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Product innovation, purchase behavior, satisfaction and brand loyalty in carbonated beverage consumption: A qualitative study of Wa Municipal, Ghana

Théophile Bindeouè Nassè*[1], Edward Kwaku Agbado[2] and Emerence Oniangue Kouta[3]

[1] [2]University of Business and Integrated Development Studies, Wa, Ghana

[3]University Marien N'gouabi, Brazzaville, Congo

Email: edwardagbado2@gmail.com[2]; oniangueemerence@gmail.com[3]

*Correspondence: nassetheophile2009@gmail.com

Abstract

Innovation is widely seen as a driver of sales growth, but little is known about how consumers in emerging markets respond to innovation in everyday products such as carbonated beverages. This study explores how product innovation influences consumer purchase behavior, satisfaction and brand loyalty in Wa Municipal, Ghana. Using a constructivist philosophy and a phenomenological design, data were collected through in depth semi structured interviews with 19 consumers recruited through convenience and snowball sampling, with saturation reached at about 15 interviews. The findings show that innovation, such as new flavors, healthier formulations and eco friendly packaging, is a key factor in purchase decisions, and that consumers prefer brands whose innovations match their health and environmental concerns. Innovation also raises satisfaction by delivering distinctive and improved experiences, and it reinforces loyalty to brands that keep meeting changing needs. Price and brand reputation remain influential, but innovation adds perceived value and a competitive advantage. The study contributes consumer level qualitative evidence from a secondary city in an emerging market and extends the literature on innovation and business performance. Beverage firms are advised to invest in continuous product innovation, while policymakers may support sustainable innovation and market entry for small firms. Because the sample is small and purposive, the findings are context specific and not statistically generalizable.

***Keywords*:** Product Innovation, Sales Growth, Consumer Purchase Behavior, Brand Loyalty, Carbonated Beverages, Emerging Markets

JEL Classification: M31, O31, L66

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1. Introduction

The study examines how medium- and large-sized businesses expand through innovation and sales growth. In today's business environment, innovation is the most crucial component of corporate growth and gives companies a competitive advantage. Companies can innovate in various ways, which provides them the benefit of leading the way or being the front runners in the corporate world, according to (Santos Redondo, 2023). One strategic metric used to assess a corporate organization's performance is sales growth (Ratajczak-Tretel et al., 2023). The study highlights that an organization's ability to retain or acquire new consumers is reflected in its sales growth, indicating that its productive capacity is fully employed. On the same note, sales growth, which is a result of an increase in the market value of the products and a lowering of the unit cost of the product, signifies the capacity of the business to finance its growth. Wa Municipal is used as a case study in this qualitative research. Wa is a medium-sized town located in the upper-west region of Ghana. Wa serves as the capital of the Upper West region, and it is one of the newly created and developing towns in the country. The choice of Wa Municipal for this study is based on the fact that Wa is slowly becoming an attractive hub for both local and foreign investors in Ghana due to its strategic location and emerging socio-economic activities. The modern business community is well represented, with both small and large-size companies providing a diverse range of products to meet the daily needs of the ever-increasing population of Wa. In the wake of the budding business activities, there has been a steady increase in the establishment of medium and large-size companies in Wa providing a diverse range of goods and products. On the other hand, the business environment is becoming very competitive and challenging for enterprises. Therefore, finding the effective means of ensuring sales growth in Wa Municipal is almost becoming a major pre-occupation for both the new and existing business. The study focuses on examining the relationship between innovation and sales growth and also identifying factors influencing consumer behavior. The table of contents outlines the different sections of the research paper. The literature review section explores previous research on innovation and sales growth, as well as factors influencing consumer behavior. At the intersection of technological progress and changing tastes, the beverage sector is undergoing a significant transformation (Sovacool et al., 2021). This industry is experiencing an increased demand for innovative beverages that satisfy thirst and deliver enhanced health benefits, convenience, and a tailored consumer experience (Arenas-Jal et al., 2020). This study aims to unravel the complex bond between innovation and sales growth, emphasizing beverage consumption patterns. The past few years have witnessed a remarkable increase in beverage sales, with revenues for mainstream store beverages soaring to an impressive $86 billion, highlighting the substantial economic footprint of this sector (Bean et al., 2022). This uptick in sales transcends mere consumption increases, pointing to the pivotal role of strategic innovation. Notably, many beverages have emerged, reflecting a definitive shift in consumer preferences towards innovative and enhanced products. The advent of functional beverages, designed to bolster both physical and mental health, mirrors the industry's adaptation to a more health-aware consumer

