

The Effect of Event Marketing Techniques Employed by Nigerian Firms on Consumers' Brand Loyalty and Patronage

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Abstract: *Event marketing is considered a novel technique that provides both event host and attendees (participants) experiential marketing/communication. This study examined the effect of four flagship events in Nigeria: 'Star Quest', 'Guilder Ultimate Search,' 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' (TV game show), and the 'Next Nigerian Music Idol' on consumers' brand loyalty and patronage. The opinions of 1466 event attendees comprising live participants and viewers (respondents) were sought on issues raised. Findings show that events create positive emotions, brand attitude, and positive buying intentions on consumers. Consumers' participation and active involvement in event marketing activity positively affect their patronage of host's brand. Event consistency is discovered to be a very important element in determining the effect of event on consumers as consumers brand patronage may be relatively high or otherwise when events are tied to a particular brand of event's host/creation. Finally, a conceptual model of effect of events on consumer is developed as a guide for future research*

Keywords: Event Marketing, Brand, Brand positioning, Brand Loyalty, Consumers

1. Introduction

The phases of change in the corporate business scene in the World generally, and in Nigeria particularly have had significant toll on Nigerian firms. Changes such as government divestiture, privatization, mergers and acquisition, new entry of firms operating virtually in all sectors of the economy coupled with increased competition have shifted Nigerian business operations to being more consumer or market-oriented. These changes have also affected the demand of consumers and prospects (i.e. consumers demand are changing too). Against this background, therefore, it has now become more difficult to secure and sustain a cutting edge approach or unique and dependable differentiation formula that is sure to win all the times.

To confront this challenge, management of business organizations has had to increase the level of resources with attention focused on attracting and retaining customers [1], [2]. They are also continually searching for better strategies or communication mix to excite their customers, retain their loyalty and indeed leverage their corporate and brand image [3]. This search has resulted in lots of creative promotional activities among firms, with industry leaders joining the environmental band-wagon of either creating/floating an event or sponsoring existing events. These organizations now adopt event marketing, which is considered a relatively novel marketing tool as part of conscious effort in dealing with changing consumer demand, challenges of traditional media scene [4],[3].

The increasing use of event marketing by firms is documented by even writers [5], [6]. Most firms have specific objectives when they choose to engage in event

marketing [7] such as sales, awareness, and image enhancement. Also, the frequency, visibility importance or prominence events have gained recently is a testimony that manufacturers, corporate advertisers, and marketers have found event marketing a sure strategy to leverage customers' brand loyalty and positioning [8].

Despite the growing event marketing literature, there is limited empirical research investigating the effect of various alternative event activities on consumers' brand loyalty and patronage. For many companies it is unclear how the effect of an event can be measured [5] and measuring event effectiveness has only been very sporadically studied in the literature. Bearing these in mind, there is a need for new knowledge on how event marketing activities affect consumers, and how the effect can be measured. The purpose of this research is therefore to understand and determine how different event marketing techniques employed by some Nigerian firms affect or impact on consumers brand loyalty, attitudes, purchase intentions and patronage.

Specifically, the following questions will be addressed:

1. How is the consumer affected by event marketing?
2. To what extent does event impact/alter emotions, brand attitude, and buying intentions of consumers?
3. Does consumers' participation and involvement in an event affect their choice and patronage of a firm's brand?
4. To what extent are brand patronage and loyalty affected by event tied to a particular brand of the event's host?
5. Does staging event consistently create positive image/reputation of event's host on consumers mind thereby sustaining consumers' brand loyalty?

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Framework and Clarifications

It is important that enough insights are brought to bear in discussing the concepts that formed the subject matter under investigation. This is necessary because in the last decade or so, the term event marketing has been used extensively to describe different phenomena, like events as product, sales promotion, or sponsorship [6]. For this reason, the term event evokes different meanings to different people, individual and organizations. This has resulted to definitional discrepancies or explanation dilemma, which Drengner, Graus and Jahn [9]; Achor, [3] have tactfully resolved to an extent by distinguishing event from sponsorship and other related communication activities. Event as conceptualized in marketing public relations parlance connotes exciting live shows, occurrence or gathering organized by an organization, group, etc which has marketing cum business-oriented values [10]. In the same vein, Martensen and Grinholdt [11] described an event as a live themed activity (e.g. music festival, sporting event, etc) in order to achieve marketing objectives. Other scholars like Ornbo et al [12] consider events as a part of the somewhat broader concept of experience marketing where events are part of this experience communication.

