



Effect of Brand Loyalty on the Sales Performance of Some Selected Bakery Businesses in Bauchi State: The Mediating Role of Consumer Attitude

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Abstract

In today's highly competitive bakery industry, fostering brand loyalty has become a crucial strategy for enhancing sales performance. However, the underlying mechanisms through which brand loyalty influences sales performance remain underexplored, particularly in the context of small businesses in Nigeria. This study investigates the effect of brand loyalty on the sales performance of bakery businesses in Bauchi State; the mediating role of Consumer Attitude. The study examines how consumer attitude shapes purchasing decisions and strengthens the impact of brand loyalty on business success. A quantitative research design was adopted, utilizing a survey method to collect data from 342 customers of bakery firms in Bauchi State. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed through SEMinR software to analyze the relationships among the variables. The findings reveal that brand loyalty has a significant positive effect on both consumer attitude ($\beta = 0.838$, $t = 40.603$) and sales performance ($\beta = 0.803$, $t = 32.487$). Furthermore, consumer attitude is positively associated with sales performance ($\beta = 0.567$, $t = 9.406$), confirming its crucial role in shaping sales performance. Mediation analysis confirms that consumer attitude mediates the relationship between brand loyalty and sales performance ($\beta = 0.475$, $t = 9.051$), highlighting its importance as a psychological mechanism through which brand loyalty translates into increased sales. The findings offer practical implications for bakery firms, emphasizing the need to build strong brand loyalty and foster positive consumer attitudes through consistent quality, strategic branding, and customer engagement.

Keywords: Brand loyalty, Sales performance, Consumer attitude, Competition, Bakery business.

INTRODUCTION

Performance of firms are becoming a major concern to investors and managers of businesses; this is because it determines not only the survival of businesses but its continuity as well. Performance refers to how well an organization is achieving her goals and objectives. It measures the ability of a firm to effectively use her scarce resources to meet the need of her clients in exchange for a profit. There are many aspects of assessing the performance of organizations, one of which is sales (Faleye, 2022).

Sales performance is seen as a measure of how well a sales team or individual seller meets their sales goals and objectives. With reference to organization, it is seen as the measure of how well an organization is able to meet her sales target using the resources at her disposal (Mubarak, & Pougajendy, 2023). It's a way of evaluating the effectiveness of a sales team of an organization over a specific period of time.

Bakeries across the globe are experiencing boom in their sales performance, this is due to the importance of their products to the survival of human beings and the nations in general. However, the sale

performance of the bakery industry differs across the globe. Bakery firms in some countries or continents are doing better than bakery firms in other countries/continents (Udi, 2024). Bakery firms in developed countries like US, UK, France seem to be doing better than countries in other part of the globe. For instance, recent data in the US shows that the bakery industry in the country witness a significant increase in retail sales of baked goods, growing at a CAGR of 5.9% between 2018 and 2022, reaching a market size of \$82.9 billion in 2022; with bread being the top performing category, reaching \$30 billion in retail sales during the same period; the industry is expected to continue growing at a CAGR of 3.1% until 2026, reaching \$97.7 billion in retail sales by then (Le, 2024; Wunsch, 2024).

In Africa, recent report shows that the African bakery products market is expected to experience significant growth, with a projected CAGR of around 6.2% during the forecast period, indicating a positive sales performance trajectory across the continent; key factors driving this growth include rising urbanization, changing consumer preferences, and increasing demand for convenient bakery items (---). A look at the above statistics shows that the bakery industry in Africa is also thriving and is also full of potentials that are yet to be explore. The ability to explore these potentials varies from one African country to another. In Nigeria, the bakery industry is a large and growing part of the food processing industry. It's characterized by high competition and a variety of baked goods, including bread, biscuits, cakes, and pastries and the production of these products is been affected by the macro and micro economic variables in the country.

To overcome these challenges, bakery businesses have employed so many strategies, the purpose of employing these challenges is to enable them carry out their mandate of providing staple foods to Nigerians thereby increase their sales. One of the strategies firms in this industry are employing to enhance their sales performance is the use of branding. This strategy is aiding in ensuring brand loyalty.