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base (Damiescu et al., 2024). These offerings have successfully established a strong market presence with their promises of increased energy, better immunity, and cognitive benefits. Additionally, the trend towards personalization has accelerated, with consumers increasingly seeking out beverages that align with their specific health and wellness goals. Innovation serves as a vital catalyst for sales growth, empowering businesses to launch novel and improved products, services, and processes that cater to the evolving needs of consumers and provide a competitive edge (Indriarti et al., 2020). Consequently, the synergy between innovation and sales growth has attracted considerable attention from both academics and industry professionals, given its significance in driving business prosperity (Bogers et al., 2020). Focusing on Wa Municipal in Ghana's Upper West Region, a burgeoning consumer base is eager for innovative products. Yet, there is a noticeable dearth of empirical studies examining the nexus between innovation and sales growth in this area, creating an evident knowledge gap for businesses aiming to capitalize on innovation in this market (Hirose and Creswell, 2023)

This research bridges this gap by qualitatively examining the interplay between innovation and sales growth. Specifically, it assesses the influence of innovation on sales growth and the intermediary roles played by consumer perceived value, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty (Howard and Hair Jr, 2023). This study aspires to enrich the existing literature on innovation and sales growth through meticulous data analysis, particularly within the Wa Municipal context. The insights gleaned from this study are expected to equip local businesses with the knowledge to make strategic decisions that harness innovation for sales growth (Addou et al., 2024).The research illuminates the dynamics of innovation and its impact on sales growth in this specific setting, seeking to offer practical guidance for businesses striving to succeed in Wa Municipal's evolving marketplace. Ghana's emergence as an increasingly important market underscores the pivotal role of innovation in driving sales growth (Wedam, et al., 2022). Recent studies have explored how innovation contributes to sales growth, particularly in developing nations like Ghana. Research shows that innovation has been a critical driver of success for businesses in various industries, and the beverage industry is no exception. The development of new products, processes, and technologies has been a crucial factor in the growth and success of beverage companies (Akbar et al., 2020). However, the beverage industry is also highly competitive, and companies must constantly innovate to stay ahead of the competition (Gamble et al., 2021). One of the main challenges facing beverage companies is the increasing demand for healthier and more sustainable products (Abdalla et al., 2020). Consumers are becoming more health-conscious and are seeking beverages that are low in sugar, calories, and artificial ingredients (Hughes et al., 2023). At the same time, there is a growing awareness of the environmental impact of beverage production and packaging (Hendricks et al., 2024). As a result, companies are under pressure to develop innovative products and packaging that meet these changing consumer preferences and regulatory requirements. In West Africa, where the beverage industry faces unique challenges, including health-conscious consumers and environmental awareness, understanding the relationship

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between innovation, marketing, and carbonated beverage consumption is crucial. To explore these dynamics, this study focuses on Wa Municipal in the Upper West Region, known for its diverse population and rapid growth (Agahi, 2020). By examining customer consumption patterns, we aim to address the managerial gap and provide insights applicable to local and foreign businesses in this region. Despite the importance of innovation in the beverage industry, there is not enough literature of research on the specific factors that influence innovation and sales growth (Hamid and Abbasi, 2020). While some studies have examined the impact of innovation on consumer behavior (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016) there is limited research on the role of customer consumption patterns in the innovation process (Sivakumar et al., 2023). Moreover, more research is needed on the impact of innovation on sales growth in the beverage industry, particularly in the context of the current trends toward healthier and more sustainable products. The selection of Wa Municipal in the Upper West Region as the research area is justified by its status as one of Ghana's fastest-growing towns (Tia et al., 2023). Furthermore, the municipality's diverse population, encompassing multiple ethnic groups with varying socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, presents an ideal setting for studying consumer behaviors and preferences. Understanding these variations in consumer responses to innovation holds significant practical implications for businesses (Sitaker et al., 2020) and facilitates the development of generalized solutions applicable to both local and foreign businesses operating in Wa Municipal. This study aims to address a managerial gap by exploring the relationship between innovation and sales growth in the beverage industry, with a particular focus on customer consumption pattern. The main question is: What is the relationship between innovation and sales growth among businesses in the beverage sector in Wa Municipal?