Thus, an event is a marketing communication activity and can be looked at as an activity with a high level of involvement. Because events involve their target group and involve it in the company and as well as the products, they give the target group an experience that appeals to all the senses [13]. In other words, events appeal to the feeling and emotions that arise in the individual and the event-based communication because differently visible and alive [14]. The message may therefore be able to create a stronger effect than through traditional communication channels. This study will elaborate on this in the appropriate section. Literature is replete with a number of events that are considered events in the new marketing communication context or scenario. Apart from the tangential identification of event typologies earlier, Achor [3] adopted two approaches in an attempt to classify events. These are: the purpose-related classification paradigm and marketing public relations classification approach. The purpose-related approach or classification particularly and holistically groups each event according to the purpose it serves or objectives it intends to achieve.

It also identifies the natural particulars or attributes of events and thereby categorizes them according to their natural attributes. Event typologies that fall within the ambit of the purpose-related descriptions are summarized by Achor [3] to include:

- i. Corporate events (e.g. product launches, press conferences, Awards, etc).
- ii. Special corporate hospitality event (e.g. concert, award ceremonies, films premiers, etc).
- iii. Marketing programme events (e.g. road shows, grand opening event, customer contexts, etc).
- iv. Commercial events (e.g. fashion shows, product launches).

- v. Private (personal) event e.g. wedding, birthday, anniversaries, etc.
- vi. Social, cultural and political event (e.g. football competitions, cultural festivals (e.g. Arugungu Fishing Festival Imo Awka), political rallies and conventions.
- vii. Leisure events (e.g. leisure sport, music, recreation, etc).

The Marketing Public Relations (MPR) approach of events taxonomy or classification identifies events whether created or sponsored that have marketing or public relations oriented values to offer to the event creator (owner), sponsor and attendees (target audience). Some events typology already captured in the purpose-related classification approach also fall within the MPR approach. The event typology that is investigated in this study includes those that have marketing public relations values. The event techniques anchor on talent hunt shows, entertainment and adventure. The list of events that are adjudged event marketing activities are evolving due to the proliferation of created and sponsored events in the Nigerian marketing scene.

3. Event Marketing: A Theoretical Overview

In the preceding section, the definition of event marketing was intentionally delayed due to the earlier identified description anomaly or definitional discrepancies. A critical review of literature exposes this problem, which has further distorted public perception of the concept. Three factors can be advanced for this definitional dilemma. The first factor anchors on the erroneous interchangeability of event marketing with sponsorship or describing sponsorship as the same thing as event marketing by some scholars [15],[16],[17]. The second contributor to this dilemma is triggered by polemics on the concept by some scholars, definers or describers who describe event marketing to suit their professional roots or origins [3]. Those guilty of this are practitioners of new marketing communications, e.g. marketing, public relations practitioners, advertising practitioners and mass media professionals. Each of these groups represents a discipline and each discipline has distinct view which differs from one another. However, this distinction in their views markedly distorts proper understanding. The third source of confusion is the relatively newness of event marketing as a promotional strategy or novel marketing tool [18].

Arising from the above sources of explanatory issues or factors, attempt has been made here to group scholars attempt to conceptualize the term event marketing into two schools of thoughts. These are the Clarity/Emerging School and Event Marketing is equal-to-sponsorship school of thought. It is now appropriate to operationalize or conceptualize event marketing so as to draw a demarcation between the two schools of thought and to identify which school of thought the sources of definitional dilemma belong. In the various definitions/descriptions of event marketing and sponsorship that follow, definers and scholars are consensual in their approach. According to Nwosu [10] event marketing is a specialized marketing communication strategy that involves identifying, managing and utilizing exciting live event as communication arrowhead for promoting an organization, products, services or personally.

