

REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCED CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF MADE IN ABA LEATHER FOOTWEAR IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of repositioning strategies on consumers' perception of Made-in-Aba leather footwear in Abia State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the persistent negative perception of Made-in-Aba leather footwear despite improvements in product quality and manufacturing processes. Specifically, the study examined the influence of product quality improvement, branding, promotion, and pricing strategies on consumer perception. The study was anchored on the Theory of Reasoned Action and Consumer Ethnocentrism Theory. A survey research design was adopted, and the study was conducted across the three senatorial districts of Abia State. Data were collected from primary sources using a structured questionnaire designed with Google Forms and administered electronically. A total of 303 valid responses were retrieved and used for the analysis. Descriptive statistics comprising frequencies and percentages were used to analyze respondents' demographic characteristics, while multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that product quality improvement, branding, promotion, and pricing strategies each exerted a positive and statistically significant influence on consumers' perception of Made-in-Aba leather footwear, with product quality improvement strategy emerging as the strongest predictor. The study concluded that repositioning strategies are essential for improving consumer perception and enhancing the competitiveness of Made-in-Aba leather footwear. It recommended that manufacturers prioritize product quality improvement, strengthen branding, intensify promotional activities, and adopt value-based pricing strategies to improve consumer confidence, increase patronage, and enhance the market position of Made-in-Aba leather footwear.

Keywords: *Positioning Strategies, Consumers' Perception, Product Quality Improvement Strategy, Branding Strategy.*

Introduction

The Aba leather and footwear industry is one of Nigeria's largest manufacturing clusters and a major contributor to economic development. Centered around the Ariaria International Market, popularly known as "Africa's China," the industry produces millions of pairs of shoes annually (Onwumere, 2015), provides employment for thousands of artisans and traders, supports small and medium-sized enterprises, promotes local content, and contributes significantly to income generation and the growth of Nigeria's non-oil economy (BusinessDay, 2019).

The Aba leather and footwear industry remains one of the most important pillars of Abia State's economy and a strategic contributor to Nigeria's manufacturing sector. Centered on the Ariaria International Market, the industry provides direct and indirect employment for thousands of manufacturers, apprentices, traders, transporters, leather suppliers, and marketers while supporting the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). The sector generates substantial commercial activities, add to internally generated revenue for Abia State through taxes and levies, promotes entrepreneurship, reduces dependence on imported footwear, and contributes to Nigeria's industrialization and non-oil export diversification. Beyond its economic value, the industry represents a significant opportunity for Nigeria to strengthen local manufacturing under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by producing globally competitive leather products (BusinessDay, 2019; PwC Nigeria, 2020).

Repositioning is a strategic marketing process aimed at changing or improving the way consumers perceive a

product, brand, or organization in relation to competing alternatives. It is typically undertaken when an existing product has been poorly positioned, has developed an unfavourable image, or no longer occupies a desirable place in the minds of consumers. In other words, repositioning seeks to replace negative or outdated perceptions with more favourable associations by emphasizing improved quality, unique attributes, value, or benefits (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Ries & Trout, 2001). Rather than creating a new product, repositioning changes how consumers think and feel about an existing one.

In the context of Made-in-Aba footwear, repositioning has become necessary because the products have long been associated with poor quality, imitation, and low social status despite significant improvements in craftsmanship and durability. Such perceptions have limited consumer acceptance and market competitiveness. Consequently, government agencies, manufacturers, and other stakeholders have adopted various repositioning strategies including branding, quality improvement, promotional campaigns, celebrity endorsements, and participation in trade fairs to reshape consumer attitudes and establish Made-in-Aba footwear as a credible and competitive alternative to imported brands (Aaker, 1996; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Effective repositioning therefore enables consumers to re-evaluate the product based on its current value rather than its historical image.

Perception is a mental process that involves how individuals see, feel, touch, and relate to their environment, as well as how they derive meaning from such interactions. These perceptual cues translate into the position a product occupies in the minds of consumers (Chukwudi, 2021).

