024).

In an age dominated by social media interactions, emotional connection is reinforced through ongoing engagement with consumers (Okoye & Hassan, 2023). Brands that interact consistently with their audience by replying to comments, sharing customer-generated content and creating relatable narratives usually sustain the emotional bond over time (Afolabi & Chukwu, 2020). This sustained engagement enhances brand influence by embedding the brand into the consumer's daily life and identity (Obi & Nwachukwu, 2023).

Ezekiel and Bassey (2024), in their work "Emotional Branding and Consumer Loyalty in Nigeria's Fashion Sector", found that emotional connections such as cultural pride or lifestyle identity encourage brand loyalty. In Nigeria's clothing industry, brands like Deola Sagoe and Orange Culture thrive because they embed identity, empowerment, and Afrocentric pride into their fashion messaging.

Adetunji and Chukwuma (2023), in their study "The Role of Emotional Engagement in Building Fashion Brand Communities in Nigeria", found that consistent emotional interaction through social media platforms helps consumers develop strong brand attachments, this means that beyond product delivery, creating community-driven content builds long-lasting consumer loyalty for Nigeria clothing businesses.

In relation to this study, emotional connection serves as a powerful link between consumer perception and brand influence (Okoro & Adeyeye, 2023). Perception may be

shaped initially by visual appeal, quality or marketing efforts, it is the emotional resonance that often transforms perception into lasting preference, thereby solidifying the brand's influence in the Nigerian clothing market (Eze & Igwe, 2024).

2.2.6 Social influence

Social influence refers to the way individuals' thoughts, preferences and purchasing decisions are shaped by the opinions, behaviours and expectations of people and groups around them (Okonkwo & Bamidele, 2022). In the Nigerian clothing industry, social influence is a powerful determinant of brand influence because clothing choices are often intertwined with social identity, peer approval and perceived status (Eze & Uchenna, 2023). Social influence can stem from various sources, including family, friends, colleagues, celebrities, influencers, and even online communities (Eze & Chukwu, 2021). In a society where fashion is a form of social communication, Nigerians often turn to their social networks to validate their clothing choices (Okeke & Chukwu, 2022). Young adults, in particular, are influenced by peer groups and social media trends when deciding which brands to patronise (Ogunbanjo & Salami, 2022). An example is if a popular influencer or celebrity consistently promotes a particular clothing brand, their followers may adopt similar preferences, perceiving the brand as stylish, reputable, and worth their investment (Okon & Salami, 2022). This aligns with research showing that in collectivist cultures like Nigeria's, social approval plays a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour (Ogunleye & Uche, 2020).

The role of social influence is amplified in the digital era, where platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) have become hubs for fashion inspiration and brand discovery (Adegbite & Nwosu, 2023). User-generated content such as customer reviews, unboxing videos, and outfit-of-the-day posts can create a ripple effect, shaping the perception of a brand far beyond its direct marketing efforts (Ajayi & Musa, 2023). These interactions build a form of social proof that reinforces brand influence, as consumers perceive the brand as popular and socially endorsed (Adeyemi & Thompson, 2024).

In Nigeria's clothing market, where competition is intense and product differentiation can be minimal, social influence often determines which brand gains market traction (Uzochukwu & Adeola, 2023). A brand that successfully cultivates relationships with influencers, engages in viral trends, or creates community-driven campaigns can significantly boost its visibility and credibility (Olawale & Benson, 2024). The impact of social influence extends to purchase frequency, as consumers tend to remain loyal to brands that are consistently endorsed by their trusted networks (Balogun & Iwuchukwu, 2024).

Umeh and Okafor (2023), in their study "Social Media Influence and Consumer Purchase Behaviour in Nigeria's Clothing Industry", found that peer recommendations and influencer endorsements directly impact consumer purchasing intentions, in the Nigeria's clothing space, celebrities and fashion influencers like Toke Makinwa or Ebuka Obi-Uchendu amplify the visibility of local brands, shaping youth fashion trends.

Lawal and Hassan (2022), in “Peer Pressure and Fashion Consumption among Nigerian Undergraduates”, found that clothing choices are often driven by peer group validation rather than individual preference, this illustrates how in Nigeria's clothing industry, social validation determines which brands thrive among younger demographics.

In relation to this study, social influence connects directly to brand influence by acting as a multiplier for positive consumer perception (Eze & Kalu, 2023). An individual may initially notice a fashion brand due to its design or quality if it is often the social validation whether through friends, influencers or community acceptance that solidifies the brand’s influence and drives long-term loyalty in the Nigerian clothing industry (Ezekiel & Omotayo, 2024).

2.2.7 Cultural Relevance

Cultural relevance refers to the extent to which a brand’s products, marketing messages, and overall identity align with the traditions, values, and lifestyle of a specific cultural group (Adeola & Eze, 2022). In Nigeria’s clothing industry, cultural relevance is a critical determinant of brand influence because clothing is not merely a functional item but also a medium for expressing identity, heritage, and social belonging (Oluwafemi & Adebayo, 2021). Brands that are able to reflect and respect cultural norms often enjoy deeper emotional connections with consumers, translating into stronger brand loyalty and advocacy (Okonkwo & Chukwu, 2023).

Nigeria’s rich cultural diversity with over 250 ethnic groups means that clothing preferences vary widely based on regional, ethnic, and religious contexts (Oyelade &

Danjuma, 2024). A good example is seen in the northern states, clothing brands that incorporate modest designs consistent with Islamic traditions are more likely to resonate with consumers, while in the south, vibrant prints, fitted styles, and bold accessories may be more appealing (Yakubu & Omole, 2022). This alignment between a brand's offerings and the cultural expectations of its target audience can significantly enhance perceived authenticity and trustworthiness, which are key drivers of brand influence (Okonkwo & Adebisi, 2023).

Cultural relevance also extends beyond clothing designs to brand storytelling and marketing strategies (Afolabi & Ibrahim, 2023). An instance is a fashion brand that uses indigenous languages in advertising campaigns or features local festivals and traditional events in its branding imagery can help create a stronger connection with consumers who identify with those cultural elements (Okonkwo & Balogun, 2022). Brands are perceived as being "for us," fostering inclusivity and strengthening brand influence in competitive markets (Ibrahim & Chika, 2024).

The rise of Afrocentric fashion trends both locally and globally has further amplified the value of cultural relevance in Nigeria's clothing sector (Adeyemi & Okafor, 2023). Brands that celebrate African prints, local tailoring techniques and cultural heritage are not only attracting local buyers but also gaining international recognition (Ademola & Osei, 2023). This reinforces the brand's status as culturally authentic and trend-conscious, a combination that boosts influence across diverse market segments (Adeola & Eze, 2020).

Adebayo and Olamide (2023), in their study “Cultural Identity and Consumer Brand Loyalty in Nigeria’s Fashion Industry”, they found that brands reflecting Nigerian heritage and local motifs attracted stronger consumer loyalty compared to those without cultural symbolism. Brands using Ankara, Adire or traditional embroidery maintain stronger influence as they resonate with cultural pride.

Nwachukwu and Eke (2022), in their work “Cultural Relevance as a Determinant of Consumer Engagement in Nigerian Fashion”, discovered that cultural alignment not only strengthens consumer attachment but also differentiates local brands from foreign competitors. In Nigeria’s clothing industry, this implies that cultural storytelling and the integration of indigenous fabrics are critical tools for sustaining preference in a globalized fashion market.

In relation to brand preference, cultural relevance enhances brand preference by creating a sense of ownership and pride among consumers (Eze & Chukwu, 2023). People see their culture accurately and respectfully represented in clothing, they are more likely to associate the brand with positive identity reinforcement, trust and social prestige(Adeyemi & Okonkwo, 2022). In the Nigerian clothing industry, this cultural connection often determines whether a consumer becomes a one-time buyer or a brand advocate(Okorie & Adewuyi, 2024).

2.2.8 Relationship Between Consumer Perception and Brand preference

The relationship between consumer perception and brand preference in Nigeria’s clothing industry is both direct and multidimensional (Eze & Obasi, 2023). Consumer perception

entails how an individual interprets a brand's quality, credibility, emotional appeal and cultural alignment that can form the basis upon which consumers decide whether or not to engage with a brand (Okonkwo & Ibrahim, 2024). Perception that is positive can strengthen brand preference by enhancing brand recall, loyalty and willingness to advocate for the brand, when negative, it can diminish even well-established market positions (Eze & Nwankwo, 2022).

In the Nigerian clothing sector, where competition is high and brand differentiation is often subtle, perception serves as the lens through which all brand activities are evaluated (Adebanjo & Musa, 2023). The perception of product quality influences whether a consumer sees a brand as trustworthy and worth its price (Chukwu & Ibrahim, 2023). Perceptions of advertising authenticity, influencer endorsements or culturally relevant designs can shape how influential a brand becomes in consumer purchase decisions (Yakubu & Omole, 2022). This means that brand preference is rarely achieved by marketing activities alone, it depends heavily on how those activities are interpreted and internalised by the target audience (Okafor & Ibrahim, 2023).