Thus, the main research objective is to explore and analyse the relationship between innovation and sales growth among businesses in the beverage sector in Wa Municipal, focusing on understanding how innovative practices influence financial performance and market expansion. The specific research objectives are:

- To examine the effects of innovation on consumer purchase.
- To examine the effects of innovation on consumer satisfaction.
- To examine the effects of innovation on brand loyalty.

These objectives aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive sales growth in the context of innovation within the beverage industry. They offer valuable insights for businesses looking to enhance their market position and financial success.

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Innovation

Innovation refers to the process of creating new or improving existing products, processes, or services through creative thinking and problem-solving (Eneizat and Al-Kasasbeh, 2021). It is a critical aspect of business and entrepreneurship, as it allows companies to stay competitive and adapt to changing market conditions (Christensen et al., 2018). Innovation can take many forms, including the development of new technologies, the introduction of new business models, and the creation of new products or services (Enkel et al., 2020). One of the key drivers of innovation is creativity, which involves generating new ideas and solutions to problems (Samson and Umar, 2020). Creativity can be fostered through a variety of techniques, such as brainstorming, prototyping, and design thinking (Brown, 2022). In addition, innovation often requires a willingness to take risks and experiment with new approaches (Grenway, 2021).

Another important aspect of innovation is the ability to collaborate and share ideas across different departments and functions within an organization (Chandrasekaran et al., 2023). This can be facilitated through the use of cross-functional teams and open communication channels (Al-Attari, 2021). Innovation can also be influenced by external factors, such as market trends, customer needs, and technological advancements (Kiuru, 2021). Companies that are able to identify and respond to these factors are often more successful in their innovation efforts (Chesbrough, 2010). Innovation is a critical aspect of business and entrepreneurship that involves creating new or improved products, processes, or services through creative thinking and problem-solving. It requires a willingness to take risks, collaborate across different departments and functions, and respond to external factors such as market trends and customer needs. Identifying consumer needs and market gaps is crucial for innovation. Studies have shown that understanding these needs can lead to more targeted and successful innovations (Zhou et al., 2023). Additionally, Conducting research on consumer behavior and preferences informs product development, which is essential for creating innovations that resonate with consumers and lead to sales growth (Elezaj and Livoreka, 2022). Furthermore, the development of new products or services from research findings is a pivotal stage for innovation. It has been observed that effective development practices can significantly impact a firm's sales performance (Hoogendoorn et al., 2024). Bringing an innovation to market is a complex process that requires strategic planning. Research indicates that successful commercialization is a key driver of sales growth (Elezaj and Livoreka, 2022). The spread of innovation among consumers is influenced by various factors. Studies suggest that the rate of adoption can affect the overall sales growth of the innovative product (Elezaj and Livoreka, 2022). Finally, assessing the outcomes of the innovation process is essential for understanding its impact on sales growth. The literature supports the idea that innovation can lead to positive sales outcomes when properly managed (Zhou et al., 2023).