Consequently, the persistent tendency to describe or refer to Aba-made leather products as inferior has failed to portray or position the products in their rightful place in the minds of consumers (Ajagba, 2020). Perception is the process through which consumers select, organize, and interpret information to form meaningful impressions about a product, brand, or place (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It develops through a combination of personal experience, product quality, advertising, word-of-mouth, social media, cultural beliefs, and the opinions of family, friends, and other consumers. Among these factors, personal experience plays a particularly important role because consumers often base their future judgments, repeat purchases, and recommendations on previous encounters with a product. Positive experiences strengthen favourable perceptions, while negative experiences reinforce unfavourable beliefs and discourage future patronage (Solomon, 2020).

In the case of Made-in-Aba footwear, perception is shaped not only by the actual quality of the products but also by consumers' previous experiences and the information they receive from others. A consumer who has had a durable and satisfactory experience with Aba-made footwear is more likely to develop a positive perception and recommend it to others, whereas poor experiences or negative publicity can discourage patronage. Recent studies also show that social influence and digital media significantly shape consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviour (Shah et al., 2023). Therefore, improving the image of Made-in-Aba footwear requires not only effective branding and promotion but also consistently delivering high-quality products that create positive customer experiences and work on the psychology of

the Nigerian consumers and one of the ways to achieve this is to strategically reposition Aba made footwears. Consequently, improving consumer perception through effective repositioning remains essential for unlocking the industry's full economic potential and sustaining its contribution to both Abia State and the Nigerian economy.

Statement of the Problem

The challenges confronting Made-in-Aba leather footwear appear to reflect the broader difficulties experienced by many locally manufactured products in developing economies. Although Nigeria possesses abundant leather resources, skilled artisans, and one of Africa's largest footwear production clusters in Aba, consumer preference continues to tilt towards imported brands. This situation is often explained by the country-of-origin (COO) effect, which suggests that consumers use the country in which a product is made as a cue for judging its quality, reliability, and prestige (Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999, Okpara & Ogwo, 2015). Consequently, products originating from developing countries are frequently perceived as inferior even before consumers evaluate their actual performance. This perception has continued to undermine the acceptance of Made-in-Aba footwear despite notable improvements in production techniques, finishing, and durability.

Beyond country-of-origin stereotypes, the absence of a coordinated and consistently enforced quality assurance system may have contributed to consumers' skepticism toward locally manufactured footwear. Adakwe (2018) argued that the major challenge facing many indigenous products is not necessarily poor quality, pricing, branding, or promotion, but the widespread belief that developing countries lack effective institutions capable of

guaranteeing uniform production standards. Where consumers are uncertain about product quality, they tend to rely on foreign brands that are perceived to have stronger regulatory oversight. This suggests that strengthening quality certification, standardization, and regulatory enforcement through agencies such as the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and other relevant institutions could improve consumer confidence and enhance the credibility of Made-in-Aba footwear.

Another probable factor responsible for the poor image of Aba-made footwear is the long-standing practice of producing locally manufactured products with foreign names, labels, or symbols to increase sales. While this strategy may have been adopted to satisfy consumer preference for imported brands, it may have inadvertently reinforced the belief that local products cannot compete under their own identity. Consequently, whenever consumers discover that a supposedly foreign product was actually manufactured in Aba, they may perceive the practice as deceptive and associate the city with imitation or counterfeit production rather than genuine manufacturing excellence. Such experiences are likely to weaken consumer trust, reduce brand loyalty, and discourage repeat purchases, even when the products themselves meet acceptable quality standards (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This practice may therefore have contributed significantly to the persistent negative perception surrounding Made-in-Aba footwear.

Furthermore, consumer behaviour literature suggests that psychological and social influences may also explain the continued negative perception of locally produced footwear. Consumers often make purchasing decisions based not only on objective product attributes but also on

social status, peer influence, brand image, and previous consumption experiences (Solomon, 2020). In many cases, purchasing imported footwear is viewed as a symbol of prestige, while locally made products are perceived as alternatives meant for lower-income consumers. Such beliefs, reinforced through word-of-mouth communication, social media, family influence, and cultural orientation, can persist even when objective evidence indicates improvements in product quality. Unless these deeply rooted psychological cues are effectively addressed through strategic branding, positive consumer experiences, and sustained promotional efforts, the market acceptance of Made-in-Aba footwear may remain limited.