Event marketing is understood exclusively in the sense of a communication tool whose purpose is to disseminate a company's marketing messages by involving the target groups in experiential activities. This means that their members (event attendee or participant) are themselves active during a so-called marketing event, thus offering the opportunity for social interaction among the participants as well as between participants and the company [19]. Similarly, event marketing is the practice of promoting the interest of an organization and its brands by associating the organization with a specific activity [20],[21].

Sponsorship on the other hand involves the acquisition of rights to affiliate or associate with a product, event or organization for the purpose of deriving related benefits (Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton, 2000). Seen from the above perspective, sponsorship can be described as the planned, deliberate and enlightened self-interest oriented contribution to support (e.g. donations) an event or visibly activity usually with the aim of achieving some self-defined business, marketing or communication benefit for the sponsor [3]. It may be also seen as "the underwriting of a special event to support corporate objectives" [23], including sales brand awareness and image enhancement [24],[25].

The above descriptions or conceptual notions belong to clarity/emerging school of thought. The clarity/emerging school has aptly drawn parallel conceptual line between event marketing and sponsorship. This study adopts the line of thought of the clarity/emerging school but finds the latter (event marketing is equal-to-sponsorship schools ie EM=SP) confusing and a distortion of knowledge. However, a critical review of literature has shown that the definitional dilemma earlier alluded to stems from thus latter school. In the older or more conservative books on marketing communication, sponsorship seems to be treated as progenitor to event marketing. This progenitor theory has been expanded by some scholars who believed that sponsorship involves event marketing; therefore both are the same or can be used interchangeably. Scholars or writers like Fill [15] Picton and Broaderick [16],[17] Pulford, Smith and Berry[26] are leading exponents of this wrong notion. In their writings, they wrote volumes on sponsorship and skeletally treated event marketing. Recall that a sponsorship may relate to an activity or to an organization. Event marketing often involves sponsorships, but this is not always the case. Compared to sponsorship, which involves payment for the association with an activity, individual or organization, event marketing refers to the staging of an event and/or efforts by a firm to associate with another entity's event with or without paying a sponsorship fee.

4. Empirical Review

Event marketing is considered a relatively novel marketing. In contrast to conventional communication strategies, event marketing involves the active participation of target groups in the purchase, use and choice decisions. These features have not been subjected to sophisticated empirical studies so far. In this current study, the effect of event marketing on consumer brand loyalty and patronage will be evaluated.

A review of literature reveals that there are only a few empirically-backed attempts to explain directly the effects of event marketing [19], [27],[5]. Mainly these studies concentrate on how the attitude towards an event object or the image of event object (e.g. the brand or the company) is influenced. Other related studies focused attention on motivation and satisfaction of event attendees; identification of event connected brand recognition [28]; customer retention, satisfaction, relationship quality as they affect both event attendees and event host (Owners) or sponsors. Empirical research findings by Drengner, Gaus, and Jahn [18] suggest that the particular advantage of event marketing can be used successfully to influence the brand image. Sneath, finney, and Close [5] provide evidence for the inclusion of event marketing in the company's promotional mix and indicate that experience with the sponsor's product during the event may enhance event outcomes. Lacey et al [29] showed that repeat attendance on event sponsorship enhanced brand image and purchase intentions of an on-going title sponsor's products. Their findings also showed that there are significant differences in attendees: (i) attitudes about the title sponsor and (ii) increased likelihood of purchasing the sponsor's products (iii) attitudes about the title sponsor were most favourable among spectators who attended the annual event multiple times. Their study also showed an increased likelihood of purchasing a new product from the title sponsor.

A more focused reexamination of these previous studies indicates a total neglect of event marketing impact on customers' response towards hierarchy of effects. This particular study will investigate the consumer exposure to different techniques of event marketing employed by Nigerian firms and how such events alter attitude towards the use, choice, purchase intentions and brand loyalty/patronage. Simply put, the study will examine effects of events on consumer emotions, brand attitude and buying intentions, consumer participation/involvement on events, etc.