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2.1.2 Sales Growth

Sales growth is a measure of the increase in an organization's revenue over a specific period, typically year-over-year. It is an important indicator of a company's ability to attract and retain customers, as well as its capacity to finance its own growth. It is a key indicator of a company's success and can be achieved through a variety of strategies, such as expanding into new markets, increasing customer loyalty, and improving sales processes. One of the main drivers of sales growth is marketing efforts, which can help to increase awareness of a company's products or services and generate leads (Sharma et al., 2021). Effective marketing strategies can include advertising, promotions, and public relations (Kotler et al., 2021). Another factor that can contribute to sales growth is the development of strong relationships with customers (Mittal et al., 2021). By building trust and loyalty with customers, businesses can increase the likelihood of repeat sales and positive word-of-mouth advertising (Han and Anderson, 2020). In addition, the sales process itself can be optimized to drive growth (Anthony, 2015). This can involve strategies such as upselling and cross-selling, as well as the use of data analytics to identify trends and opportunities (Achrol and Kotler, 2022). Sales growth can also be achieved through the expansion into new markets, either domestically or internationally (Kotler et al., 2021). This can involve entering new product categories, targeting new customer segments, or expanding into new geographic regions. However, it is essential to note that sales growth can also be affected by external factors, such as changes in the economy, competition, and consumer behavior (Mulyana et al., 2023). As such, businesses need to monitor and adjust their strategies to ensure continued growth regularly (Anthony, 2015).

2.1.3 Consumer Purchase Behavior

Consumer purchase behavior involves the study of how individuals, groups, and organizations select, purchase, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires (Qazzafi, 2020). In the beverage industry, consumer purchase behavior examines factors influencing the consumption patterns of carbonated and other types of beverages. As demonstrated by (Strydom et al., 2023), Buyer conduct focuses on how individuals, groups, and associations select, buy, use, and dispose of items, organizations, contemplations, or experiences to satisfy their necessities and needs. Nassè (2021) and Soesilowati (2010) Pioneered the concept of consumer purchase behavior as limited in its applicability and falls short of capturing the more significant reasons influencing consumption in Western contexts and other regions like Africa. Consumer purchase behavior is a crucial aspect of business operations, and understanding its various influences can help businesses improve their marketing strategies, product design, and customer experience. According to (Kumar et al., 2021), consumer purchase behavior is influenced by a combination of demographic, psychographic, social, cultural, and situational factors. For example, a study by (Hutter et al., 2013), found that demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and occupation can affect how customers make purchasing decisions. Similarly,

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psychographic factors such as values, attitudes, and lifestyles can also play a role in shaping consumer purchase behavior (Achrol and Kotler, 2022). Social factors, such as the opinions and behaviors of family, friends, and social groups, can also impact consumer behavior (Kotler and Caslione, 2009). For instance, a study by Marsal-Llacuna and Segal (2016) found that social media can influence consumer purchase behavior by providing a platform for consumers to share their experiences and opinions with others. Cultural factors can shape consumer behavior, with different cultural groups exhibiting different values, beliefs, and behaviors (Sent and Kroese, 2022). For example, a study by Chow et al.(2017), found that cultural differences can affect how consumers perceive and respond to marketing messages. Finally, situational factors such as location, time, and availability of products can also affect consumer purchase behavior (Cheng et al., 2011). For instance, a study by Zhan et al. (2022) found that consumers are more likely to make impulse purchases in a physical store rather than online shopping. The literature review allows us to stipulate the first assumption:

P_1: Innovation influences consumer purchase behavior.

2.1.4 Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is a key metric that measures the degree to which a company's products or services meet the needs and expectations of its customers. According to Kluegel and Smith (2017) consumer satisfaction is a critical aspect of business success, as satisfied consumers are more likely to repurchase, or recommend the company to others, and provide positive feedback (Zeichner, 2003). Collecting feedback from consumers can provide valuable insights into their needs and expectations. According to Johnson (2018), consumers' feedback is an essential tool for businesses to understand both their consumers' core needs and core preferences. Feedback can be collected through surveys, focus groups, or social media. To improve customer satisfaction, businesses can implement various strategies, such as listening to customer feedback, providing high-quality products and services, offering personalized experiences, providing excellent customer service, streamlining processes, and offering competitive pricing. According to Brown and Green (2019), personalization can help build consumer loyalty and increase consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction is a crucial aspect of business success, and measuring it can help businesses identify areas for improvement. Businesses can increase consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat business by implementing various strategies. The literature review allows us to stipulate the second assumption:

P_2: Innovation influences consumer satisfaction.