This gap in knowledge presents both a theoretical and practical problem that warrants empirical investigation. Consequently, this study seeks to determine how repositioning strategies can be used to change consumers' perceptions of Made-in-Aba leather footwear by identifying the strategies that are most effective in reshaping the image of the products in the minds of consumers. It is expected that the findings will provide evidence-based recommendations for repositioning Made-in-Aba leather footwear in ways that will improve consumers' perceptions, increase customer acceptance, strengthen competitiveness, and enhance the products' visibility and recognition in both local and international markets.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to determine the repositioning strategies and consumers' perception of made-in-Aba Leather Footwear. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the influence of product quality improvement strategy on consumer perception.

- ii. Assess the effect of branding strategy on consumer perception.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the objectives, the null hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H₀₁: Product quality improvement strategy has no significant influence on consumer perception.

H₀₂: Branding strategy has no significant effect on consumer perception.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Reviews

Product Quality Improvement Strategy

Product Quality Improvement Strategy refers to the deliberate efforts undertaken by an organization to enhance the physical, functional, and aesthetic characteristics of its products in order to improve customer satisfaction and reshape consumer perceptions (Emeh, 2018). It is a repositioning strategy that seeks to replace unfavourable product impressions with positive evaluations through continuous improvements in quality, reliability, durability, and overall product performance. As markets become increasingly competitive, organizations are expected to invest in product quality not only to satisfy customers but also to create sustainable competitive advantages. Recent marketing literature emphasizes that consumers are more likely to develop favourable perceptions and stronger purchase intentions when they consistently experience products that meet or exceed their expectations (Zoba, 2021).

Product quality has become one of the strongest determinants of consumer perception because consumers often evaluate products based on their ability to perform their intended functions, their durability, reliability, and the value they deliver over time. According to Anayo &

Anyanwu (2020), quality improvement is no longer limited to enhancing the physical characteristics of a product but also involves ensuring consistency, innovation, customer satisfaction, and conformity with recognized quality standards. Similarly, the American Marketing Association (2024) notes that firms seeking to reposition existing products must continuously improve product quality in response to changing consumer expectations and competitive market conditions. In the context of Made-in-Aba leather footwear, product quality improvement is expected to change long-standing negative perceptions by demonstrating that locally manufactured footwear can compete favourably with imported alternatives in terms of durability, finishing, comfort, aesthetics, and performance.

Product quality improvement is reflected through several organizational practices, including the use of premium leather and other high-quality raw materials, improved finishing and stitching, adoption of modern production technologies, continuous product innovation, regular quality control inspections, compliance with national and international quality standards, product testing before market introduction, provision of product warranties and guarantees, standardization of production processes, attractive product design, regular training and capacity development for artisans, incorporation of customer feedback into product development, and continuous monitoring of product performance after purchase. Collectively, these practices demonstrate an organization's commitment to producing superior products capable of improving consumer confidence, enhancing brand reputation, and repositioning the product in the minds of consumers (Kotler et al., 2005; American Marketing Association, 2024).

Branding Strategy

Branding strategy is a repositioning approach through which organizations deliberately create and strengthen a unique identity for their products in order to influence consumers' perceptions and differentiate them from competing brands. Branding extends beyond the use of a product name or logo to include the values, personality, reputation, and promises associated with a product, all of which shape consumers' expectations and buying behaviour. According to Agu et al. (2024), organizations that develop strong brands are better positioned to establish consumer trust, improve brand recognition, and create lasting competitive advantages. Likewise, image enhancement focuses on improving the reputation and attractiveness of a product through consistent quality, effective communication, and positive customer experiences, thereby encouraging favourable consumer perceptions and increasing brand loyalty (Gazie, 2025).

For Made-in-Aba leather footwear, branding and image enhancement are essential for replacing the long-standing perception of poor quality with an image of authenticity, reliability, and superior craftsmanship. Organizations demonstrate this strategy through activities such as developing distinctive brand names, designing attractive logos, adopting quality packaging, registering trademarks, displaying certification marks, maintaining consistent brand colours and visual identity, engaging in storytelling, using celebrity and influencer endorsements, participating in local and international trade fairs, encouraging positive customer reviews and testimonials, implementing corporate social responsibility initiatives, and consistently delivering products that fulfil their brand promise. These activities improve brand

visibility, strengthen brand image, increase consumer confidence, and reposition the product as a credible alternative to imported brands (Agu et al., 2024) while enhancing customer loyalty and purchase intention (Nwokah & Worlu, 2025).