Finally, this study will advance knowledge about the impact of event marketing by developing a conceptual model of effects of event marketing on consumers of beer and telephone services in Nigeria. The construct will be a modification of existing conceptual model by Drengner et al [18], Martensen and Grenholdt [11].

Branding: This is very essential in the contemporary marketing scene. As revealed in the literature and the introductory section, marketers increasingly use events to establish and maintain strong brands. Defined, a brand is a "distinguishing name and/or symbol intended to identify goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors" [30]. In event marketing, incorporation of logos, trademarks, or package designs is a way to distinguish one's offerings and synergistically link them to the event. Branding decisions play a critical role in establishing sustainable competitive advantage [31] especially when combined with sponsored events. Scholars have begun to explore how firm branding strategies influence firm involvement in event and other related marketing activities.

Hypotheses Development and Conceptual Model

Having reviewed the relevant literature and based on our research questions the following hypotheses are presented:

- H1: Events create positive emotions, brand attitude and buying intentions on consumers.
- H2: Consumers' participation and involvement in an event positively affect their patronage of host's/sponsor's brands.

- H3: Consumers' brand patronage is relatively high when event is tied to a particular brand of the host/sponsor.
- H4: Event consistency creates positive image/reputation of event's host on consumers mind, thereby sustaining consumers' brand loyalty.

Based on these hypotheses a conceptual model is developed.

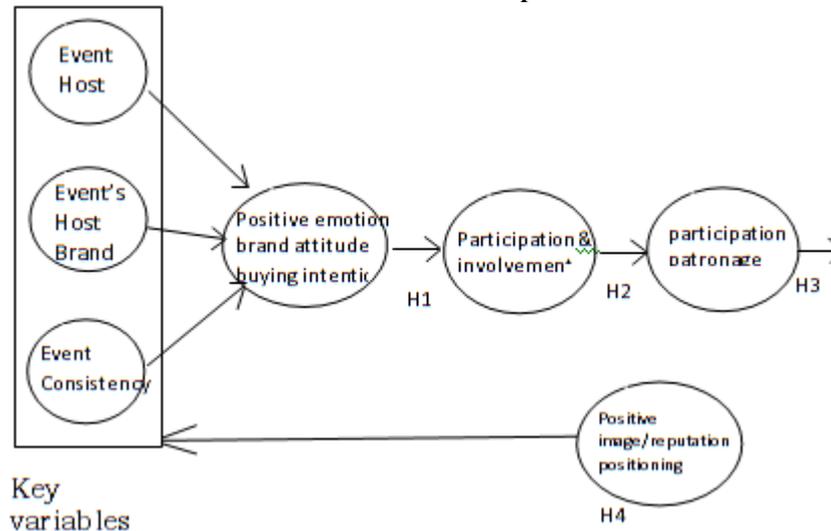


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Effect of Event Marketing

Events Studied and Operating Mode

Three related event techniques were chosen for investigation namely talent hunt shows, adventure series and relaxation. Specifically the “Star Quest” and Guilder Ultimate Search of Nigeria Breweries Plc; “Who Wants to be a Millionaire” game show of MTN Nigeria Communication Limited, and the ‘Next Nigeria Music Idol of Etisalat Communication Limited are events studied. Both the star Quest and the next Nigeria music idol are music talent hunt event targeted at young people with latent talent in music. They are crowd pullers and have two different audiences namely live attendees/participants and viewers on TV. The Ultimate Search is a live adventure fun-filled event created for able bodied and energetic young people aimed at testing their leadership acumen, perseverance and coping in the jungle. The climax of this adventure is searching and finding Guilder Hero Totem by selected participants. The event runs for two weeks on the national television during which participant who contravened game rules were evicted.

Who wants to be a millionaire is a relaxation TV Game show. It offers both the studio audience and home audience opportunity to win prize money ranging from 10 million to twenty thousand naira. Apart from Ultimate Search, the other events require participation from home audience (viewers) and live studio audience (stage participants). To be part of the events they must be involved emotionally.