2.1.5 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a critical aspect of building a successful business. According to a study by Harvard Business Review, increasing customer retention rates by just 5% can increase profits by 25% to 95% (Ruback and Yudkoff, 2017). This highlights the importance of building solid relationships

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with customers and providing them with a positive experience that keeps them returning. Brand loyalty is by offering high-quality products or services. A study by Forrester (2021) found that quality is the most important factor in building customer loyalty, with 83% of customers saying that it is the primary reason they remain loyal to a brand. By focusing on quality, businesses can create a reputation for themselves as a provider of excellent products or services, which can help build customer trust and loyalty. A study by Lenka and Singh (2019) found that personalization is a driver of customer loyalty, with 73% of customers stating that they are likely to remain loyal to a brand that propose personalized experiences. By using data and analytics to understand customer preferences and tailor their experiences accordingly, businesses can create a sense of belonging and loyalty among their customers. Building a solid brand identity can also help to build brand loyalty. Gupta et al. (2020) found that brands that have a strong identity and can communicate their values and purpose effectively are more likely to build loyalty with customers. By creating a clear and consistent brand message, businesses can create a sense of familiarity and trust with customers, which can help to build loyalty over time. Offering rewards and recognition to loyal customers can also help to build brand loyalty. A study by Nielsen et al. (2017) found that 64% of customers say that they are more likely to remain loyal to a brand that offers rewards and recognition for their loyalty. By recognizing and rewarding customer loyalty, businesses can create a sense of appreciation and gratitude among their customers, which can help to build long-term relationships. Building brand loyalty is a critical aspect of building a successful business. By offering high-quality products or services, providing personalized experiences, building a solid brand identity, and offering rewards and recognition to loyal customers, businesses can create a loyal customer base that will drive long-term growth and success. The literature review allows us to stipulate the third assumption:

P_3: Innovation influences brand loyalty.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory was first introduced by (Rogers and Havens, 1962), is a widely accepted framework for understanding the adoption and spread of new ideas, practices, and technologies across various domains. This theory posits that the adoption of innovations follows a predictable pattern, with individuals and groups falling into one of five categories based on their level of innovativeness: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Karnowski and Kümpel, 2016). At the core of the diffusion of innovations theory is the idea that the adoption of innovations is influenced by several critical factors, including the innovation itself, the communication channels used to promote it, the time it takes for the innovation to be adopted, and the social system in which it is introduced (Shin and Baek, 2023). By understanding these factors, businesses and policymakers can design effective strategies to promote new products and technologies, ultimately leading to increased adoption and sales growth. One of the key insights

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of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory is that the adoption rate is not a random process, but rather a predictable one that various factors can influence. For example, the theory suggests that the rate of adoption is influenced by the perceived relative advantage of the innovation, the degree of complexity associated with its use, and the level of trialability or experimentation that is possible before adoption (Zagata et al., 2020). In addition, the theory highlights the importance of opinion leaders and communication networks in the diffusion process. Opinion leaders, such as influential individuals or organizations, play a critical role in promoting innovations and convincing others to adopt them (Zagata et al., 2020). Communication networks, such as social media, online forums, and word of mouth, are also essential in spreading information about innovations and influencing the adoption decision (Zagata et al., 2020). The Diffusion of Innovations Theory has been widely applied across various fields, including consumer behavior, public health, and marketing. For example, in the context of Wa Municipal, the theory could be used to identify local innovators and early adopters and then leverage their influence to promote the adoption of new products and technologies (Rogers & Rahim, 2021)By understanding the factors that influence the rate of adoption and the role of opinion leaders and communication networks, businesses and policymakers can design targeted strategies to increase innovation adoption and drive sales growth. The Diffusion of Innovations Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the adoption and spread of new ideas, practices, and technologies. By applying this theory, businesses and policymakers can gain valuable insights into the factors influencing the adoption rate and develop effective strategies to promote new products and technologies. For more detailed information, readers can refer to the original work by Everett Rogers, “Diffusion of Innovations,” which provides a comprehensive explanation of the theory and its applications (Zagata et al., 2020). The diffusion of innovations theory by Rogers (1962), which explains how ideas or products spread through a population, has several limitations. The theory primarily focuses on individual adoption rather than organizational change processes. It does not fully address how innovations impact entire organizations or systems. Also, companies that introduce innovations often overlook cultural differences. Understanding local norms and values is crucial for successful adoption. Convincing consumers to embrace new ideas and products can be challenging. Most people are risk-averse, and marketers face the uphill task of steering them toward innovations. The theory does not fully capture the diverse phenomena of innovation and diffusion across individuals, networks, organizations, and societal actors.