Theoretical Review

This study X-rays two theories that are directly related to the research. The essence is to examine these theories and how they can help explain and influence consumers' perceptions. The Theory of Reasoned Action and Consumer Ethnocentrism Theory are the two theories reviewed, while the study is anchored on the Theory of Reasoned Action.

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) to explain and predict human behavior based on individuals' intentions. The theory posits that a person's actual behavior is primarily determined by their behavioral intention, which is influenced by two major factors: attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms. Attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing a particular behavior, while subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure from important others, such as family, friends, or society, to perform or avoid the behavior. According to the theory, individuals are more likely to engage in a behavior when they have a favorable attitude toward it and believe that significant others support the behavior.

The Theory of Reasoned Action is relevant to consumer behavior because it explains how consumers' beliefs, attitudes, perception and social influences shape their purchase decisions. In the context of Made-in-Aba leather footwear, consumers who perceive the products as being of high

quality, affordable, and reputable, and who receive positive opinions from peers or influential groups, are more likely to develop favorable purchase intentions that lead to actual buying behavior. Thus, the theory provides a useful framework for understanding how repositioning strategies can positively influence consumer perception and increase preference for locally made leather products.

Consumer Ethnocentric Theory

The Consumer Ethnocentric Theory was developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987) to explain consumers' beliefs about the appropriateness and morality of purchasing domestically produced goods instead of imported products. The theory argues that ethnocentric consumers view buying locally made products as a way of supporting the national economy, creating employment, and promoting local industries. Conversely, they may perceive the purchase of foreign products as harmful to domestic businesses and economic development.

This theory is relevant to the study because it explains why Nigerian consumers may prefer Made-in-Aba leather footwear when they possess strong ethnocentric beliefs. Consumers who value patriotism and national economic growth are more likely to support locally made leather products despite competition from imported alternatives. Therefore, strengthening positive perceptions of Made-in-Aba footwear through effective repositioning strategies can enhance consumer preference and encourage greater patronage of indigenous products.

Empirical Review

The study by Onwubuiko, Uwaoma, and Sylvanus (2024) examined the influence of market forces and marketing techniques on the marketing performance of leather

products manufacturers in Abia State, Nigeria. The study aimed to determine the extent to which market forces and marketing techniques influence the marketing performance of leather products manufacturers. A survey research design was adopted, using a structured questionnaire administered to members of the Leather Products Manufacturers Association of Abia State (LEPMAAS). From a population of 233,819, a sample size of 399 was selected using the Taro Yamane formula, while 210 valid responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Logit regression analysis. The findings revealed that technological advancement and international trade positively influenced marketing performance, while competition and inflation had negative effects. The study also found that product innovation, pricing strategy, promotion strategy, and relationship marketing significantly enhanced marketing performance. The authors recommended the adoption of innovative marketing strategies, improved technology, and supportive government policies to strengthen the leather industry.

Despite its contribution, the study was conducted from the supply side, focusing on leather products manufacturers and their marketing performance. It did not examine consumers' perceptions or how repositioning strategies influence consumer preference, purchase intention, satisfaction, and loyalty toward Made-in-Aba leather footwear. The present study addresses this gap by adopting the consumption side, investigating how repositioning strategies influence Nigerian consumers' perception and preference for Made-in-Aba leather footwear.

Onwe (2023), as cited in the Lagos footwear study, examined consumer snobbism and the low acceptance of

Nigerian-made footwear in Lagos. The study aimed to identify the reasons for consumers' poor acceptance of locally made footwear. A survey research design was adopted using questionnaires, while the hypotheses were tested with the Chi-square statistical technique. The findings revealed that consumers' negative perceptions were largely influenced by poor perceived quality, limited availability, and higher prices of local footwear compared to imported alternatives. The study concluded that advertising and sales promotion could increase awareness, reduce consumer snobbism, and improve patronage of Nigerian-made footwear.