Brand loyalty is a situation in which a customer or client purchase from a particular brand over and over again despite the presence of competitors selling the same product (Kopp, 2025). This method of increasing sales performance makes customers to associates positive feelings or admiration toward a particular product/service and these feelings aid to retain customers via repeated purchase. The loyalty of consumers to a particular brand depends on the attitude of the consumers.

The bakery industry in Bauchi State, Nigeria shares the same history with others in Nigeria and in the problems bedevilling the bakery industry as well. Some of the problems as listed by Njoku & Kalu (2015) includes but not limited to low profit margin as a result of high cost of production, infrastructural deficit, high operation cost, and stiff competition. Increase in the price of flour and sugar in the market has also had adverse effect on bakery industry in Bauchi State, Nigeria. Hence, having competitive advantage seems the only way to survive in the industry.

The primary ingredient for producing bread and other bakery products are mostly flour, sugar and butter. The prices of these products have been increasing in Nigeria. Udi, (2024) observed that there is a dramatic increase in the cost of the raw materials used for bakery businesses in Nigeria and this is leading to a corresponding increase in the prices of bakery products. Bakers in Nigeria have seen a nearly 100% increase in the cost of flour from April 2023 to December 2024 and the cost are still soaring to a point that is seriously affecting the sales of most baked foods (Udi, 2024). This increment cut across all the raw materials use in bakery business.

The problem of epileptic power supply in Nigeria has persisted for decades despite the efforts of various government to abate it. This persistent problem is making businesses in the country to either close down or look for alternative source of power supply which increase the cost of doing business in the country. This excludes the sudden unimaginable increase in the cost of power in the country. People that are into bakery businesses either purchase generator or depend on unreliable supply of electricity by PHCN which affect the supply of their products to their clients thereby reduce the loyalty of customers to their products.

Most bakery businesses in Nigeria lack the requisite market strategies to use in penetrating the market or retain their existing customers. Consistency in the production of quality products by bakery owners aid in ensuring brand loyalty. The absence of it makes customers to easily switch loyalty and such change in customers attitudes affect the sales performance of bakery firms.

Efforts have made by scholars to investigate the effect of brand loyalty on the purchase of a particular product or in determining the sales of a product. For instance, Saeed (2018) studied the impact of brand image on brand loyalty. Muhammad Shoaib (2015) investigated the associations between the brand image, advertisement and purchase behavior. Muhammad Irfan Tariq et al. (2018) explored the relationship with brand image and purchase intentions of young adults of Pakistan with respect to FMCGs. Muhammad, Mudasar and Ghafoor (2015) investigated the impact of customer satisfaction and brand image on brand loyalty. Khan (2017) studied the effect of brand related factors (Brand knowledge, brand relationship, behavioral intention, brand advertisement and past experience about the brand) on the purchase intention of the customers.

The above empirical reviews revealed some gaps. The first one is that past literatures on the area of brand loyal and sales performance are scarce; scholars who attempted to carry out such investigation only established direct relation. The use of a mediator or moderator to carry out such investigation is yet to be properly explore. Lastly, literatures on the effect of brand loyalty on sales performance in the bakery industry is still at its development stage. It is in this light that the study seeks to investigate the mediating role of consumer attitude in the relationship between brand loyalty and sales performance of bakery firms in Bauchi State. The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To evaluate the effect of brand loyalty on the sales performance of bakery businesses in Bauchi state.
- ii. To determine the effect of brand loyalty on consumer attitude of bakery businesses in Bauchi state.
- iii. To ascertain the effect of consumer attitude in mediate sales performance of bakery businesses in Bauchi state.
- iv. To determine the effect of consumer attitudes on the sales performance of bakery businesses in Bauchi state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sales Performance

Sales performance is a combination of sales effectiveness - a company's sales professionals' ability to "win" at each stage of the customer's buying process and ultimately earn the business on the right terms and in the right timeframe - and sales efficiency - the speed with which each task in the sales process is completed (Okocha et al, 2021). Sales performance is a direct inducement that provides an additional value or incentive for the product to the sales force, distributors, or consumers with the primary goal of generating an immediate sale. Sales performance reflects the level of customer loyalty to a company or an individual employee. In this study, sales performance was operationalized using the following metrics: sales volume and profitability (Falaye, 2022).