2.2.2 The Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a psychological model that explains how individuals formulate and execute their intentions to perform a specific behavior. The theory was developed by Ajzen (2020) and Pryor (2022), and has been widely applied to various fields, including social psychology, consumer behavior, and health promotion (Ajzen, 2020). According to the TPB, an individual's intention to perform a behavior is the best predictor of their actual behavior (Ajzen and Schmidt, 2020). Intentions, in turn, are influenced by three main factors: attitudes, subjective

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norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes refer to an individual's evaluation of the behavior's desirability and likelihood of occurrence (Ajzen and Schmidt, 2020). Subjective norms reflect an individual's perception of the social pressures around them, including the opinions and behaviors of others (Ajzen, 2020). Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's belief in their ability to control their behavior and perform the intended action (Ajzen and Schmidt, 2020). The TPB suggests that an individual's intention to perform a behavior is a function of the combination of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The theory also proposes that an individual's behavior is a function of their intention and the context in which the behavior is performed (Hagger et al., 2022). The TPB has been applied to a wide range of behaviors, including health behaviors, consumer behaviors, and political behaviors (Taghavi and Maharati, 2024). It has been used to predict and explain behaviors such as smoking, exercise, and voting (Ajzen, 2020). TPB is a well-established psychological model that provides a valuable framework for understanding and predicting human behavior. By understanding the factors that influence an individual's intention to perform a behavior, the TPB can help researchers and practitioners develop effective interventions to promote positive behaviors and discourage negative ones.

2.3 Conceptual Model

Figure 1. Conceptual model



Source: Authors' constructed, 2026

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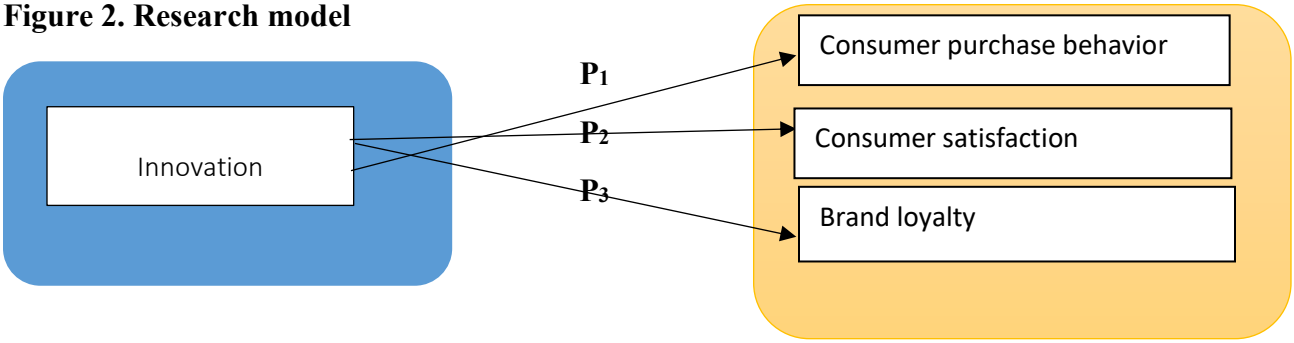
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Figure 1 explains more ideas on innovation, consumer purchase behavior, consumer satisfaction, and brand are interrelated and collectively contribute to a business's success and sustainability. For instance, innovation enables consumer purchase behavior because it allows the development of new or improved products/services that attract consumer interest, purchases and consumer satisfaction. When consumers purchase a product or service, their experience with it determines their level of satisfaction. Then, high levels of consumer satisfaction can lead to brand loyalty, as satisfied customers are more likely to continue buying from the same brand; and brand loyalty drives innovation and loyal customers can support innovation through feedback, word-of-mouth promotion, and continued patronage, providing the brand with resources and insights to further innovate. Thus, brand loyalty also encourages repeated purchases, as loyal customers prefer to buy from a brand they trust and have had positive experiences with. Understanding these relationships helps companies engage in market segmentation, marketing research and development that support and foster innovation, enhance customer experiences, and build strong, loyal customer bases. This holistic approach is crucial for long-term growth and competitive advantage in the marketplace. This cycle demonstrates how these elements are interconnected and how each component influences the others to create a sustainable and positive feedback loop for brands.