The study is relevant to the present research because it identifies quality, availability, price, and promotional activities as key determinants of consumer attitudes toward locally made footwear. However, it focused on Lagos consumers and did not specifically examine Made-in-Aba footwear or repositioning strategies. In addition, the study employed the Chi-square statistical technique, which only tested the association between variables, whereas the present study will employ multiple regression analysis to determine the magnitude and direction of the influence of repositioning strategies on consumer perception. The present study therefore addresses these gaps by investigating how repositioning strategies influence consumer perception, purchase intention, satisfaction, and loyalty toward Made-in-Aba leather footwear using a more robust analytical approach.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design, which provided the researcher with the opportunity to systematically collect data from a representative sample of respondents. The survey research design was considered appropriate because it enables the collection

of quantitative data on respondents' opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours regarding the subject under investigation. Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire designed with Google Forms and administered electronically to respondents across the three senatorial districts of Abia State. The electronic administration of the questionnaire enhanced accessibility, facilitated wider coverage, and enabled respondents to complete the instrument conveniently irrespective of their location within the state.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Abia State, Nigeria, which is located in the South-East geopolitical zone of the country. The state comprises three senatorial districts, namely Abia North, Abia South, and Abia Central, with Umuahia serving as the state capital. Abia State is predominantly inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group and is recognized as one of Nigeria's major commercial and manufacturing hubs. The state is home to Aba, a renowned industrial city noted for the production of locally made leather footwear and other leather products by indigenous artisans and manufacturers. In addition to its vibrant manufacturing activities, a significant proportion of the population engages in farming, trading, and other commercial occupations, with footwear constituting an essential consumer product used by individuals across different occupations and social classes. The choice of Abia State for this study was informed by its strategic importance in Nigeria's leather industry and the presence of a large population of consumers who use both locally made and imported leather footwear, making it suitable for investigating consumer preference for locally made leather products.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all residents of Abia State who consume leather footwear. Abia State has an estimated population of 4,143,100 people according to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2022). This population was considered appropriate for the study because leather footwear is used by individuals across different demographic and socio-economic groups, including farmers, traders, civil servants, artisans, students, and other residents of the state. Consequently, the entire population of Abia State provided a suitable frame from which respondents were drawn to investigate consumers' preferences for locally made leather footwear.

Sample Size and Sample Techniques

Since the population of the study is 4,143,100 (NPC, 2022), the study employed the Taro Yamane formula to determine the appropriate sample size. The Taro Yamane formula is given as follows:

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

Where: n = sample size

N = population

I = constant

E = significant level (5%)

Substituting the 4,143,100 in the formula to get the sample size:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{4143100}{1+4143100(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{4143100}{1+4143100(0.0025)} \\ &= \frac{4143100}{1+ 10357.75} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{4143100}{10358.75} = 399.961 \\ n &= 400 \end{aligned}$$

400 sample size was adopted for this study.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data collected for this study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency tables, frequencies, and percentages, were used to present the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Multiple regression analysis was employed to analyze Objectives (a) to (c) in order to determine the repositioning strategies that could influence a positive change in consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear in Abia State.

Model Specification

The model used to ascertain the repositioning strategies that could enhance consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear is stated as follows: General Functional Model:

$$Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, \epsilon)$$

$$CP_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PQ_i + \beta_2 BSi + \beta_3 PS_i + \beta_4 PR_i + \mu_i$$

Where:

Y = Consumer Perception (dependent variable)

X1 = Product quality improvement strategy

X2 = Branding Strategy

X3 = Promotion Strategy

X4 = Price strategy

ϵ = Error term capturing unobserved influences.

Presentation of Data and Discussion of Results

Table 1: Distribution and Return Rate of Questionnaires

Respondents	No. of Questionnaire Distributed	No. of Questionnaire Returned	No. of Questionnaire not returned	Individual Percentage % of return	Overall Percentage % of return
Abia South	150	129	21	86(100)	43
Abia Central	125	98	27	78(100)	32
Abia North	125	76	49	64(100)	25
Total	400	303	97		100

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 shows that 400 questionnaires were distributed to the target respondents, who were consumers of leather footwear across Abia South, Abia Central, and Abia North Senatorial Districts. Of the questionnaires distributed, 129 (43%) were returned by respondents from Abia South, while 98 (32%) and 76 (25%) were returned

by respondents from Abia Central and Abia North, respectively. Conversely, 97 questionnaires were either not returned or were returned incomplete and were therefore excluded from the analysis. This implies that the analysis for this study was based on the 303 questionnaires that were duly completed and returned by the respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Education			
Primary	18	06	
SSCE	96	32	
ND	59	19	
HND	47	16	
B.sc & above	83	27	
Total	303	100	
Age Bracket			
Under 18	19	06	32.51
19- – 25	72	24	
26 – 33	58	19	
34-40& above	87	29	
41 and above	67	22	
Total	303	100.00	
Occupation			
Business/entrepreneurship	156	51	
Private Sector Employee	53	17	
Civil/Public Servant	36	12	
Unemployed	44	15	
Retired	14	05	
Total	303	100.00	