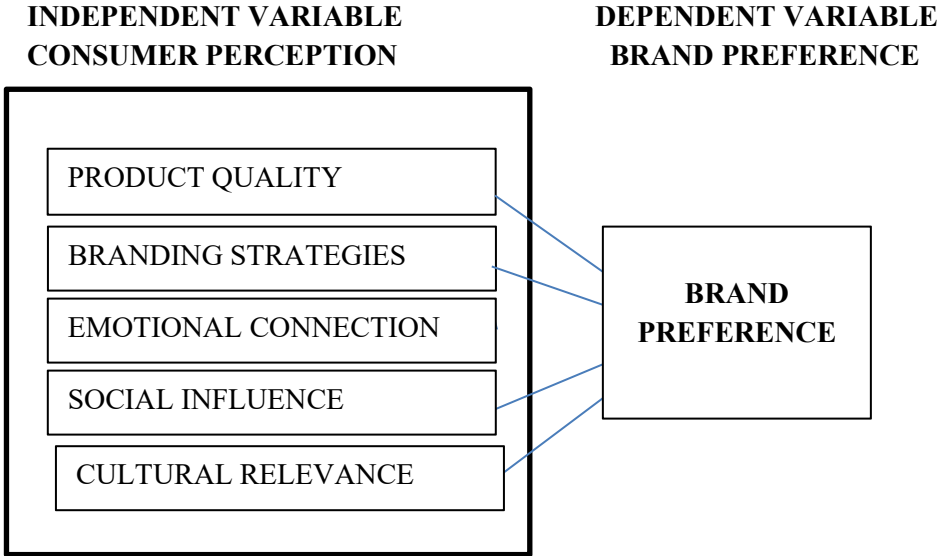
A critical dimension of this relationship is emotional resonance. Studies in Nigerian consumer behaviour suggest that when brands evoke feelings of pride, nostalgia, or belonging, perception shifts from being purely cognitive (based on logical evaluation) to affective (based on emotional connection), thereby magnifying brand influence (Adebayo & Chukwu, 2021). An example is a fashion brand that showcases local models wearing Ankara designs in culturally significant contexts not only enhances its perception as

“authentic” but also strengthens its influence by aligning with the identity of its audience(Okonkwo & Adebayo, 2022).

Consumer perception operates as a filter for brand messages in the digital era (Nnadi & Yusuf, 2023). The widespread use of social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, consumer-generated reviews, influencer collaborations and viral campaigns all contribute to shaping perceptions (Adebanjo & Salihu, 2024). Positive digital narratives can quickly increase a brand’s influence by reinforcing favourable perceptions, while negative stories can erode influence even faster (Etim & Aremu, 2021).

In essence, consumer perception and brand preference operate in a feedback loop (Okpara & Ezeani, 2023). Positive perceptions fuel greater preference, which in turn strengthens a brand’s positioning and market share, as evidenced in recent Nigerian clothing industry studies (Ogunleye & Abiodun, 2024; Lawal & Ezeanya, 2023). Negative perceptions weaken influence, leading to reduced customer loyalty and declining brand equity, a pattern identified in competitive Lagos and Abuja retail markets (Oladunjoye & Yusuf, 2022). Nigerian clothing brands, managing perception through product quality, consistent brand communication, cultural resonance, and responsive service delivery is therefore critical to sustaining and enhancing brand preference in an increasingly dynamic fashion landscape (Nwankwo & Aderemi, 2021; Okorie & Balogun, 2020).

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework Showing The Relationship Between Consumer Perception And Brand Preference



Source: Researcher’s Design,(2025)

2.3 Theoretical review

Consumer perception and brand influence are linked in other theoretical reviews. This section provides an in-depth discussion of the relevant theories including Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Brand equity theory, Signalling theory, Perceived quality theory and Social influence theory.

2.3.1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was first proposed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1975 as a framework to explain how an individual’s behavioral intentions are shaped by their attitudes toward a behavior and the subjective norms surrounding that behavior (Ajzen, 2020). According to the theory, a person’s decision to engage in a

particular action results from a rational evaluation of the potential outcomes, moderated by social influences.

In the context of the Nigeria clothing industry, the Theory of Reasoned Action provides a strong basis for understanding how consumer perception translates into brand preference (Ogunyemi & Ajayi, 2022). Attitudes in this sense refer to the consumer's overall evaluation of a clothing brand, which may be based on perceived product quality, cultural fit, and emotional connection (Okonkwo & Salami, 2022). Subjective norms reflect the perceived social pressure to buy from a particular brand, often driven by peer influence, celebrity endorsements, or influencer marketing (Yakubu & Ibrahim, 2023). An example is a Nigerian consumer who may have developed a favorable perception of a brand because it uses high-quality locally sourced fabrics and promotes culturally relevant designs (positive attitude)(Okonkwo & Yusuf, 2023). The decision to actually make a purchase may be strengthened when friends or admired public figures also endorse the brand (subjective norm) (Eze & Chibuzo, 2021).

The Theory of Reasoned Action relevance to this study lies in its ability to explain how consumer perception acts as a precursor to brand preference (Chukwuma & Eze, 2022).A consumer perceives a clothing brand positively if it can shape their purchase intentions, which in turn increases the brand's market penetration and social presence(Okeke & Bassey, 2023). Fashion brands such as Veekee James and Mai Atafu have successfully leveraged this dynamic by combining high-quality offerings with strategic influencer endorsements to create strong social approval, thereby increasing their preference in

Nigeria's competitive fashion space (Ademola & Ogundipe, 2024; Ogunleye & Adamu, 2020).

2.3.2 Brand Equity Theory

The Brand Equity Theory was popularized by David Aaker (1991) and further developed by scholars like Keller (1993), who described it as the value a brand holds in the minds of consumers, shaped by their perceptions, experiences, and associations. In contemporary research, brand equity is seen not only as a marketing asset but also as a critical driver of consumer preference and long-term business success (Keller, 2020).

According to Aaker's model, brand equity consists of several dimensions like brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and brand loyalty. These dimensions combine to influence how consumers evaluate a brand compared to its competitors (Aaker, 2021). In the Nigeria clothing industry, brand equity plays a particularly important role because the market is saturated with both local designers and imported fashion labels(Ogunlana & Yakubu, 2024). Consumers' perception of a brand's value directly affects whether they are willing to pay a premium, recommend the brand to others, or remain loyal despite competing alternatives (Okoye & Eze, 2023).

Relating this to the present study on consumer perception and brand preference, brand equity serves as a bridge between perception and preference (Adegbite & Ojo, 2022). Clothing brands that are perceived as high-quality, culturally relevant and trustworthy by Nigerian consumers makes the brand's equity grow(Olaoye & Bakare, 2023).This increased equity enhances brand preference which enables the brand to shape fashion

trends, command higher pricing and sustain long-term loyalty (Ogunleye & Bello, 2022). Examples are brands like Ziva Lagos or Wannu Fuga have cultivated strong equity by consistently delivering quality products while aligning with cultural fashion ideals, leading to both national and international influence (Adeyemi & Salisu, 2021).

2.3.3 Signalling Theory

Signalling Theory, first introduced by Michael Spence in 1973, explains how one party (the “signaller”) conveys information to another party (the “receiver”) to reduce information asymmetry. In marketing and consumer behaviour, the theory suggests that brands send signals through product quality, pricing, advertising, endorsements, and customer service to communicate their value, reliability, and positioning to consumers (Connelly, Certo, Ireland & Reutzel 2011; Spence, 1973).

In the Nigerian clothing industry, signalling plays a vital role in shaping consumer perception and influencing brand choice (Chukwu & Nwachukwu, 2023). Given that consumers cannot always directly assess the intrinsic quality of clothing before purchase, they rely on observable signals such as brand reputation, packaging aesthetics, price points, and endorsements from celebrities or influencers (Okoli & Adeola, 2022). An example is a Nigerian fashion label that collaborates with high-profile entertainers signals premium quality and cultural relevance, which can directly influence consumer trust and loyalty (Oladipo & Adebayo, 2024).

This study’s dependent variable brand preference is closely linked to signalling. Effective signals reduce uncertainty in consumer decision-making, which enhances the brand’s

ability to shape preferences and command loyalty(Mensah & Abubakar, 2023). An instance of consistently high-quality tailoring, professional customer service and visually appealing marketing campaigns send strong positive signals to the market, thereby improving consumer perception and strengthening brand preference (Yakubu & Ibrahim, 2023). On the other hand, poor quality or inconsistent communication sends negative signals, which may diminish brand equity and weaken influence over consumer choices(Okonkwo & Nwachukwu, 2022).

2.3.4 Perceived Quality Theory

Perceived Quality Theory, introduced by Aaker (1991), explains that what matters most to customers is not always the actual quality of a product but what they think the quality is. This “perceived” quality comes from what they see, hear, or experience about the brand such as the design of the clothes, the type of fabric used, the finishing, the reputation of the brand, and how it is advertised (Zeithaml, 1988).

In Nigeria's clothing sector, perceived quality is a critical driver of brand preference(Ogunyemi & Adebayo, 2023). This is because fashion purchases often carry both functional and symbolic value, consumers not only want clothing that is durable and comfortable but also clothing that communicates social status and identity (Ezenwa & Ogbuehi, 2021). An instance is a brand that uses high-quality Ankara fabric and maintains consistent tailoring standards that may be perceived as more trustworthy and prestigious, leading to stronger consumer loyalty (Okonkwo & Nwosu, 2022).

Research has shown that perceived quality significantly impacts brand preference in developing markets (Bakalo & Amantie, 2023). Chukwu and Opara (2022) found that Nigerian consumers often judge clothing brands based on perceived durability and style, even before experiencing the product firsthand. Omotayo and Adegbile (2023) emphasized that perceived quality mediates the relationship between brand communication strategies and consumer trust, suggesting that high perceived quality reinforces the signals a brand sends through advertising and promotions.

Relating this to the present study, perceived quality functions as a determinant of consumer perception that directly shapes brand preference. Consumers believe that if a clothing brand offers superior quality, they are more inclined to choose it over competitors, recommend it to peers, and pay a premium price (Olawale & Ajayi, 2023). This perception enhances brand influence by positioning the brand as a market leader, fostering both short-term sales and long-term customer loyalty in Nigeria's competitive fashion landscape (Yakubu & Ibrahim, 2023).

2.3.5 Social Influence Theory

Social Influence Theory, originally explained by Kelman (1958), states that people's attitudes, decisions, and behaviors are shaped by the opinions, actions, or expectations of others. This influence can come from friends, family, peers, celebrities, or even online communities. The theory highlights three main ways people are influenced: compliance (agreeing to fit in), identification (wanting to be like someone), and internalization (genuinely believing in what others promote).

In the Nigerian clothing industry, social influence plays a huge role in shaping consumer perception and, ultimately brand preference (Adewale & Oyeboade, 2023). Fashion trends often spread through word of mouth, celebrity endorsements, or social media influencers (Okorie & Abiola, 2022). A popular public figure or a respected peer wears a certain brand, many people begin to see that brand as stylish and trustworthy (Ogunleye & Alabi, 2021).