As businesses become more optimistic about future growth opportunities, the pressure is on sales organizations to meet ever-increasing revenue targets. For these reasons, improving sales performance in the economy necessitates a more rigorous and data-driven approach to fundamental sales processes such as strategic planning, territory allocation, resource planning, and compensation programming. The extent of actual work performed by an individual or the extent to which actual work is demonstrated by an individual can be defined as performance. Tactical selling approaches simply do not work in an era of increasing competition and tense negotiations with buyers (Okocha et al, 2021).

Branding

Branding is the process of creating a strong, positive perception of a company, its products or services in the customer's mind by combining such elements as logo, design, mission statement, and a consistent theme throughout all marketing communications. Effective branding helps companies differentiate themselves from their competitors and build a loyal customer base (Mubarak & Pougajendy, 2023). Today, the market is very competitive and there is an intense competition to acquire consumers and the

trend is increasing. This competitive environment enables consumers with many options and to choose from a variety of products. They stated that in such a dilemma consumers' ultimate decision is determined by various other factors (Mubarak & Pougajendy, 2023).

Consumer Attitude

Consumer attitudes are defined as feelings about a certain service or product, and they are a crucial aspect in building effective competitive strategies. As a result, businesses are actively working to enhance consumers' attitudes toward their products. Several previous studies have shown that customer attitude affects their behavior (Mukherjee and Banerjee, 2019). The importance of attitude as a predictor of purchase intentions have been studied in the theory of planned behavior (Alimamy and Al-Imamy, 2021).

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Theory of Brand Congruity

Theory of Brand Congruity was founded by Gardner and Levy in 1955. Congruity theory, focuses on the importance of brand messaging and consistency. When a brand's messaging is congruent with a customer's beliefs and values, they are more likely to engage with the brand and develop a sense of loyalty. Brand congruity theory, influences consumer behavior in a way that results in the purchase of a bakery product and this increase the sales performance of bakery industry (Johar & Sirgy, 1989). In other hand, Brand congruity theory may not be an important factor in purchase and evaluation of all product categories. Some products are more conspicuous or rely more heavily on image. Brand congruity theory is applicable to this study because it has been associated with purchase intention, where it effects the consumer decision making to purchase a product that is congruent with his/her self-image. This is supported by the study finding of (Nor, et al. (2022) that self-congruity has a positive relationship with purchase intention hence promote sales performance of Bakery industry.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was formulated by Icek Ajzen in (1985). TPB's ability to bridge cognitive, social, and technological domains positions it as a vital framework for addressing contemporary challenges. The current study apply Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as it offer a profound insights into how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape intentions and behaviors of people to buy a bakery product and this enable Bakery industry to boost it product sales. The theory is criticised by its sufficiency assumption that attitudes, norms, and control are adequate overlooks additional factors like emotions or habits, requiring expanded models (Gawronski & Strack, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted quantitative approach, a cross-sectional survey design was used for data collection. Similarly, the unit of analysis used for the study is individual unit of analysis. The population of this study consists of all the Bakeries in Bauchi State with the population figure of 1500 (Bauchi State Association of Bakers, 2023). The Stratified sampling technique was employed for this study. The sample for this study was determined using Taro Yamane's formula of sample size determination and arrived at 315 sample size.