5. Method

Since the study is a post event study, survey method was used. The research instrument used was a 15 – item structured questionnaire that sought the opinions of 1466 event attendees, live participants, and viewers (sample) or respondents. They were purposively selected across the six

geopolitical zones of Nigeria. They were initially contacted and engaged via the social networking medium Facebook. A request form seeking their attention to participate in the survey and brief explanation of the purpose of the study were posted in the notification and message pages of the respondents' facebook. The facebook was chosen because of its interactive nature and great advantage to easily contact the respondents. After establishing contact with the respondents, questionnaires were mailed to their e-mail boxes for completion. Completed questionnaire were also mailed to researcher via e-mail. The 5 – point likert-type scales (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) were mainly used in the questionnaire to assess respondents' brand attitude, buying intentions, emotions, event participation and involvement, and brand patronage.

Descriptive statistics (e.g. tables & frequencies) were used in the data presentation and analysis. The data were subjected to further analysis using the mean (x); a cut off point was determined by finding the mean of nominal value assigned to the options in the likert 5- point scale. The formula is thus:

$$\text{Mean } x = \frac{\sum fi}{n}$$

where: Σ = sum F = Frequency
 n = number of item

The mean = 15 = 3.00 + 0.05 = 3.05 level of significance. For the purpose of decision making 3.05 and above was accepted as agree while below 3.05 was accepted as disagree.

Presentation/Analysis of Findings

The analysis of the demographic data showed that more than one-third of the sample (38.2 percent) were within the age range of 30-39 years. 28.6 percent (420) respondents were within the age bracket of 18 – 29 years; 20 percent (300) are between ages 40 – 49 years while 186 (12.6 percent) accounts for those within the age bracket of 50-59 years. Gender participation showed that 44.1 percent are female while the remaining 55.9 percent (820) respondents are male. Also table 1, showed that 42.2 percent were attendees or live audience participants during the events while 57.8 percent represents participants who watched or viewed the events on TV. The analysis further revealed that respondents were conversant with the operating modalities and rules governing the events studied (Star Quest, Ultimate Search, Who Wants to be a Millionaire and “the Next Nigerian Music Idol).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of Sample (n = 1466)

Age (Median =)	Frequency	Valid Percent
18 – 29	420	28.6%
30 – 39	560	38.2%
40 – 49	300	20.4%
50 – 59	186	12.6%
Gender		
Female	646	44.1%
Male	820	55.9%
Mode of event Participation		
Live attendee/audience participation	620	42.2%
Viewed or watched on Television	848	57.8%
Total	1466	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 2: Event Built around Event’s host/sponsor Brand

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1360	92.7%
No	16	1.03
Cant say	90	6.1%
Total	1466	100%

Source: Field Survey,,2015

Majority of the respondents (92.7 percent) agreed that the events were/are built around host/sponsor’s brand. An insignificant number (1.0 percent) disagreed while 6.1 percent or 90 respondents were neither here nor there.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on event creation of positive emotions, brand attitude, and buying intentions

		SA	A	N	D	SD	Means sample (n)	Total score $\sum x_i f_i$	Mean (x) response $\frac{\sum x_i f_i}{n}$	Decision
i.	Do you agree that the events your participated in either as alive attendee/audience or viewer via TV created positive emotions towards the sponsor’s brand name.	487	584	206	25	164	1466	5603	3.82	Agreed
ii	Do you also agree that you have positive attitude towards the event sponsor’s brand.	561	431	213	201	60	1466	5630	3.84	Agreed
iii	So can we say that your buying intention towards the host/sponsor’s brand has been positively affected.	582	346	188	50	300	1466	5258	3.58	Agreed

Source: Field Survey

Note: SA = Strongly agree (5), A = Agree (4); N = Neutral (3) D = Disagree (2); Strongly disagree (1).