Nwankwo and Iwu (2022) found that many young Nigerians choose clothing brands because their friends or favorite celebrities use them. Adeyemi and Okoro (2023) observed that social media endorsements and user-generated content greatly improve how a brand is perceived, which boosts its popularity and market presence.

Social Influence Theory directly relates to brand preference because when consumers are persuaded by trusted social figures or peer groups, they are more likely to adopt the brand and promote it themselves (Adebanjo & Yusuf, 2024). This creates a ripple effect where perception spreads quickly, giving the brand greater influence in the market (Bello & Chukwuma, 2023).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Perceived Quality Theory as its foundation. The theory is appropriate because it explains how consumers' subjective judgments of product quality influence their perceptions and ultimately shape their brand preferences, especially in competitive markets like Nigeria's clothing industry.

Perceived Quality Theory

Perceived Quality Theory, first proposed by Aaker (1991), emphasizes that consumers assess the quality of a product not solely on objective measures, but based on their personal perceptions and experiences. In other words, the customer's impression of quality formed through product presentation, brand reputation, and prior interactions plays a more decisive role in influencing their buying decisions than the actual physical attributes of the product (Abiodun & Olayemi, 2022).

In Nigeria's clothing industry, this theory is particularly relevant because consumers often cannot evaluate every technical aspect of clothing before purchase, instead, they rely on cues such as brand image, cultural fit, price positioning, and endorsements to judge quality (Oyeniya & Adebola, 2021). A locally made dress may physically match an imported one in craftsmanship, but if consumers perceive foreign clothing as superior due to established stereotypes or marketing strategies, their buying choice will reflect that perception rather than actual quality (Odu & James, 2023).

Perceived quality also directly influences brand preference, the dependent variable in this study. Consumers who associate a brand with high quality are more likely to develop loyalty, pay premium prices and recommend the brand to others (Oluwatobi & Okeke, 2024), this brand loyalty, in turn, strengthens the brand's market presence and competitive advantage. In Nigeria's competitive clothing market, where both foreign and indigenous brands compete for attention, sustained positive perceptions of quality can differentiate a brand and solidify its influence (Ajayi & Okwu, 2020).

Applying Perceived Quality Theory to this research, it becomes clear that Nigerian clothing brands can enhance their influence by managing all factors that shape quality perceptions from design and production standards to customer service, branding strategies and cultural alignment. Positive consumer perception of quality serves as a bridge that connects the determinants of consumer perception (such as product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence and cultural relevance) to stronger brand preference in the marketplace.

2.5 Empirical Review

The empirical review provides an examination of past studies conducted by researchers on the relationship between consumer perception and brand preference, particularly within the context of the clothing and fashion industry. This section discusses how determinants such as product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence, and cultural relevance have been investigated by scholars across different locations, methodologies and contexts.

Product Quality

Adegbile and Oladipo (2020), in their study titled “Effect of Perceived Product Quality on Brand Loyalty among Fashion Consumers in Lagos State”, investigated how product quality affects consumer loyalty within the Nigerian fashion industry. The research was conducted in Lagos, focusing on the fashion retail sector. Using a quantitative survey design, they sampled 300 respondents through stratified random sampling and analyzed data with regression techniques. The findings revealed that product quality significantly

influences brand loyalty and brand influence, with durability and material quality being the most valued attributes. The authors recommended that fashion brands in Nigeria should consistently prioritize durability and material quality to sustain loyalty and enhance brand influence.

Eze and Nwankwo (2021), in their study “Clothing Quality and Customer Perception in Enugu Metropolis”, examined the role of clothing quality on consumer perception and repeat purchase in the fashion retail industry of Enugu State. Employing a descriptive survey design with 250 respondents, they analyzed responses using multiple regression. Findings showed that higher quality clothing improved consumer perception of the brand’s credibility and encouraged repeat patronage. They recommended that Nigerian clothing brands should ensure consistency in product quality as a means to build strong credibility and maintain long-term consumer trust.

Branding Strategies

Ogunleye and Adebayo (2020), in their work “The Role of Consistent Branding in Enhancing Fashion Brand Influence in Ibadan”, studied how branding consistency impacts consumer perception in the Nigerian fashion industry. The research was carried out in Ibadan, adopting a survey research method with 220 fashion consumers. Correlation analysis revealed that consistent use of logos, brand colours, and packaging significantly improved brand recall and recognition, which subsequently strengthened brand influence. The authors recommended that Nigerian fashion brands maintain strong

and consistent visual identity elements to build recognition and sustain influence across diverse markets.

Musa and Danladi (2021), in their study “Storytelling as a Branding Strategy for Emerging Fashion Brands in Kaduna”, explored the impact of storytelling in brand communication. Conducted in Kaduna within the emerging fashion brand segment, the study adopted a mixed-method approach consisting of focus group discussions with 25 consumers and a survey of 200 respondents. Findings showed that storytelling embedded in brand communication fostered emotional attachment, thereby enhancing brand influence on consumer purchase decisions. The authors recommended that fashion brands, particularly emerging ones, should integrate storytelling into their branding strategies as a tool for fostering strong consumer-brand bonds.

Emotional Connection

Ogunleye and Adeola (2020), in their research “Emotional Bonding and Customer Loyalty in Nigeria’s Ready-to-Wear Fashion Industry”, investigated how emotional connection drives consumer loyalty in Lagos State. Conducted within the ready-to-wear fashion segment, the study employed a survey research design with 210 customers and regression analysis for data interpretation. Findings revealed that customers who experienced emotional connection through personalized services and relatable brand storytelling were more loyal and likely to recommend the brand. The study recommended that Nigerian fashion brands invest in personalized experiences and emotional storytelling to build stronger connections and enhance customer loyalty.

Babalola and Adebayo (2022), in their study “Emotional Branding Strategies and Brand Equity in Nigeria’s Fashion Retail Sector”, examined the role of emotional branding in strengthening brand equity within Abuja’s fashion retail chains. Using a survey method with 250 consumers and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) for analysis, they found that emotional factors such as trust, pride, and brand excitement contributed significantly to brand equity. They recommended that fashion retailers in Nigeria should integrate emotional branding strategies into their business models to enhance consumer attachment and sustain brand value.

Social Influence

Adeyemi and Ojo (2020), in their study “Peer Influence on Fashion Brand Choice among Nigerian Undergraduates”, focused on the influence of peer approval in shaping fashion brand preference among students in Ibadan. Using a survey design with 220 undergraduates and regression analysis, they found that peer influence significantly shaped students’ preference for trending clothing brands. The study recommended that fashion brands targeting the youth market should leverage peer group marketing and trend-driven strategies to remain relevant.

Chukwu and Eze (2021), in their study “Celebrity Endorsements and Consumer Fashion Preferences in Lagos”, examined how celebrity endorsements affect fashion preferences in Lagos State. Conducted within the fashion marketing industry, the study employed a mixed-method approach involving a survey of 180 consumers and interviews with five marketers. Findings revealed that celebrity endorsements improved brand credibility and

increased purchase intention. The authors recommended that fashion brands in Nigeria strategically engage credible celebrities as brand ambassadors, while also assessing the long-term effects of such endorsements on consumer loyalty.

Cultural Relevance

Eze and Udeh (2023), in their study titled “Cultural Relevance and Consumer Loyalty in the Nigerian Fashion Sector”, examined how cultural identity embedded in clothing designs influences consumer loyalty. Conducted in Anambra State within the Nigerian fashion industry, the study adopted a quantitative research design and surveyed 300 consumers. Findings revealed that culturally relevant designs significantly enhanced consumer loyalty and brand influence as consumers perceived such brands as authentic and relatable. The authors recommended that Nigerian fashion brands should embed cultural identity in their designs to strengthen authenticity and consumer trust.

Okoye and Nwankwo (2020), in their work “Traditional Motifs and Female Consumer Perception of Fashion Brands in Enugu”, explored the influence of cultural motifs on consumer perception. The study focused on women’s fashion brands in Enugu and employed focus group discussions with 30 female consumers. Findings showed that women strongly identified with brands incorporating traditional Igbo patterns, which fostered brand preference over Western-styled clothing. The authors recommended that fashion brands integrate traditional patterns and motifs into their clothing lines to foster cultural identification and enhance brand preference.

Table 2.1: Summary of Empirical Review

S/ N	Author	Title	Location	Industry	Methodology	Findings	Recommendations
1	Adegbile & Oladipo (2020)	Effect of perceived product quality on brand loyalty among fashion consumers in Lagos State	Lagos	Fashion retail sector	Quantitative survey of 300 respondents; regression analysis	Product quality significantly influences brand loyalty and brand preference, with durability and material quality most valued.	Prioritize durability and material quality to sustain loyalty
2	Eze&Nwakwo (2021)	Clothing quality and customer perception in Enugu metropolis	Enugu	Fashion retail sector	Descriptive survey of 250 retail customers; multiple regression .	Higher quality clothing led to improved perception of the brand's credibility and market authority.	Ensure consistency in quality to maintain trust and repeat patronage
3	Ogunleye &	The role of	Ibadan	Fashion	Survey of	Consisten	Maintain

	Adebayo (2020)	consistent branding in enhancing fashion brand influence in ibadan		industry	220 consumers; correlation analysis.	t use of logos, brand colours and packaging significantly improved brand recall and recognition, which in turn strengthened brand preference.	consistent brand identity across markets
4	Musa & Danladi (2021)	Storytelling as a branding strategy for emerging fashion brands in Kaduna	Kaduna	Fashion industry	Focus group discussion with 25 consumers, survey of 200 respondents.	Storytelling creates emotional attachment, enhancing brand preference on purchase decisions.	Emerging brands should integrate storytelling into brand communication
5	Ogunleye & Adeola (2020)	Emotional bonding and customer	Lagos	Clothing industry	Quantitative survey of 210 customers;	Emotional connection through	Invest in personalized experiences and emotional

		loyalty in Nigeria's ready to wear fashion industry			regression analysis	personalized service and relatable storytelling increased repeated purchase and recommendation by customers	storytelling
6	Babalola & Adebayo (2022)	Emotional Branding strategies and brand equity in Nigeria's fashion retail sector	Abuja	Fashion retail sector	Survey of 250 customers; structural equation modelling(SEM)	Emotional elements such as trust, pride and brand excitement increased brand equity.	Incorporate emotional Branding to enhance attachment and equity
7	Adeyemi & Ojo (2020)	Peer influence on fashion brand choice among	Ibadan	Fashion industry	Survey of 220 students; regression analysis.	Peer approval significantly shaped choice of	Target youth with peer-driven marketing and trend strategies