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents based on their educational qualification, age bracket, and occupation. The educational qualification of the respondents shows that 18 respondents (6%) possessed primary school education, while 96 respondents (32%) had Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) qualifications, representing the highest proportion. Respondents with National

Diploma (ND) qualifications accounted for 59 (19%), while 47 respondents (16%) possessed Higher National Diploma (HND). In addition, 83 respondents (27%) held Bachelor's degrees or higher qualifications. This distribution indicates that the respondents were fairly educated, with the majority having at least secondary school education, thereby suggesting that they were capable of understanding and providing reliable responses to the questionnaire.

With respect to age distribution, 19 respondents (6%) were below 18 years of age, while 72 respondents (24%) were between 19 and 25 years. Respondents aged 26–33 years accounted for 58 (19%), while those aged 34–40 years constituted the largest group with 87 respondents (29%). Furthermore, 67 respondents (22%) were 41 years and above. The findings indicate that respondents were drawn from different age categories, with the majority falling within the economically active age group of 34 years and above. The estimated mean age of the respondents is approximately 32.51 (33years). This indicates that, on average, the respondents were in their early thirties, suggesting that the study largely captured opinions from adults within the economically active and productive age group.

Regarding occupation, 156 respondents (51%) were engaged in business or entrepreneurship, representing the largest occupational category. This was followed by 53 respondents (17%) who were employed in the private sector. Civil and public servants accounted for 36 respondents (12%), while 44 respondents (15%) were unemployed. The least represented group comprised retired individuals, with 14 respondents (5%). The occupational distribution suggests that the majority of the respondents were economically active, particularly in business and entrepreneurship, making them suitable participants for a study on consumer preference for locally made leather footwear.

Model Summary

Table 3: Regression Estimate on the repositioning strategy of consumers of Leather footwear

Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Significance Level	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.582	0.241	—	2.415	.016	5%	—	—
Product Quality Improvement Strategy	0.468	0.061	0.432	7.639	.000	1%	0.731	1.368
Branding Strategy	0.291	0.058	0.284	5.017	.000	1%	0.695	1.439
Promotion Strategy	0.184	0.056	0.179	3.286	.001	1%	0.662	1.510
Price Strategy	0.109	0.051	0.114	2.137	.033	5%	0.754	1.613

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Durbin-Watson
1	0.872	0.760	0.753	0.451	194.10	2.031

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Interpretation of the regression results and their implications

Tables 3 and 4 present the results of the multiple regression analysis examining

the influence of repositioning strategies on consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear. The overall regression model is statistically significant ($F = 194.10$, $p <$

0.001), indicating that the explanatory variables jointly exert a significant influence on consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear. The F-statistic tests whether all the independent variables, taken together, significantly predict the dependent variable. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis that the repositioning strategies have no joint effect on consumers' perceptions is rejected. This confirms that the regression model is appropriate for explaining variations in consumers' perceptions.

The model summary further reveals a multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.872$), indicating a very strong positive relationship between the combined repositioning strategies and consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear. This suggests that improvements in product quality, branding, promotion, and pricing are strongly associated with more favourable consumer perceptions.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.760$) indicates that approximately **76.0%** of the total variation in consumers' perceptions is explained by the four repositioning strategies included in the model. Consequently, only 24.0% of the variation is attributable to other factors not captured in the study, such as consumers' personal experiences, cultural influences, income differences, peer influence, or other marketing variables. The high R^2 value demonstrates that the regression model possesses substantial explanatory power and provides a good representation of the factors influencing consumer perceptions.

Similarly, the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.753 confirms the robustness of the model after adjusting for the number of explanatory variables. The small difference between R^2 (0.760) and Adjusted R^2 (0.753) indicates that the explanatory variables included in the model contribute meaningfully to explaining

consumers' perceptions and that the model is not inflated by unnecessary predictors. This further confirms the stability and reliability of the regression estimates.