The data collection instrument used for the purpose of this study was basically questionnaire. Data for this study was analyse using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) through SEMinR package.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
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Gender	Male	174	50.9
	Female	168	49.1
	Total	342	100.0
Age	Below 25 years	40	11.7
	25-30	92	26.9
	31-35	75	21.9
	36-40	94	27.5
	41 & above	41	12.0
	Total	342	100.0
Educational Qualification	SSCE	56	16.4
	OND/NCE	117	34.2
	BSs/HND	117	34.2
	MSc/MBA	52	15.2
	Total	342	100.0
Marital Status	Single	162	47.4
	Married	180	52.6
	Total	342	100.0

Source: SPSS Version 26, (2025)

The gender distribution indicates a near-equal representation, with male respondents constituting 50.9% (n = 174) and female respondents comprising 49.1% (n = 168). Age distribution among respondents highlights that the majority fall within the 25 - 30 years (26.9%, n = 92) and 36 - 40 years (27.5%, n = 94) age groups. Additionally, respondents aged below 25 years account for 11.7% (n = 40), while those aged 31 - 35 years and 41 years and above constitute 21.9% (n = 75) and 12.0% (n = 41), respectively. Educational qualifications among respondents indicate that the largest groups hold either an Ordinary National Diploma (OND)/Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) or a Bachelor's degree/Higher National Diploma (HND), each representing 34.2% (n = 117) of the total sample. Respondents with a Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) qualification constitute 16.4% (n = 56), while those with postgraduate degrees (MSc/MBA) make up 15.2% (n = 52). The marital status distribution shows that married individuals form the majority of the respondents, accounting for 52.6% (n = 180), while single respondents represent 47.4% (n = 162).

Assessment of Measurement Model (Outer Model)

This section assessed the validity and reliability of the constructs used. In PLS-SEM, the measurement model represents the relationships between the observed indicators (manifest variables) and the underlying latent constructs (factors). First, we calculated the outer model evaluation using four components: convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, and construct reliability. To do this, PLS Algorithm was run to produce the factor loadings, average variance extracted, heterotrait monotrait (HTMT) ratio, Cronbach alpha, composite reliability and indicator's reliability.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is concerned with the extent to which a set of indicators are representative of the construct they are meant to measure; and, whether a construct and its associated indicators are significantly distinct or different from other constructs in the overall model (Vogt, 1993). Table 2 presents the results of the outer model assessment, providing valuable information about the measurement model's performance. As observed from the table, all variables, namely brand loyalty (BL), consumer behaviour (CB) and sales performance (SP), demonstrate favourable loading scores ranging from 0.908 to 0.746. These robust loading values indicate that the variables satisfy the criteria of convergent validity, as they surpass the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Chin, 2009; Hair et al., 2013, 2019).

Table 2 Factor Loadings

	Brand Loyalty	Consumer Attitude	Sales Performance
BL1	0.820		
BL2	0.835		
BL3	0.837		
BL4	0.808		
BL5	0.894		
SP1		0.908	
SP2		0.884	
SP3		0.858	
SP4		0.851	
SP5		0.790	
CA1			0.870
CA2			0.883
CA3			0.701
CA4			0.736
CA5			0.746

Source: SEMinR, (2025)

Additionally, the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) scores for all constructs were found to be greater than 0.5, meeting the criteria for convergent validity. The AVE scores, ranging from 0.598 to 0.738, indicate that each variable's variance shared with its indicators is higher than its shared variance with other constructs, further confirming the convergent validity of the measurement model (Hair et al., 2011). These findings affirm that the measurement model effectively captures the unique characteristics of the constructs and ensures reliable and valid interpretations of the relationships in the study (see Table 3).

Table 3 Average Variance Extracted Statistics

	AVE
	> 0.5
Brand Loyalty	0.704
Consumer Behaviour	0.598
Sales Performance	0.738

Source: SEMinR, (2025)

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity, which measures the distinctiveness of different concepts, is crucial in ensuring that valid measures of each concept do not correlate too highly with one another (Bagozzi et al., 1991). To assess the dissimilarity between the construct measures in this study, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of correlations was employed, favoured over other approaches due to its reliability in detecting discriminant validity issues (Henseler et al., 2015; Ali et al., 2018). The HTMT represents the mean value of the correlations between indicators across constructs relative to the mean average correlations of indicators measuring the same construct. Table 4 displays the HTMT ratios for all constructs, and it reveals that all values were within the threshold of 0.90, providing strong support for the establishment of discriminant validity.