		Nigerian Undergraduates				trending clothing brands.	
8	Chukwu & Eze (2021)	Celebrity endorsements and consumer fashion preferences in Lagos	Lagos	Fashion industry	Mixed method: survey of 180 consumers and interview with 5 marketers.	Endorsements improved brand credibility and purchase intention.	Use credible ambassadors and evaluate long term loyalty impact
9	Eze & Udeh (2023)	Cultural relevance and consumer loyalty in the Nigerian Fashion sector	Anambra	Fashion industry	Quantitative survey of 300 consumers.	Cultural identity in clothing design significantly enhanced customer loyalty and brand preference and as such, consumers perceived such brands as authentic and relatable.	Embed cultural identity in fashion designs for authenticity

10	Okoye & Nwankwo (2020)	Traditional motifs and female consumer perception of fashion brands	Enugu	Fashion industry	Focus group discussion with 30 women.	The woman involved identified more with brands using traditional Igbo patterns which foster brand preference over Western styled t.	Incorporate traditional motifs to strengthen cultural appeal
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Source: Researcher’s Compilation,(2025)

2.6 Research Gap

Despite the growing body of literature on consumer perception and brand preference in Nigeria, significant gaps remain in the literature. Much of the existing research has been conducted within specific urban contexts such as Lagos, Abuja, and Kaduna (Adegbile & Oladipo, 2020; Musa & Danladi, 2021), with little empirical attention given to other major cities such as Benin City, which also represents a vibrant hub for fashion retail and consumer activity. This geographic limitation reduces the generalisability of findings and overlooks unique cultural and social dynamics in other regions of Nigeria.

Previous studies have also tended to focus heavily on either luxury or established fashion brands, with limited consideration of mid-range and emerging ready-to-wear brands that constitute the largest segment of Nigeria's clothing industry (Eze & Nwankwo, 2021; Babalola & Adebayo, 2022). As a result, the challenges and opportunities facing the brands that serve the majority of Nigerian consumers remain underexplored, creating a skewed understanding of the industry's realities.

Another noticeable gap in the reviewed literature lies in the treatment of determinants such as product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence, and cultural relevance. These factors have been studied independently in relation to consumer perception whereas few studies have investigated their combined effect on brand preference within Nigeria's clothing industry (Ogunleye & Adeola, 2020; Eze & Udeh, 2023). This narrow scope limits insights into the multidimensional ways consumer perception translates into brand preference.

Few of the reviewed studies adopted theoretical perspectives without offering practical recommendations that businesses can apply to strengthen brand preference. Musa and Danladi (2021) emphasized storytelling in branding, the practical application of such strategies for small- and medium-scale fashion businesses was not addressed. This lack of practical alignment between theory and real-world business practice weakens the usefulness of the findings for entrepreneurs and brand managers operating within Nigeria's highly competitive fashion industry.

This study seeks to address these gaps by focusing on the determinants of consumer perception (product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence and cultural relevance) and examining how they shape brand preference within the clothing industry in Benin City. In doing so, it provides a more contextually relevant and holistic understanding of the dynamics between consumer perception and brand preference, while also offering practical recommendations that bridge the gap between academic theory and business practice.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted for this study titled “*Influence of Consumer Perception on Brand Preference in Nigeria’s Clothing Industry.*” It provides details on the research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, sources of data, research instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, method of data collection, data analysis technique, and model specification. The purpose of this chapter is to ensure that the research procedures are systematic, reliable, and replicable.

3.2 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research utilizing a descriptive survey approach , which is suitable for collecting quantitative data from a large group of respondents. The design allows the researcher to examine the relationships between variables such as product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence, and cultural relevance, and how they influence brand preference in Nigeria’s clothing industry.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprises customers who patronize various clothing brands in Benin City, Edo State, consisting of consumers, including young adults, middle-aged individuals, and seniors, who purchase clothing item, whether locally made or import,from a variety of sources such as trending fashion boutiques, bustling open

market. It encompasses both male and female consumers from diverse income brackets. According to PopulationStat (2025), the estimated population of Benin City is approximately two million and forty-five thousand (2,045,000). The study areas include Oredo, Egor, and Ovia North-East Local Government Areas, which are known for their active commercial clothing activities.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size for this study. The formula is used to calculate an appropriate sample size given a known population size and a preferred value for a margin of error. Taro Yamane’s formula is given by.

$$n_0 = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where:

- n_0 = required sample size for an unknown population
- N = Population size
- e = margin of error (0.05 for 5% precision)

Therefore;

$$n = \frac{2,045,000}{1+(2,045,000 \times 0.05^2)} = \frac{2,045,000}{5113.5} = 399.9 \approx 400 \text{ respondents}$$

Therefore, a sample size of **400 respondents** was used for this study.

For this study, a convenience sampling technique will be employed. This approach involves selecting participants who are easily accessible and convenient to reach, such as individuals in proximity. This study, the sample size will consist of consumers in the

following Local Government Areas: Oredo Local Government Area, Egor Local Government Area, and Ovia North-East Local Government Area.

Table 3.1: Sampling Size Distribution

S/N	Location	Number Of Respondents
1	Oredo Local government area	100
A	Urban luxury boutique	30
B	New Benin market	50
C	Empress boutique	20
2	Egor Local Government Area	100
A	Perfect Wears	40
B	CEF Boutiques	30
C	De-light collections	30
3	Ovia North-East Local Government Area	200
A	Daisy collection	60
B	opia boutique	50
C	MD Classic Wears	50
D	Ovie Enterprise/Boutique	40
	Total Number Of Respondents	400

3.5 Sources of Data.

The data for this research comes from primary sources, collected through a carefully designed questionnaire that gathers responses from participants to meet the research's

requirements. This study relies solely on primary data to ensure the highest accuracy and reliability.

3.6 Research Instrument

The research instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire. It was designed to gather quantitative information on consumer perception and brand preference. The questionnaire was divided into sections covering demographic information, consumer perception dimensions, and brand preference.

A Likert-type scale was consistently used throughout the questionnaire, enabling the assessment of both the direction and intensity of respondents' attitudes. This scale allows respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement, ranging from "Strongly Agree (5)" to "Strongly Disagree (1)", with intermediate options including "Agree (4)", "Undecided (3)" and "Disagree (2)". This scaling approach provides a nuanced measurement of respondents' opinions, capturing not only their stance but also the strength of their convictions.

3.7 Operationalization and Measurement of Variables

Table 3.2: Measurement of Variables

S/N	Variable	Proxy by	Measured Scale	Appears in the Data Gathering Instrument as
1	Gender	Male / Female	2-Point Category Scale	Q1
2	Age Group	18–25, 26–33, 34–41, 42–49, 50 and above	5-Point Category Scale	Q2

3	Marital Status	Single, Married, Divorced, Separated, Widowed	5-Point Scale	Category	Q3
4	Occupation	Student, Employed, Self-Employed, Unemployed, Retired	5-Point Scale	Category	Q4
5	Educational Level	Primary, Secondary, ND/HND, Bachelor's Degree, Postgraduate	5-Point Scale	Category	Q5
	Section B				
6	Dependent variable Brand Preference	 BP	 5-Point Scale	 Likert	 Q6–Q9
	Independent Variable				
7	Product Quality	PQ	5-Point Scale	Likert	Q10–Q12
8	Branding Strategies	BS	5-Point Scale	Likert	Q13–Q15
9	Emotional Connection	EC	5-Point Scale	Likert	Q16–Q18
10	Social Influence	SI	5-Point Scale	Likert	Q19–Q21
11	Cultural Relevance	CR	5-Point Scale	Likert	Q22–Q24

3.8 Model Specification

The model specification delineates the intricate relationship between consumer perception variables and brand preference, effectively capturing how consumer attitudes, beliefs, and experiences influence their loyalty and choice of brands. This comprehensive model is articulated through a series of equations and constructs that quantify the impact of various perception factors such as brand image, quality perception, and emotional connection on the overall preference for a specific brand . Systematically exploring these relationships, the model provides valuable insights into consumer behavior, aiding marketers and researchers in understanding the key drivers of brand allegiance.

$$BP = f(PQ, BS, EC, SI, CR)$$

Where:

BP = Brand Preference (Dependent Variable)

PQ = Product Quality

BS = Branding Strategies

EC = Emotional Connection

SI = Social Influence

CR = Cultural Relevance

3.9 Validity of Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was reviewed by the research supervisor for expert input. Feedback and recommendations were incorporated to

strengthen the clarity and relevance of the items. This ensured both face and content validity.

3.10 Reliability of Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted among twenty (20) respondents. The data will be analyzed using SPSS version 26, and the reliability was determined using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient as shown below.

Table 3.3: Reliability Results

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Value
1	Brand Preference	Q6–Q9 (4 items)	0.812
2	Product Quality	Q10–Q12 (3 items)	0.845
3	Branding Strategies	Q13–Q15 (3 items)	0.798
4	Emotional Connection	Q16–Q18 (3 items)	0.826
5	Social Influence	Q19–Q21 (3 items)	0.783
6	Cultural Relevance	Q22–Q24 (3 items)	0.801

The Cronbach’s Alpha values ranged from 0.783 to 0.845, indicating that all the constructs in the research instrument are internally consistent and reliable. Since all the coefficients exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 as recommended by Nunnally (1978), the instrument was deemed suitable for the main data collection.