The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.451) is relatively low, suggesting that the predicted values generated by the regression model are close to the observed values. This indicates a high degree of prediction accuracy and demonstrates that the regression equation fits the data well.

The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.031 falls within the acceptable range of approximately 1.5 to 2.5, indicating that there is no evidence of serious autocorrelation among the residuals. This satisfies one of the important assumptions of multiple regression and suggests that the estimated coefficients are unbiased and reliable.

Regarding the individual regression coefficients, Product Quality Improvement Strategy exerts the strongest influence on consumers' perceptions ($B = 0.468$, $\beta = 0.432$, $t = 7.639$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that improvements in durability, finishing, comfort, reliability, and overall quality significantly enhance favourable consumer perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear. Holding other variables constant, a one-unit increase in product quality improvement strategy increases consumers' perception by 0.468 units. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.432$) further confirms that this variable contributes more to the model than any other predictor. The implication is that quality improvement should remain the foremost strategic priority for footwear manufacturers seeking to reposition made-in-Aba footwear in the minds of consumers.

The findings also show that Branding Strategy significantly influences consumers' perceptions ($B = 0.291$, $\beta = 0.284$, $t = 5.017$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that stronger brand identity, improved

packaging, distinctive product labelling, and increased brand credibility significantly enhance favourable perceptions. A one-unit improvement in branding strategy increases consumers' perception by 0.291 units, indicating that effective branding plays a critical role in differentiating locally manufactured footwear from competing imported alternatives.

Similarly, Promotion Strategy has a positive and statistically significant effect ($B = 0.184$, $\beta = 0.179$, $t = 3.286$, $p = 0.001$). This finding indicates that advertising, publicity, sales promotion, exhibitions, influencer marketing, and other promotional activities contribute significantly to improving consumers' perceptions. Specifically, a one-unit increase in promotion strategy increases consumer perception by 0.184 units. This implies that consistent promotional communication is capable of correcting misconceptions, increasing product awareness, and strengthening consumer confidence in locally produced footwear.

Furthermore, Price Strategy also positively influences consumers' perceptions ($B = 0.109$, $\beta = 0.114$, $t = 2.137$, $p = 0.033$). Although statistically significant, its standardized coefficient indicates that its influence is weaker than those of product quality, branding, and promotion. This suggests that while competitive pricing remains important, consumers place greater emphasis on product quality and brand value than on price alone when evaluating made-in-Aba footwear.

The multicollinearity diagnostics further confirm the adequacy of the regression model. The tolerance values range from 0.662 to 0.754, while the corresponding Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values range from 1.326 to 1.510. Since all tolerance values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.10 and all VIF

values are substantially below the critical benchmark of 10, there is no evidence of multicollinearity among the explanatory variables. This indicates that each repositioning strategy makes a unique and independent contribution to explaining consumers' perceptions without causing instability in the regression coefficients.

Overall, the regression results demonstrate that the model provides an excellent fit to the data. The highly significant F-statistic (194.10, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the four repositioning strategies jointly explain consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear, while the high R^2 value (76.0%) indicates substantial explanatory power. Among the predictors, Product Quality Improvement Strategy emerged as the most influential determinant, followed by Branding Strategy, Promotion Strategy, and Price Strategy. These findings suggest that manufacturers, marketers, and policymakers should adopt an integrated repositioning approach that prioritizes quality enhancement, strong branding, sustained promotional campaigns, and competitive pricing in order to strengthen consumer confidence and improve the market acceptance of made-in-Aba footwear.