Table 4 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Criterion

	BL	CA	SP
Brand Loyalty	1.000		

Consumer Attitude	0.961	1.000	
Sales Performance	0.885	0.947	1.000

Source: SEMinR, (2025)

Composite Reliability

Table 5 also illustrates that all variables, including Brand Loyalty, Consumer Attitude and Sales Performance have the CR value of 0.922, 0.880 and 0.934, respectively (≥ 0.70), meaning that the variables have confirmed the composite reliability formula (Chin, 2009; Hair et al., 2013). Accordingly, Cronbach Alpha (α) value of including Brand Loyalty, Consumer Attitude and Sales Performance were 0.895, 0.829 and 0.911 (≥ 0.70), which means that these variables have satisfied the composite reliability.

Table 5 Internal Consistency (Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability)

	alpha	rhoC
Brand Loyalty	0.895	0.922
Consumer Behaviour	0.829	0.880
Sales Performance	0.911	0.934

Source: SEMinR, (2025)

Construct Reliability

Indicator reliability revealed the extent each construct has much in common with their associated indicator. It is the square of the standardised indicator outer loadings, showing the amount of indicator variance explained by the latent variable. To evaluate the indicator reliability, all indicator's outer loadings or factor loadings should be statistically significant with a standardised outer loadings value of ≥ 0.50 (Hair et al., 2020). Table 4.6 present each indicator's reliability, and all constructs are well above the minimum acceptable level for outer loadings. Figure 1 displays the loadings of each construct alongside the coefficient values.

Table 6 Construct Reliability

Variable	Indicator	Indicator Reliability > 0.5
Brand Loyalty	BL1	0.820
	BL2	0.835
	BL3	0.837
	BL4	0.808
	BL5	0.894
Sales Performance	SP1	0.908
	SP2	0.884
	SP3	0.858
	SP4	0.851
	SP5	0.870
Consumer Attitude	CA1	0.883
	CA2	0.701
	CA3	0.636
	CA4	0.746
	CA5	0.838

Source: SEMinR, (2025)

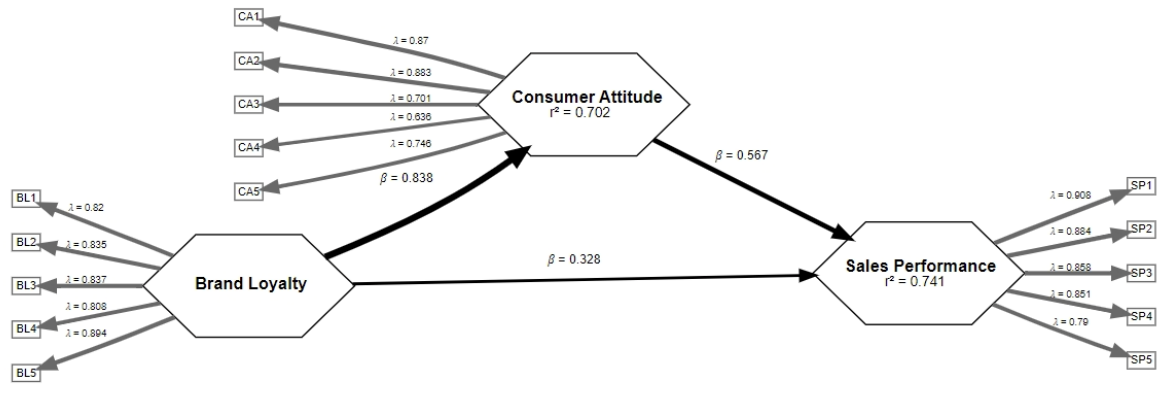


Figure 1: Reflective Construct Measurement Model

This model is applied to ensure that the reliability and validity of construct measures and therefore provides support for the suitability of their inclusion in the path model (Joseph & Thomas, 2021).