Table 3 indicates the descriptive statistics of events effect on emotions, brand attitude and buying intentions. The table showed that 3.82 is the mean score of those who agreed that events create positive emotion towards event host/sponsor’s brand. Positive attitude towards host/sponsor’s brand had a

mean response of 3.84 while that of buying intentions had a mean score response of 3.58. All the three means responses score are above the 3.05 cut off point or level of significance, hence they are accepted.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on participants’ involvement in events and effect on brand patronage

		SA	A	N	D	SD	sample (n) 1466	Total score $\sum x_i f_i$	Mean (x) response $\frac{\sum x_i f_i}{n}$
i.	As a participant in any of the events, would you say your participation/ involvement has affected your patronage of the host brand	487	301	316	206	156	1466	5155	3.51

Note: SA = strongly agree (5), Agreed = (4); N – Neutral (3) D = Disagree (2); SD = Strongly disagree (1).

Table 4 indicates the descriptive statistics on participants’ involvement in events and effect on brand patronage. The data on the table showed that 3.51 is the mean score of those

who agreed that their participation/involvement during the event positively affected their patronage of the host’s brand. From the established decision rule, 3.51 is greater than 3.05

significance level adopted, therefore accepted as agreed. What this suggest is that consumers' participation and

involvement in an event positively affect their patronage of host's brand.

Table 5: Level of consumers' Brand Patronage

	Question/statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	sample (n) 1466	Total score Exifi	Mean (x) response $\frac{\text{Exifi}}{n}$
i.	Is your brand patronage relatively high when event is tied to a particular brand of event's host/sponsor?	364	400	68	47	587	1466	4305	2.93

Note: SA = Strongly agree (5); A = agreed (4); N = Neutral (3) D = disagree (2), SD = Strongly disagree (1).

Table 5 indicates that the mean response score of respondents or consumers whose brand patronage is relatively high when event is tied to a particular brand of the host/sponsor is 2.93. Given this result and based on the adopted decision rule, 2.93 is below 3.05 significant level, therefore the hypothesis is disagreed. This suggests that consumers' brand patronage is not relatively high when event is tied to a brand associated with the host. Further probe into the result revealed that those respondents who either strongly agree or agree to the statement in the table 5 are emotionally attached to the brands associated with event names. The percentage of those whose brand patronage is

relatively high is 52.1% as against 40 percent of those who do not. The 52.1% as against 40 percent of those who do not. The 52.1% patronize Star and Gulder brands of beer hence the level of patronage always go up when the events named after the two brands are staged.

Table 6 showed descriptive statistics of the impact of staging events consistently on attendees/viewer participants. From the table, it can be seen that the mean response score is 3.80 and from the established decision rule, 3.80 is above 3.05 significant level adopted. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. What this means is that, events consistency creates positive image/reputation of host on attendees/participants' (consumers') mind. The invariably sustains consumers' brand loyalty.

Table 6: Event consistency and its impact on image/reputation and brand loyalty

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Sample (n) 1466	Total score Exifi	Mean (x) response $\frac{\text{Exifi}}{n}$	Rmks	
i.	When event are staged regularly/consistently, does it create positive image/reputation of the host in your mind	584	327	300	201	54	1466	5584	3.80	Agreed

Note: SA = Strongly agree (5), A = Agreed (4), N = Neutral (3), D = Disagree (2) SD = Strongly disagree (1)