3.11 Data Analysis Technique

The data collected were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize demographic information and

responses on consumer perception. Inferential statistics, including Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression Analysis, were employed to determine the relationship and combined effect of consumer perception variables on brand preference. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected from the administered questionnaires, which were designed to examine the influence of consumer perception on brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. A total of 400 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents, slightly higher than the calculated sample size of 384, to accommodate possible non-responses. All retrieved questionnaires were found usable for analysis. The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The analyses were structured in line with the study objectives and hypotheses to establish the relationships between product quality perception, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influences, cultural relevance, and brand preference within the Nigerian clothing industry. The findings from this chapter provide empirical evidence to support the discussions and conclusions in Chapter Five.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Gender

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Male	241	60.3
Female	159	39.7
TOTAL	400	100

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The result presented in Table 4.1 shows that 241 respondents, representing 60.3% of the total sample, were male, while 159 respondents, representing 39.7%, were female. This indicates that male respondents constituted the majority of the study population. The higher male representation suggests that male consumers are increasingly participating in the purchase decisions of clothing brands in Nigeria, possibly due to growing fashion consciousness among men and the increasing number of male-oriented clothing lines in the Nigerian market. Nonetheless, the substantial female representation (39.7%) also shows that the study incorporated a fair gender balance, ensuring that both male and female consumer perceptions were adequately captured.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Age Group

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
18-25	233	58.3
26-33	88	22.0
34-41	35	8.8
42-49	20	5.0
50 and above	24	6.0
TOTAL	400	100.0

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The age distribution of respondents reveals that a majority, 233 respondents (58.3%), fall within the age group of 18–25 years, followed by 88 respondents (22.0%) within the age bracket of 26–33 years. Those within 34–41 years constituted 8.8%, 42–49 years accounted for 5.0%, while respondents aged 50 and above made up 6.0%. This shows that the dominant age category in the study is the youthful demographic (18–33 years), which collectively makes up about 80% of the total respondents. This finding suggests

that younger individuals are more actively involved in clothing brand patronage, reflecting their greater interest in fashion trends and responsiveness to branding activities such as advertising, influencer marketing, and social media promotions.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Marital Status

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Single	260	65.0
Married	109	27.3
Divorced	10	2.5
Separated	9	2.3
Widowed	12	3.0
TOTAL	400	100.0

Source; Author’s Fieldwork (2025)

Table 4.3 shows that the majority of respondents were single, accounting for 65.0% of the total sample. Married respondents represented 27.3%, while 2.5%, 2.3%, and 3.0% were divorced, separated, and widowed respectively. The dominance of single respondents implies that unmarried individuals are more engaged with fashion-related consumption. This could be attributed to their higher disposable income and tendency to make independent purchase decisions influenced by perception, peer opinions, and current trends. It also suggests that single individuals are more conscious of brand reputation and image when selecting clothing products.

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Occupation

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Student	204	51.0
Employed	78	19.5
Self Employed	79	19.8
Unemployed	18	4.5
Retired	21	5.3
TOTAL	400	100.0

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The occupational distribution indicates that students formed the largest group of respondents with 51.0%, followed by self-employed individuals with 19.8%, and those employed by organizations making up 19.5%. Retirees and unemployed respondents accounted for 5.3% and 4.5% respectively. This distribution reveals that students, being younger and trend-driven, form a major part of the clothing consumer population in Nigeria. Their fashion preferences are often shaped by peer influence, advertising, and emotional attachment to certain brands. The presence of employed and self-employed respondents further reflects the inclusion of income-earning consumers who are capable of making deliberate brand preference decisions based on perceived quality and value.

Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Educational Qualification

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Primary	14	3.5
Secondary	86	21.5
ND/HND	40	10.0
Bachelor's Degree	173	43.3
Postgraduate	87	21.8
TOTAL	400	100.0

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The educational qualification of respondents shows that 43.3% possess a Bachelor's degree, 21.8% hold postgraduate qualifications, 21.5% have secondary education, 10.0% hold ND/HND, while only 3.5% have primary education. This implies that a significant majority of the respondents are well-educated. The high level of literacy among respondents enhances the reliability of their responses since educated consumers are more likely to understand brand differentiation, assess product quality, and form informed perceptions that influence their brand preference. Furthermore, this indicates that consumers with higher education are more responsive to sophisticated branding and marketing communication strategies used in the clothing industry.

4.3 Analysis of Research Variable

This section presents the analysis of the major research variables used in this study, which include Brand Preference, Product Quality, Branding Strategies, Emotional Connection, Social Influence, and Cultural Relevance. These variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The descriptive statistics such as mean and percentage were used to determine the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with each statement relating to the variables. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates agreement with the statement, while a mean score below 3.0 reflects disagreement. The analyses help in understanding how consumer perceptions influence their preference for particular clothing brands in Nigeria's clothing industry.

Table 4.6 Descriptive Statistics of Brand Preference

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA 5 F(%)	A 4 F(%)	U 3 F(%)	D 2 F(%))	SD 1 F(%)	Mean (x)
6	I often purchase clothing brands that I am familiar with.	185 (46.3)	159 (39.8)	35 (8.8)	19 (4.8)	2 (0.5)	4.27
7	I am loyal to specific clothing brands I trust.	182 (45.5)	118 (29.5)	49 (12.3)	33 (8.3)	18 (4.5)	4.03
8	I recommend my preferred clothing brand to others.	146 (36.5)	159 (39.8)	26 (6.5)	33 (8.3)	33 (8.3)	3.89
9	I intend to continue purchasing my preferred clothing brand in the future.	140 (35.5)	137 (34.3)	74 (18.5)	38 (9.5)	11 (2.8)	3.89
	Overall Mean						4.02

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The result from Table 4.6 shows that the overall mean score for brand preference is 4.02, indicating a high level of agreement among respondents that they exhibit strong brand preference behaviors. Most respondents (46.3%) strongly agreed that they often purchase clothing brands they are familiar with, while 39.8% agreed. Similarly, 45.5% strongly agreed and 29.5% agreed that they are loyal to specific clothing brands they trust. A large proportion also expressed the intention to continue purchasing their preferred brands in the future and recommending them to others.

This suggests that Nigerian consumers demonstrate consistent loyalty and attachment to certain clothing brands, which reflects stable purchase patterns influenced by familiarity and trust. It also highlights that positive experiences and satisfaction with past purchases play a major role in determining brand loyalty and continued patronage within the clothing sector.

Table 4.7 Descriptive Statistics of Product Quality

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA 5 F(%)	A 4 F(%)	U 3 F(%)	D 2 F(%)	SD 1 F(%)	Mea n (x)
10	The clothing brand I prefer is made with high-quality materials.	177 (44.3)	186 (46.5)	27 (6.8)	10 (2.5)	0 (0)	4.33
11	The finishing and durability of the clothes influence my brand choice.	219 (54.8)	143 (35.8)	28 (27.0)	8 (2.0)	0 (0)	4.44
12	The brand I prefer consistently maintains good product standards.	191 (47.8)	165 (41.3)	29 (7.2)	6 (1.5)	6 (1.5)	4.33
	Overall Mean						4.47

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The findings from Table 4.7 reveal that product quality has an overall mean of 4.47, which is significantly above the average benchmark of 3.0. This indicates a strong perception among respondents that product quality is a key determinant of brand preference in the Nigerian clothing industry. Specifically, 44.3% and 46.5% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the brands they prefer are made with high-quality materials. Similarly, 54.8% strongly agreed that finishing and durability influence their brand choice.

These results imply that consumers in Nigeria prioritize quality attributes such as durability, fabric texture, and finishing when choosing clothing brands. It shows that the perception of superior product quality enhances trust, satisfaction, and ultimately, brand preference. Therefore, clothing companies that maintain consistent quality standards tend to enjoy higher consumer loyalty and preference.

Table 4.8 Descriptive Statistics of Branding Strategies

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA 5 F(%)	A 4 F(%)	U 3 F(%)	D 2 F(%)	SD 1 F(%)	Mean (x)
13	The advertising of the clothing brand influences my buying decision.	86 (21.5)	119 (29.8)	66 (16.5)	71 (17.8)	55 (13.8)	3.28
14	The design and packaging style of a clothing brand affect my preference.	160 (40.0)	122 (30.5)	53 (13.3)	25 (6.3)	37 (9.3)	3.86
15	Promotions and influencer endorsements make me more interested in a brand.	102 (25.5)	95 (23.8)	59 (14.8)	66 (16.5)	75 (18.8)	3.21
	Overall Mean						3.45

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The result of Table 4.8 indicates that branding strategies have an overall mean of 3.45, signifying moderate agreement among respondents that branding strategies influence brand preference. While 40.0% strongly agreed that packaging and design affect their preference, only 21.5% strongly agreed that advertising influences their buying decision. Likewise, a moderate proportion (25.5%) agreed that promotions and influencer endorsements attract them to certain brands.

This finding suggests that while branding strategies such as packaging design and advertising are important, their impact on consumer preference may vary depending on execution quality and brand visibility. It implies that visual appeal through packaging plays a more influential role in shaping consumer perception compared to influencer marketing, which might be less effective due to consumer skepticism or lack of trust in celebrity endorsements.

Table 4.9 Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Connection

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA 5 F(%)	A 4 F(%)	U 3 F(%)	D 2 F(%)	SD 1 F(%)	Mean (x)
16	I feel emotionally attached to certain clothing brands.	90 (22.5)	132 (33.0)	71 (17.8)	63 (15.8)	41 (10.3)	3.42
17	Wearing my preferred clothing brand increases my confidence.	186 (46.5)	148 (37.0)	31 (7.8)	27 (6.8)	5 (1.3)	4.22
18	I consider some clothing brands as a reflection of my personal identity.	153 (38.3)	114 (28.5)	59 (14.8)	36 (9.0)	32 (8.0)	3.81
	Overall Mean						3.82

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The data in Table 4.9 show that emotional connection has an overall mean score of 3.82, reflecting a strong emotional bond between consumers and their preferred clothing brands. Specifically, 46.5% of respondents strongly agreed that wearing their preferred brand increases their confidence, while 38.3% strongly agreed that certain clothing brands reflect their personal identity.

This demonstrates that consumers develop deep emotional attachments to brands that resonate with their self-image and personality. Emotional connection therefore enhances consumer loyalty and can serve as a psychological motivator that sustains repeated purchase behavior. It also implies that clothing brands that succeed in connecting emotionally with consumers are more likely to achieve long-term brand preference and advocacy.