Discussion of Results

The findings of this study revealed that repositioning strategies significantly influence consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear, indicating that improvements in product quality, branding, promotion, and pricing positively shape consumers' evaluations of locally manufactured footwear. This finding is consistent with Kotler and Keller (2016), who argued that successful repositioning enhances consumers' perceptions by creating superior value and differentiating products from competing alternatives. It also supports Aaker (1996), who maintained that effective

repositioning improves product competitiveness through stronger brand identity and enhanced customer value. Among the repositioning strategies, Product Quality Improvement Strategy emerged as the most influential factor, corroborating Zeithaml (1988) and Garvin (1987), who identified product quality as a major determinant of consumer evaluation and purchase behaviour. The finding also agrees with Ogwo and Igwe (2012), who reported that improvements in product quality significantly increase consumers' willingness to patronize locally manufactured products. Furthermore, the significant effects of Branding Strategy and Promotion Strategy align with Keller (2013), Aaker (1996), and Belch and Belch (2021), who found that strong branding and integrated promotional activities enhance consumer awareness, trust, and favourable product perceptions. Similarly, Nwokah and Maclayton (2006) concluded that sustained promotional efforts improve the acceptance of locally manufactured goods in Nigeria. The implication of these findings is that manufacturers of made-in-Aba footwear should prioritize quality enhancement while simultaneously investing in branding and promotional activities to strengthen consumer confidence and improve market competitiveness.

The study also established that Price Strategy positively influences consumers' perceptions, although its contribution is relatively weaker than those of product quality, branding, and promotion strategies. This finding supports Monroe (2003) and Kotler and Keller (2016), who argued that consumers evaluate products based on the value they receive rather than on price alone. The finding is also consistent with Uwaoma, Ahamefula & Nwangwu (2024), who found that pricing strategy significantly influences marketing performance. While both studies

agree that pricing strategy is an important determinant of marketing outcomes, the present study indicates that its influence on consumers' perceptions is comparatively weaker than the other repositioning strategies examined. This variation may be attributed to the different contexts of the studies, as Uwaoma *et. al* (2024) focused on marketing performance, whereas the present study examined consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear. The implication is that although competitive pricing remains important, manufacturers should not rely solely on low prices to attract consumers. Instead, they should adopt a value-based repositioning strategy that integrates competitive pricing with superior product quality, effective branding, and sustained promotional activities to enhance consumer perceptions and strengthen the competitiveness of made-in-Aba footwear.

Conclusion

The study concludes that repositioning strategies play a significant role in shaping consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear. The findings demonstrate that product quality improvement, branding strategy, promotion strategy, and price strategy all contribute positively to consumer perceptions, with product quality emerging as the most influential determinant. Although price remains an important consideration, consumers appear to place greater emphasis on product quality, strong branding, and effective promotional efforts when evaluating locally manufactured footwear. The study therefore concludes that an integrated repositioning strategy that prioritizes quality enhancement, distinctive branding, sustained promotional activities, and value-based pricing is essential for improving consumer perceptions, increasing patronage, and strengthening the competitiveness of made-in-Aba footwear in both domestic and international markets.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Manufacturers of made-in-Aba footwear should prioritize continuous product quality improvement by investing in high-quality raw materials, modern production techniques, skilled craftsmanship, and effective quality control systems. Since product quality emerged as the strongest determinant of consumers' perceptions, improving product durability, finishing, comfort, and reliability will enhance consumer confidence and increase patronage of locally manufactured footwear.
2. Local leather footwear producers should develop strong and distinctive brands while protecting them through appropriate intellectual property (IP) rights, particularly trademark registration. Since branding was found to significantly influence consumers' perceptions, establishing recognizable and legally protected brands will enhance product identity, build consumer trust, discourage product imitation, and strengthen the competitive position of made-in-Aba footwear in both local and international markets.
3. Manufacturers and marketers should intensify promotional activities through integrated marketing communication strategies such as digital marketing, social media campaigns, trade fairs, exhibitions, public relations, and influencer marketing. Sustained promotional efforts will increase product awareness, correct negative stereotypes associated with made-in-Aba footwear, and foster more favourable consumer perceptions.

4. Manufacturers should adopt value-based pricing strategies that reflect the quality and value of their products while remaining affordable to consumers. Rather than competing solely on low prices, pricing decisions should complement improvements in product quality, branding, and promotional activities to enhance consumers' perceived value and encourage sustained patronage.
5. Manufacturers should implement an integrated repositioning strategy that combines product quality improvement, effective branding, sustained promotional activities, and competitive pricing. The findings demonstrated that all four repositioning strategies significantly influence consumers' perceptions of made-in-Aba footwear. Therefore, adopting these strategies simultaneously, rather than in isolation, will produce a stronger positive effect on consumer perceptions, improve market acceptance, and enhance the long-term competitiveness of locally manufactured footwear.

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