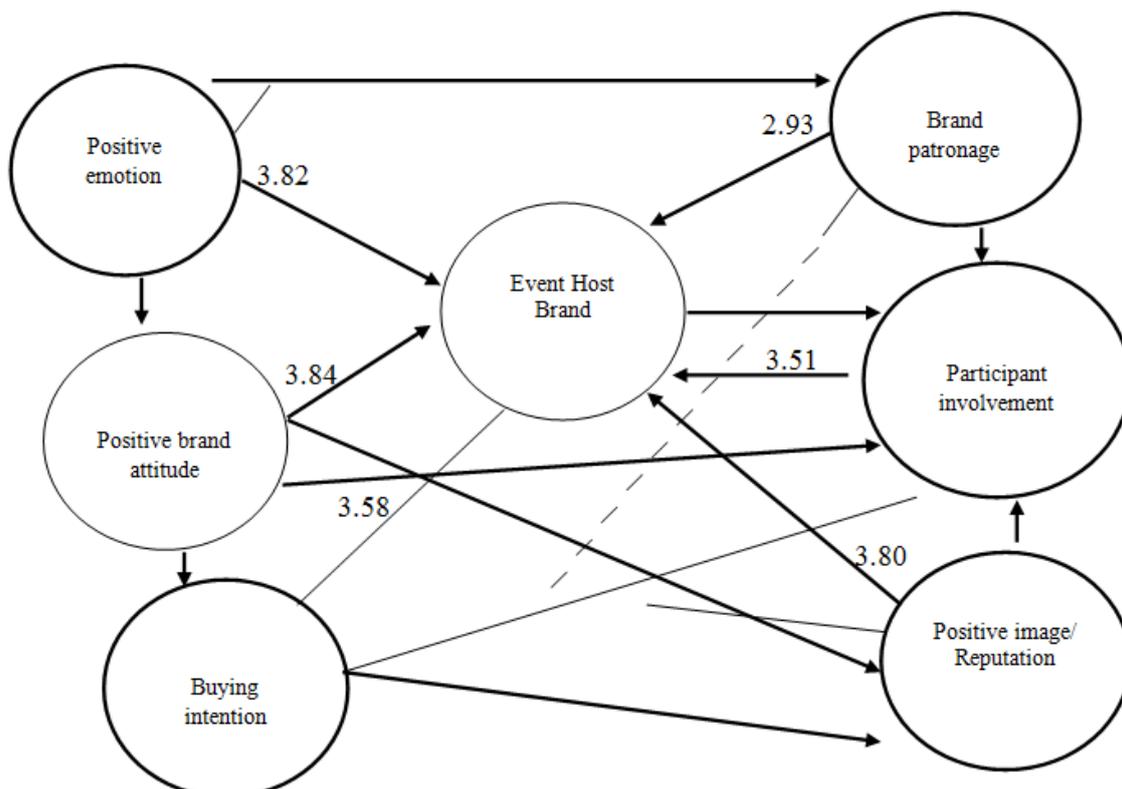


Figure 2: The conceptual model for the effect of event marketing with mean response values.

6. Discussion

After subjecting the data to further descriptive analysis three out of the four hypotheses were accepted. First it was evident that events create positive emotions, brand attitude and positive buying intentions on consumers. The mean response scores on emotions, brand attitude and buying intentions are as follows 3.82, 3.84 and 3.58 respectively. This is in line with the research findings of Drengner, Graus and Jahn (2008), close, Finney, Lacey and Sneath (2006). In Drengner et al (2008), it was found that the more positive the perceived emotions of an event attendee or participant are, the more positive is his or her evaluation of the brand. Also, an event attendee who has a more positive opinion of the firm's/sponsor's brand is more intent on purchasing the firm's/sponsor's branded product(s). Similarly, the stronger the active flow experience of an event participant is, the more positive is his or her perception of emotions. Though, the current research is based on post-event evaluation of firms' brands, the findings have validated on the spot event evaluations.

Consumer behaviour research emphasizes the importance of emotions and attitude for consumers' choice (Hansen, 2005). In addition, neurological and neuropsychological research has strongly emphasized the importance of emotional processes for most kind of human behaviour (Damasio 2033). On the basis of the above we find that a model for measuring the effect of the event activity should include emotions and other variables that have been hypothesized. (See Fig. 2 above). Our accepted hypothesis further validates research findings of Martensen and Gronholdt (2008) that positive event emotions have a positive effect on positive brand emotions. As found in our analysis, consumers' participation and active involvement in event marketing activity positively affect their patronage of host's brand. The mean response score as shown in table 4 and fig. 2 is 3.51, which is above our adopted 3.05 significant level. Our finding shows that involvement has become a central factor in most conceptual constructs of effect of event on consumers. Involvement starts the process of information disseminated via an event. Due to the challenges in marketing communication mentioned in the introductory section, involvement (participation as case maybe) has a central factor in model constructs of effect. Involvement can be defined as a "person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interest (Zaichkowsky, 1985 and "the concept of felt involvement refers to a consumer's overall subjective feeling of personal relevance" (Celsi and Olson, 1988). The consumer's level of involvement may result in very different cognitive or affective process when a message is received. It is important to create a high level of involvement toward the brand within the target group, so that to a higher extent it will create preferences towards the brand as well as obtain a more conscious and developed brand attitude (Zaichkowsky 1986). Moreover, a high level of involvement means that consumer generally pays more attention to advertisement for the brand, as the responsiveness to messages is increased concurrently with involvement.