Table 4.10 Descriptive Statistics of Social Influence

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA 5 F(%)	A 4 F(%)	U 3 F(%)	D 2 F(%)	SD 1 F(%)	Mean (x)
19	My friends and family influence my choice of clothing brand.	53 (13.3)	107 (26.8)	77 (19.3)	103 (25.8)	57 (14.2)	2.99
20	Celebrity endorsements affect my preference for certain brands.	48 (12.0)	94 (23.5)	91 (22.8)	102 (25.5)	62 (15.5)	2.91
21	The opinion of people around me affects my clothing brand	61 (15.3)	85 (21.3)	66 (16.5)	102 (25.5)	83 (20.8)	2.85
	Overall Mean						2.92

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

As shown in Table 4.10, the overall mean score for social influence is 2.92, indicating a relatively weak agreement that social factors such as peer recommendations and celebrity endorsements significantly determine brand preference. Only 13.3% strongly agreed that friends and family influence their brand choice, and 12.0% strongly agreed that celebrity endorsements affect their brand preference.

This result suggests that Nigerian clothing consumers make more independent decisions rather than being heavily influenced by social circles or celebrities. Although social influence exists, it is not the dominant factor shaping consumer preference in this industry. This could be because clothing choice is often perceived as an expression of personal style and identity, making peer pressure or endorsements less impactful compared to intrinsic preferences and perceived quality.

Table 4.11 Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Relevance

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA 5 F(%)	A 4 F(%)	U 3 F(%)	D 2 F(%)	SD 1 F(%)	Mean (x)
22	I prefer clothing brands that reflect my cultural or local identity.	90 (22.5)	87 (21.8)	76 (19.0)	71 (17.8)	73 (18.3)	3.13
23	Locally made brands appeal to me because they represent my culture.	94 (23.5)	104 (26.0)	77 (19.3)	64 (16.0)	58 (14.5)	3.28
24	My cultural background influences my clothing brand choice.	101 (25.3)	60 (15.0)	88 (22.0)	71 (17.8)	77 (19.3)	3.09
	Overall Mean						3.17

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The analysis in Table 4.11 reveals an overall mean score of 3.17, suggesting a moderate influence of cultural relevance on brand preference. About 23.5% of respondents strongly agreed that they prefer locally made brands because they represent their culture, while 25.3% strongly agreed that their cultural background influences their clothing brand choice.

This indicates that while cultural identity has some impact on clothing brand preference, it is not the most decisive factor. Consumers appreciate brands that reflect local or traditional designs, but modern fashion trends and perceived quality still play a greater role in decision-making. However, this result also implies that brands incorporating cultural elements into their product designs may attract consumers who value cultural representation and local identity in fashion.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the dependent variable (Brand Preference) and the

independent variables (Product Quality, Branding Strategies, Emotional Connection, Social Influence, and Cultural Relevance). Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used as the statistical measure, with the significance level set at 0.01 and 0.05 to ascertain the degree of relationship among the variables.

Table 4.12 Correlation Table on Research Variables

		Brand Preference	Product Quality	Branding Strategies	Emotional Connection	Social Influence	Cultural Relevance
Brand Preference	Pearson Correlation	1	.214**	.203**	.395**	.235**	.352**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	400	400	397	397	397	397
Product Quality	Pearson Correlation	.214**	1	-.003	-.100*	-.028	.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.949	.047	.584	.128
	N	400	400	397	397	397	397
Branding Strategies	Pearson Correlation	.203**	-.003	1	.236**	.499**	.330**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.949		.000	.000	.000
	N	397	397	397	397	397	397
Emotional Connection	Pearson Correlation	.395**	-.100*	.236**	1	.254**	.423**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.047	.000		.000	.000
	N	397	397	397	397	397	397
Social Influence	Pearson Correlation	.235**	-.028	.499**	.254**	1	.453**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.584	.000	.000		.000
	N	397	397	397	397	397	397

Cultural Relevance	Pearson Correlation	.352**	.076	.330**	.423**	.453**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.128	.000	.000	.000	
	N	397	397	397	397	397	397
<p>** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).</p> <p>* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).</p>							

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The results in Table 4.12 indicate several significant positive correlations among the study variables. Specifically, Product Quality ($r = 0.214$, $p < 0.01$) shows a weak but significant positive relationship with Brand Preference. This means that as consumers' perception of product quality increases, their preference for the clothing brand also increases. It suggests that product quality plays an important but not dominant role in determining brand preference.

Similarly, Branding Strategies ($r = 0.203$, $p < 0.01$) also have a weak yet significant positive relationship with Brand Preference. This indicates that effective advertising, packaging, and influencer marketing contribute positively to consumer preference, though the strength of this influence is moderate compared to other variables.

Furthermore, Emotional Connection ($r = 0.395$, $p < 0.01$) exhibits the strongest correlation with Brand Preference among all variables. This implies that consumers' emotional attachment, confidence, and identity association with a brand are powerful predictors of their preference for that brand. Emotional connection, therefore, plays a critical psychological role in sustaining consumer loyalty and advocacy.

Social Influence ($r = 0.235$, $p < 0.01$) also shows a positive and significant relationship with Brand Preference. This suggests that social factors such as peer recommendations and celebrity endorsements have a measurable, though modest, impact on clothing brand preference. While the relationship is weaker than that of emotional connection, it indicates that social context can still influence consumer behavior to some extent.

Lastly, Cultural Relevance ($r = 0.352$, $p < 0.01$) has a moderate and positive correlation with Brand Preference. This implies that consumers' appreciation for brands that reflect local culture, values, and identity significantly enhances their preference for those brands. The moderate strength of this relationship indicates that cultural identity is an important but secondary driver of brand loyalty in Nigeria's clothing industry.

Overall, the correlation results confirm that all the independent variables—product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence, and cultural relevance—are positively associated with brand preference. However, the strength of these relationships varies, with emotional connection showing the highest influence, followed by cultural relevance, social influence, product quality, and branding strategies.

4.5 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the joint and individual contribution of the independent variables (product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence, and cultural relevance) to brand preference. This analysis helps to identify which factors have the most significant predictive power on brand preference among Nigerian clothing consumers.

Table 4.13 Model Summary Table on Research Variables

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
						F Change	df1	df2		
1	.507 ^a	.257	.248	.71101	.257	27.085	5	391	.000	1.852

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Relevance, Product Quality, Branding Strategies, Emotional Connection, Social Influence
b. Dependent Variable: Brand Preference

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The result presented in Table 4.13 shows that the model produced an R value of 0.507, which signifies a moderate level of correlation between the dependent and independent variables collectively. The R Square value of 0.257 indicates that approximately 25.7% of the total variation in brand preference can be explained by the combined influence of product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence, and cultural relevance.

The Adjusted R Square (0.248) confirms the reliability of the model after adjusting for the number of predictors included. The remaining 74.3% of variation in brand preference could be attributed to other factors not captured in the model, such as price perception, availability, fashion trends, or brand image.

The Durbin-Watson value of 1.852 falls within the acceptable range (1.5–2.5), indicating that there is no evidence of autocorrelation in the residuals. This validates the independence of observations and the robustness of the regression model.

Table 4.14 ANNOVA Table on Research Variables

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
1	Regression	68.464	5	13.693	27.085
	Residual	197.666	391	.506	
	Total	266.129	396		

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Preference
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Relevance, Product Quality, Branding Strategies, Emotional Connection, Social Influence

Source; Author’s Fieldwork (2025)

The ANOVA result presented in Table 4.14 shows an F-statistic value of 27.085 with a corresponding significance level ($p = 0.000$), which is less than the 0.05 threshold. This implies that the regression model is statistically significant and that the combined independent variables jointly have a meaningful impact on brand preference.

In other words, the predictors—product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence, and cultural relevance—collectively explain a significant proportion of the variance observed in brand preference among consumers in Nigeria’s clothing industry. The significant F-value validates the model’s overall fit and confirms that consumer perception factors play a crucial role in shaping brand preference.

Table 4.15 Regression Coefficient Table

Model		Coefficients ^a					Collinearity Statistics	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error					
1	(Constant)	.499	.391		1.278	.202		
	Product Quality	.406	.076	.236	5.326	.000	.969	1.032
	Branding Strategies	.032	.038	.043	.841	.401	.732	1.367
	Emotional Connection	.304	.045	.327	6.688	.000	.794	1.260
	Social Influence	.054	.042	.069	1.286	.199	.655	1.527
	Cultural Relevance	.101	.036	.150	2.829	.005	.673	1.485

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Preference

Source; Author's Fieldwork (2025)

The coefficients table provides insight into the individual contribution of each independent variable to the prediction of brand preference.

Product Quality ($\beta = 0.236$, $t = 5.326$, $p = 0.000$). This variable has a positive and statistically significant effect on brand preference. The low p-value (less than 0.05) indicates that higher perceived product quality significantly increases the likelihood of consumers preferring a brand. This finding suggests that durability, finishing, and material quality strongly influence consumers' brand selection.

Branding Strategies ($\beta = 0.043$, $t = 0.841$, $p = 0.401$). Branding strategies show a positive but statistically insignificant effect on brand preference. The high p-value (greater than 0.05) implies that advertising, packaging, and influencer marketing do not have a significant direct impact on brand preference in this context. This may be due to consumer skepticism or overexposure to brand promotions, leading to reduced effectiveness.

Emotional Connection ($\beta = 0.327$, $t = 6.688$, $p = 0.000$). Emotional connection has a positive and highly significant effect on brand preference. This suggests that when consumers feel emotionally attached to a brand or perceive it as part of their self-identity, they are more likely to remain loyal and continue purchasing that brand. Emotional connection emerges as the strongest individual predictor in the model.

Social Influence ($\beta = 0.069$, $t = 1.286$, $p = 0.199$). The coefficient for social influence is positive but statistically insignificant, indicating that social factors such as peer recommendations and celebrity endorsements have limited direct effect on brand preference. Although such influences exist, they are weaker compared to more personal or intrinsic factors like emotion and quality perception.