Model Explanatory Power (R^2 - Coefficient of Determination)

R-Square (R^2) test is aimed at understanding the endogenous latent variable has predictive power to the model or not. In summary, the R^2 value shows the strength of the prediction accuracy. As for the rule of R^2 , the values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 disclose that the model is strong, moderate, and weak. The test results showed that the R-square of sales performance and consumer attitude variables are 0.741 and 0.702, which means that the brand loyalty and consumer attitude can explain 74.1% percent variance in sales performance, while 70.2% variance in consumer attitude can be explained by brand loyalty with a strong predictive level. See table below:

Table 7 Model Explanatory Power (R^2 - Coefficient of Determination)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Sales Performance	0.741	0.739
Consumer Attitude	0.702	0.701

Source: SEMinR, (2025)

Model Explanatory Power (The effect size test (f^2))

The effect size test (f^2) aims to evaluate the extent of the correlation of the latent predictor variable (exogenous latent variable) on the structural model. Accordingly, there are three main criteria, which are 0.02 (small), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large). The prior calculation shows that the brand loyalty f^2 value on sales performance is 0.125 indicates a medium effect size, and on consumer attitude is 2.359, which indicates a large effect sizes. Consumer attitude f^2 value on sales performance is 0.350, which indicates a large effect size as shown in table 8.

Table 8 Model Explanatory Power (f^2 - Effect Size)

	f^2 (f -Sq)	Magnitude
BL ->SP	0.125	Medium
BL->CA	2.359	Large
CA ->SP	0.350	Large

Source: SEMinR, (2025)

Note: BL – Brand Loyalty; SP – Sales Performance; CA – Consumer Attitude

Table 9 Direct Relationship Path Coefficient Assessment

Relationship	Beta Coefficient	Bootstra p	T Stat.	2.5% LCI	97.5 %	Decision
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	(β)	SD			UCI	
Brand Loyalty ->Sales Performance	0.803	0.025	32.487	0.753	0.843	Rejected
Brand Loyalty ->Consumer Attitude	0.838	0.021	40.603	0.792	0.872	Rejected
Consumer Attitude ->Sales Performance	0.567	0.060	9.406	0.450	0.677	Rejected

Source: SEMinR, (2025)

$P < 0.05^*$

CI – Confidence Interval

STDEV – Standard Deviation

Testing for the Direct Relationship

In testing for the direct relationship, the results on the paths between brand loyalty and sales performance (t -value = 32.487, $CI = (0.753, 0.848)$), brand loyalty and consumer attitude (t -value = 40.603, $CI = (0.792, 0.872)$) and consumer attitude and sales performance (t -value = 9.406, $CI = (0.450, 0.677)$), were all found to be positive and significant.

Testing for the Indirect Relationship

The indirect relationship showed the structural model path coefficient assessment with the mediator variable.

Test of Mediation

This is done through, and evidence of mediation is established when the indirect effect is statistically significant with t -value > 1.96 , two tailed, $p < 0.05$. The results displayed in Table 9 evidenced the mediation effect of consumer attitude in the relationship between brand loyalty and sales performance. From table 9, the indirect effect of consumer attitude was positive and significant for the path way relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the effect of brand loyalty on the sales performance of bakery businesses in Bauchi State; the mediating role of Consumer Attitude. Grounded in the Theory of Brand Congruity and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the study provided empirical evidence on how brand loyalty and consumer attitude contribute to sales performance. The results revealed that brand loyalty significantly enhances both consumer attitude and sales performance, while consumer attitude mediates the relationship between brand loyalty and sales performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance brand loyalty, consumer attitude, and sales performance in bakery firms in Bauchi State:

- i. Bakery firms in Bauchi State should implement strategic customer engagement initiatives such as personalized loyalty programs, promotional discounts, and exceptional customer service to foster repeat patronage and long-term brand loyalty.
- ii. Enhancing consumer attitude through effective brand communication, including clear messaging, high-quality packaging, and social media engagement, will further boost sales performance of bakery industry in Bauchi State.
- iii. Given the increasing influence of digital platforms, firms should leverage online marketing strategies such as social media advertising, influencer partnerships, and targeted email campaigns to boost brand awareness and sales. Similarly, to sustain sales performance, bakery firms in Bauchi State must prioritize product quality and innovation by introducing new varieties, maintaining consistency in taste and freshness, and adapting to consumer preferences.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Further studies could examine the impact of Brand design on consumer behavior and brand loyalty in the bakery sector.

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