Similarly, consumers' brand patronage may be relatively high or otherwise when events are tied to a particular brand

of event host/creator. When data generated to test this assumption were subjected to descriptive analysis, we obtained a mean response score of 2.92 which is lower than 3.05 significant level adopted. Hence, it is concluded that consumers' brand patronage is not relatively high when event is tied to a particular brand. Though further probe into this result showed that event participants or attendees who are loyal to the Star and Gulder brands of beer have a high patronage of the brands because of their association with events. Our finding in this regard is not attributable to all products/brands produced by Nigerian firms, since elsewhere, it has been proved that consumers' brand patronage is relatively high when event is associated to renowned brand (Achor, 2011). As a corollary, brand involvement as official product in an event have special connection between consumers and event sponsor or host. To further buttress this notion, Martensen and Gronholdt (2008) discovered that brand involvement in event marketing activity has a positive effect on brand attitude and patronage.

Finally, our findings depict event consistency as a very important element in determining the effect of event on consumers. From the data on table 6, mean response score on the above factor yielded a higher value of 3.80, which is greater than cut off point of 3.05 significance level. What this suggests is that event consistency creates positive image/reputation of both the event and host on consumers mind. This invariably help in sustaining consumers' loyalty. This result is in line with Drengner, et al (2008) findings that "the more positive an event participant evaluation of event's image on the connotative dimension is, the more positive is his or her evaluation of the brand image on the connotative image dimension (Drengner, et al, 2008). Events also have potentials in leveraging corporate image/reputation of event host (firm) when events are staged regularly (Achor, 2011).

7. Implications for Practice and Theory

This set of findings has implications for both practice and theory. For practitioners, the findings provide support for incorporating event marketing into a communication strategy, especially when the event attracts people who are knowledgeable, brand loyalists, active participants and entertainment seekers. Events must be seen as strong platform to build customer-to-customers interrelationship. Events associated with brand leaders or great brands act as strong emotion triggers. It is important to create a high level of involvement towards the brand within the targets group, so that to a higher extent, it creates preferences toward the brand as well as obtain a more conscious and developed brand attitude.

Another point is that event must be built around company's brand. This is because such event has the capabilities of deepening brand equity or positioning brands in the mind of events' attendees (consumer) or event participants. The implication of this to practice is that when events are anchored on total customer value, there is an apparent customer retention and satisfaction.

The findings of the study have added to the already robust literature on event marketing by providing a modified or expanded conceptual model of effect that specifically

anchored on post event evaluation. The existing conceptual model of effects of event marketing deals especially on the on-the spot assessment of an event particularly sporting event (Close et al, 2006) Drengner et al 2008; Martensen and Gronholdt, 2008). Further insights have been provided into the hierarchy of effect in marketing communication studies. This depicts the interrelationships among the variables studied such as positive emotions, positive event attitude, buying intentions, level of involvement, brand image/patronage and event consistency. These interrelationships are shown in figure 2 which is the modified or expanded conceptual model of effect of event marketing based on 'post event evaluations'.

8. Conclusion

Nigerian firms are not left out of the 'new wind of change in marketing their brand outside the use of the traditional media. The events studied have shown that, consumers can respond either positively or negatively to the communication intents of events. The essence of event marketing is to constantly retain consumers loyalty and patronage of firms' products in such a way that is novel compared to other widely used promotional activities (e.g.) advertising, sales promotion, etc). Event marketing has been proved here to be a potent element in their entire marketing communication strategy of firms. It deals with the changing consumer demand and challenges of traditional media scene.

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