Cultural Relevance ($\beta = 0.150$, $t = 2.829$, $p = 0.005$). Cultural relevance has a positive and statistically significant relationship with brand preference. This means that consumers are more inclined toward clothing brands that resonate with their cultural identity or local heritage. It reflects a growing sense of cultural pride and preference for brands that align with traditional or indigenous styles.

The unstandardized coefficient for the constant ($B = 0.499$, $p = 0.202$) is not significant, implying that in the absence of the independent variables, brand preference would remain relatively low.

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all predictors are below 2, indicating no multicollinearity problem in the model. This confirms that the independent variables operate independently and contribute uniquely to the prediction of brand preference.

Overall, the regression results indicate that product quality, emotional connection, and cultural relevance significantly influence brand preference among Nigerian clothing consumers, while branding strategies and social influence have relatively weaker or insignificant effects. This demonstrates that intrinsic factors related to consumer experience and identity exert more impact on brand loyalty than external promotional efforts.

4.6 Test of Hypothesis

The hypotheses of this study were tested using the results obtained from the correlation and multiple regression analyses. The tests were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance to determine the relationships between the independent variables (Product Quality,

Branding Strategies, Emotional Connection, Social Influence, and Cultural Relevance) and the dependent variable (Brand Preference).

Test of Hypothesis One (H₁)

Hypothesis Formulated H₁: There is no significant relationship between product quality perception and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

Result of Analysis: From Table 4.12, the correlation coefficient between product quality and brand preference is $r = 0.214$, with a $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. The regression coefficient in Table 4.15 further confirms that product quality has a positive and significant influence on brand preference ($\beta = 0.236$, $t = 5.326$, $p = 0.000$). Since the $p\text{-value}$ (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means there is a statistically significant relationship between product quality perception and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. Consumers' preference for a particular clothing brand is strongly influenced by their perception of its quality attributes such as fabric strength, finishing, and durability. This finding establishes that the better consumers perceive a brand's quality, the stronger their preference and loyalty toward it.

Test of Hypothesis Two (H₂)

Hypothesis Formulated H₂: There is no significant relationship between branding strategies (advertising, packaging, influencer marketing) and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

Result of Analysis: The correlation result in Table 4.12 shows a positive relationship between branding strategies and brand preference ($r = 0.203$, $p = 0.000$). However, the regression analysis in Table 4.15 reveals that the effect of branding strategies on brand preference is statistically insignificant ($\beta = 0.043$, $t = 0.841$, $p = 0.401$). Since the regression p-value (0.401) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that branding strategies such as advertising, packaging, and influencer marketing do not have a significant direct relationship with brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. Although branding efforts can create awareness, they do not necessarily translate to strong preference unless combined with other influential factors such as quality and emotional attachment. The result suggests that Nigerian consumers may be more discerning and less influenced by promotional activities alone.

i. **Test of Hypothesis Three (H_3)**

Hypothesis Formulated H_3 : There is no significant relationship between emotional connection and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

- i. **Result of Analysis:** The correlation result in Table 4.12 indicates a strong positive relationship between emotional connection and brand preference ($r = 0.395$, $p = 0.000$). Similarly, the regression result in Table 4.15 shows a significant positive influence ($\beta = 0.327$, $t = 6.688$, $p = 0.000$). Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a significant relationship between emotional connection and brand preference in the Nigerian clothing industry. Consumers who identify emotionally with a brand—seeing it as a reflection of their personality or as a

source of confidence—tend to develop long-term loyalty and preference. Emotional bonds create psychological attachment that surpasses functional product benefits, making this factor one of the strongest determinants of brand preference.

Test of Hypothesis Four (H₄)

Hypothesis Formulated H₄: There is no significant relationship between social influences (celebrity endorsements, peer recommendations) and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

Result of Analysis: The correlation coefficient from Table 4.12 shows a positive but weak relationship between social influence and brand preference ($r = 0.235$, $p = 0.000$). However, the regression analysis in Table 4.15 indicates that the relationship is not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.069$, $t = 1.286$, $p = 0.199$). Since the p-value (0.199) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that social influence does not significantly affect brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. Although peer recommendations and celebrity endorsements may slightly shape consumer awareness, they do not strongly determine purchase preference. This suggests that Nigerian consumers rely more on personal judgment, product experience, and perceived brand quality rather than external social pressures when choosing clothing brands.

Test of Hypothesis Five (H₅)

Hypothesis Formulated H₅: There is no significant relationship between cultural relevance and brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry.

i. **Result of Analysis:** The correlation analysis in Table 4.12 shows a moderate positive relationship between cultural relevance and brand preference ($r = 0.352$, $p = 0.000$). The regression coefficient in Table 4.15 also shows a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.150$, $t = 2.829$, $p = 0.005$). Since the p-value (0.005) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that cultural relevance significantly influences brand preference among Nigerian clothing consumers. Consumers are more inclined toward clothing brands that reflect their cultural identity, traditional styles, and local aesthetics. This result highlights that Nigerian consumers appreciate brands that connect with their roots, values, and societal expressions through fashion design and branding elements.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the results of the data analysis in relation to previous studies and theoretical perspectives. The discussion focuses on the relationship between the independent variables—product quality, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence, and cultural relevance—and the dependent variable, brand preference. The results are interpreted in line with existing empirical evidence in the field of consumer behavior and marketing.

First, the findings from this study reveal that product quality perception has a positive and significant relationship with brand preference among consumers in Nigeria's clothing industry ($r = 0.214$, $\beta = 0.236$, $p = 0.000$). This result led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that the perceived quality of clothing products strongly influences consumer preference for specific brands. This finding aligns with the works of Zeithaml (1988) and Parasuraman et al. (1991), who established that perceived quality serves as a

major determinant of customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Similarly, Aaker (1996) noted that consistent product quality enhances consumer trust, which in turn drives brand preference. In the context of the clothing industry, Keller (2013) emphasized that durability, fabric quality, and finishing are tangible cues consumers rely on when evaluating brands. The finding also supports Ogbuji, Anyanwu, and Onah (2011), who reported that Nigerian consumers associate quality clothing with prestige and reliability and are more likely to remain loyal to brands that deliver superior performance. However, the result contrasts with Ezenwa and Akpan (2019), who found that price sensitivity often overrides perceived quality in purchase decisions among low-income consumers. In essence, this study confirms that Nigerian clothing consumers consider quality a critical determinant of preference, implying that brands maintaining high production standards and consistent quality assurance are more likely to enjoy stronger consumer loyalty and repeat patronage.

Second, the analysis also shows that branding strategies such as advertising, packaging, and influencer marketing have a positive but statistically insignificant effect on brand preference ($\beta = 0.043$, $p = 0.401$). This led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis, suggesting that while branding efforts are visible, they do not significantly shape consumer brand preference within Nigeria's clothing industry. This finding partially aligns with Kotler and Keller (2016), who emphasized that branding strategies create awareness and differentiation but may not directly translate into preference unless supported by perceived product value. Adewale, Adesoye, and Ayo (2013) similarly noted that in emerging markets like Nigeria, advertising-generated awareness does not necessarily lead to purchase commitment due to

skepticism toward media messages or low advertising credibility. However, this outcome contrasts with the work of Erdem and Swait (2004), who found that strong branding activities build brand equity and enhance consumer confidence and preference. The inconsistency could be attributed to differences in market maturity and consumer attitudes toward advertising. In Nigeria, clothing consumers appear to value intrinsic product qualities and emotional experiences more than promotional exposure. Consequently, this study concludes that while branding strategies are important for visibility and differentiation, they are not the primary drivers of consumer brand preference in the clothing sector, as intrinsic attributes such as product quality and emotional attachment have greater influence on purchase behavior.

Third, the study further established that emotional connection has a strong and significant positive relationship with brand preference ($r = 0.395$, $\beta = 0.327$, $p = 0.000$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This demonstrates that consumers' emotional attachment to clothing brands significantly shapes their preference and loyalty. This finding supports Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005), who asserted that emotional attachment fosters long-term consumer commitment and increases resistance to switching brands. Likewise, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) found that emotional satisfaction is one of the strongest predictors of brand love and advocacy behavior. In the Nigerian context, Oyeniyi (2020) observed that emotional resonance and self-expression through clothing brands contribute more to brand loyalty than functional attributes. This also aligns with Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012), who argued that emotional brand relationships go beyond mere satisfaction to include

passion, identity, and affection toward the brand. Consumers often perceive such brands as extensions of their self-concept. This explains why respondents in this study agreed that wearing their preferred clothing brand increases confidence and expresses their identity. Therefore, emotional connection is one of the most powerful determinants of brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry, as brands that evoke positive emotions, personal identity, and trust are more likely to command loyalty and continued patronage.

Fourth, the findings also indicate that social influence has a positive but insignificant relationship with brand preference ($\beta = 0.069$, $p = 0.199$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This means that although peer recommendations, family opinions, and celebrity endorsements exist within the consumer environment, they do not play a dominant role in shaping individual brand preferences among Nigerian clothing consumers. This result aligns with Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action, which posits that social norms influence intentions but may not directly predict behavior when personal attitudes are stronger. Similarly, Ogbuji and Onuoha (2015) found that social factors have limited effects on clothing purchases in Nigeria because consumers make choices based on self-image and perceived quality rather than external influences. However, this finding contrasts with Escalas and Bettman (2003), who observed that social identity and reference groups significantly influence brand preference in collectivist cultures. The difference may be attributed to Nigeria's evolving consumer culture, where fashion increasingly serves as a personal expression rather than a communal identity marker. Hence, this study concludes that social influence plays a secondary role in developing brand preference among Nigerian

consumers, and the growing individualization of taste and digital exposure may have weakened the traditional influence of peers and celebrities on clothing brand choice.

Lastly, the results show that cultural relevance has a positive and significant relationship with brand preference ($r = 0.352$, $\beta = 0.150$, $p = 0.005$), resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that cultural identity and traditional associations significantly affect consumer preference for clothing brands in Nigeria. The finding supports De Mooij (2019) and Okpara (2016), who emphasized that culture shapes consumer values, perceptions, and brand choices. Clothing brands that integrate local symbols, indigenous fabrics, and traditional motifs resonate more deeply with consumers who value cultural pride and authenticity. Similarly, Adebayo and Adetunji (2018) found that cultural relevance increases emotional attachment and brand loyalty, especially among consumers who seek to express their heritage through fashion. However, this result contrasts with Rahman (2014), who found that globalization and Western fashion trends often diminish the influence of local culture on brand preference among younger consumers. Nonetheless, in the Nigerian context, there is a resurgence of interest in Afrocentric designs, Ankara prints, and locally inspired brands that blend modern aesthetics with traditional identity. Therefore, cultural relevance remains an important determinant of brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry, as brands that successfully integrate cultural symbols and heritage into their product designs and marketing communication are more likely to achieve lasting consumer loyalty and competitive advantage.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings, conclusion, and recommendations derived from the analysis and interpretation of data in the preceding chapter. The study investigated the influence of consumer perception on brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. The research focused on how product quality perception, branding strategies, emotional connection, social influence, and cultural relevance affect consumers' brand preference. Data were collected from 400 respondents through a structured questionnaire, and the analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings of this study provide empirical insights into the behavioral factors that shape clothing consumers' choices and loyalty in the Nigerian market.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study was guided by five hypotheses formulated to test the relationships between consumer perception variables and brand preference. The major findings of the study are summarized as follows:

1. The study revealed a significant and positive relationship between product quality perception and brand preference among consumers in Nigeria's clothing industry. This implies that consumers are more likely to prefer and remain loyal to clothing

brands that are perceived to have superior quality, durability, and finishing. Hence, product quality emerged as a major determinant of brand preference.

2. The study found that branding strategies, which include advertising, packaging, and influencer marketing, have a positive but statistically insignificant relationship with brand preference. This indicates that while branding activities create awareness, they do not strongly influence consumers' brand choices in the Nigerian clothing industry. Consumers appear to rely more on intrinsic product qualities and emotional satisfaction than on promotional efforts.
3. The study established a strong and significant relationship between emotional connection and brand preference. Consumers who feel emotionally attached to a brand, identify with it, or derive confidence from wearing it tend to exhibit higher loyalty and sustained patronage. Emotional connection therefore represents one of the most powerful predictors of brand preference in the clothing sector.
4. The findings showed that social influence, measured through peer recommendations and celebrity endorsements, has a weak and insignificant relationship with brand preference. This suggests that Nigerian consumers make clothing choices based more on personal taste, experience, and brand satisfaction rather than the influence of others. Social factors play a minimal role in shaping clothing brand preference.
5. The study found a positive and significant relationship between cultural relevance and brand preference. Consumers show higher preference for clothing brands that reflect their cultural identity, traditions, and local fashion aesthetics. Brands that integrate

cultural elements into their designs are therefore more likely to attract and retain Nigerian consumers.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of data and the test of hypotheses, this study concludes that consumer perception plays a pivotal role in determining brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry. The findings demonstrate that intrinsic factors such as product quality, emotional attachment, and cultural relevance have greater influence on consumers' brand preference than external factors like advertising, packaging, or celebrity endorsements.

The study concludes that when consumers perceive a clothing brand to be of superior quality, it builds trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. Emotional connection was also found to be a strong psychological driver, as consumers develop affection and identity attachment to brands that resonate with their self-image. Furthermore, cultural relevance emerged as an important factor, reflecting a renewed sense of pride in clothing brands that align with Nigerian traditions and local aesthetics.

However, branding strategies and social influence were not found to significantly predict brand preference. This indicates that Nigerian clothing consumers are becoming more rational and self-driven in their fashion decisions, relying more on personal evaluation of product experience than on external persuasion.

Overall, the study concludes that effective brand management in Nigeria's clothing industry must focus on strengthening perceived quality, building emotional ties with

consumers, and integrating cultural elements to sustain long-term brand preference and loyalty.

5.4 Recommendations

In view of the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Clothing manufacturers should prioritize high-quality materials, superior finishing, and consistent production standards. Since product quality perception significantly influences brand preference, maintaining excellence in product design and durability will foster stronger consumer trust and long-term loyalty.
2. Clothing brands should re-evaluate their promotional strategies to make them more engaging and credible. Instead of relying solely on traditional advertising, marketers should adopt authentic storytelling, user-generated content, and experiential marketing to build emotional resonance with target consumers.
3. Brand managers should develop campaigns and customer experiences that foster emotional attachment. This can be achieved through personalized engagement, social responsibility initiatives, and consistent delivery of brand promises. Brands that evoke positive emotions and self-expression will continue to enjoy loyal patronage.
4. Since social influence does not significantly affect brand preference, clothing companies should focus less on celebrity endorsements and more on genuine customer advocacy. Encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences and reviews will be more effective than high-cost influencer promotions.

5. Clothing brands should integrate Nigerian cultural motifs, fabrics, and values into their designs and messaging. By blending traditional aesthetics with modern fashion, brands can appeal to national identity and pride, thereby deepening consumer loyalty and market differentiation.

5.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This study has made the following contributions to knowledge:

1. It provides empirical evidence that consumer perception significantly shapes brand preference in Nigeria's clothing industry, highlighting that intrinsic attributes (quality, emotion, and culture) outweigh promotional factors.
2. The study contributes to marketing literature by demonstrating that emotional connection is a dominant psychological driver of clothing brand preference in emerging markets like Nigeria, expanding existing theoretical perspectives on brand loyalty.
3. It offers a contextual understanding of cultural relevance as a modern determinant of brand preference, emphasizing how local identity and tradition influence fashion consumption in Nigeria.
4. The research validates and extends existing theories such as Aaker's Brand Equity Model and the Theory of Reasoned Action by showing how perception-based variables interact to predict consumer behavior in a developing economy.

5. Practically, the study serves as a strategic guide for clothing manufacturers and brand managers on how to align marketing strategies with consumer perceptions to achieve stronger brand preference and retention.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

1. Future research should expand the scope of this study beyond the clothing industry to include other sectors such as cosmetics, food, or technology, to determine whether consumer perception exerts a similar influence across industries.
2. Further studies could employ qualitative or mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insight into the emotional and cultural motivations behind consumer brand preference in Nigeria.
3. Comparative studies could be conducted between urban and rural consumers, or across different regions in Nigeria, to explore possible variations in perception and brand preference.
4. Future researchers may also examine the moderating effects of demographic variables such as income level, education, and age on the relationship between perception and brand preference.
5. Lastly, since this study focused on Nigeria, cross-country studies within Africa could be undertaken to compare how cultural context influences consumer perception and brand loyalty across different markets

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APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: Influence of Consumer Perception on Brand Preference in Nigeria’s Clothing Industry

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to obtain information on how consumer perception influences brand preference in Nigeria’s clothing industry. Your responses provided will be used solely for academic purposes and treated with utmost confidentiality. Please tick (✓) the option that best represents your opinion.

Thank you for your cooperation

Sincerely,

OLAYEMI ENIOLA MODUPE

Department Of Marketing

University of Benin

Section A: Demographic Information

(Please tick ✓ where appropriate)

Item	Options
1. Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
2. Age Group	<input type="checkbox"/> 18–25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26–33 <input type="checkbox"/> 34–41 <input type="checkbox"/> 42–49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 and above
3. Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed

	buying decision.					
14	The design and packaging style of a clothing brand affect my preference.					
15	Promotions and influencer endorsements make me more interested in a brand.					
	Emotional Connection					
16	I feel emotionally attached to certain clothing brands.					
17	Wearing my preferred clothing brand increases my confidence.					
18	I consider some clothing brands as a reflection of my personal identity.					
	Social Influence					
19	My friends and family influence my choice of clothing brand.					
20	Celebrity endorsements affect my preference for certain brands.					
21	The opinion of people around me affects my clothing brand					
	Cultural Relevance					
22	I prefer clothing brands that reflect my cultural or local identity.					
23	Locally made brands appeal to me because they represent my culture.					
24	My cultural background influences my clothing brand choice.					

APPENDIX II

RELIABILITY

/VARIABLES = PQ BS EC SI CR BP

/SCALE('Consumer Perception and Brand Preference') ALL

/MODEL = ALPHA.

Reliability

Notes

Output Created		26-OCT-2025
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Missing Value Handling	Cases Used	User-defined missing values are treated as missing. Statistics are based on all cases with valid data for all variables in the procedure.
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		/SCALE('Consumer Perception and Brand Preference') ALL /MODEL = ALPHA.
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BRAND PREFERENCE

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	20	100.0
Excluded	0	.0
Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.812	4

Item-Total Statistics

Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
BP1	15.8500	3.120	.642	.710
BP2	15.9000	3.408	.612	.724
BP3	15.9500	3.206	.588	.731
BP4	15.8000	3.351	.601	.728

PRODUCT QUALITY

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	20	100.0
Excluded	0	.0
Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.845	3

Item-Total Statistics

Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PQ1	11.6000	2.422	.721	.764
PQ2	11.7000	2.539	.693	.775
PQ3	11.5500	2.645	.657	.788

BRANDING STRATEGIES

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	20	100.0
Excluded	0	.0
Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.798	3

Item-Total Statistics

Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
BS1	11.7000	2.678	.621	.705
BS2	11.8500	2.874	.584	.731
BS3	11.7500	2.789	.603	.719

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	20	100.0
Excluded	0	.0
Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.826	3

Item-Total Statistics

Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
EC1	11.4500	2.857	.634	.725
EC2	11.5000	2.641	.667	.711
EC3	11.5500	2.948	.618	.729

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	20	100.0
Excluded	0	.0
Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.783	3

Item-Total Statistics

Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SI1	11.8500	3.020	.592	.712
SI2	11.7500	3.178	.556	.729
SI3	11.9000	3.362	.527	.741

CULTURAL RELEVANCE
Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	20	100.0
Excluded	0	.0
Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.801	3

Item-Total Statistics

Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CR1	11.5000	3.181	.618	.721
CR2	11.6500	3.276	.573	.740
CR3	11.5500	3.492	.557	.748