2.4 Research Model

The research model (see igure 2) investigates the relationship between innovation and its effects on customer satisfaction, purchase, and brand loyalty in the beverage sector in Wa Municipal. It is proposed that increased innovation in this sector will lead to higher customer satisfaction, increased customer purchases, and improved brand loyalty. This model will be empirically tested through data collection and analysis to provide insights into the dynamics between innovation and sales growth in the beverage sector.

Figure 2. Research model



Source: Authors' construct (2026)

3. Methodology

3.1 Profile of Study Area

The distribution of Ghana's population, which exceeds 30 million people, is not uniform across its sixteen administrative regions. Generally, the southern coastal and forest regions exhibit higher

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population densities than northern savannah lands. According to data from the 2021 population census, the Greater Accra region accounts for the most significant proportion of the national population at 17.69 percent, followed by the Ashanti Region at 17.64 percent, the Eastern Region at 9.49 percent, and the Central Region at 9.28 percent. The remaining six regions each have a population share of less than 10 percent. In 2021, the Upper West region represented 2.6 percent of the population. The study area, Wa Municipal, provides a unique and promising environment for exploring the direct relationship between innovation and sales growth in beverage consumption. Situated in a region with distinct consumer preferences, consumer purchases, and brand loyalty, businesses in Wa Municipal face specific challenges that demand innovative strategies to drive sales growth effectively. This rich context allows researchers to examine how businesses can innovate to meet evolving demands and differentiate themselves in a competitive market. The significance of studying Wa Municipal lies in the invaluable insights it can offer into the dynamic interplay between innovation and sales growth within this specific setting. By delving into the factors influencing innovation and sales growth in Wa Municipal, this study aims to equip businesses with the knowledge needed to develop sustainable strategies that foster competitiveness and growth. This research seeks to uncover trends and patterns that can inform effective business decisions and drive success in consuming beverages in Wa Municipal. Thus, Wa Municipal is a microcosm for exploring how businesses can leverage innovation to achieve sales growth amidst unique consumer dynamics. By understanding and navigating the intricacies of this environment, organizations can adapt their approaches, tailor their strategies, and ultimately thrive in this challenging yet promising market.

3.2 Philosophical Stand

Research philosophies gain wide acceptance as they deal with knowledge's origins, characteristics, and evolution. (Anoku, 2023). A research philosophy essentially represents an opinion on how data should be collected, examined, and applied to examine the impact of digital technology adoption on sales growth, customer satisfaction, and product purchases in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Consequently, the assumptions and application of the research influence the selection of a specific research philosophy. The current research has adopted a constructivist stand. According to Nassè (2018), constructivism is a philosophical paradigm emphasizing that individuals actively form their comprehension, perceptions and knowledge about the world through direct experience and thoughtful reflection on those experiences.

3.3 Research Design

A study's research design serves as a crucial framework that shapes the layout of the research. This current research encompasses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to allow a profound exploration of individual lived experiences was undertaken through in-depth semi-structured interviews, primarily aiming to comprehend the intricate meanings intertwined with these experiences. Phenomenology is the art of describing social phenomena in a concrete and

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truthful way as how the participants experienced the phenomena (Groenewald, 2004). Thus, phenomenological design in this research empowers participants to share their stories authentically and provides a rich data source to explore various dimensions of the topic. By engaging directly with interview participants, researchers can construct a deeper understanding of the subject matter and verify their findings through the richness of the data collected. This process ensures a comprehensive exploration of the topic, shedding light on its complexities and allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the lived experiences under investigation.

3.4 Research Approach

This research employs a qualitative method to thoroughly examine the link between innovation and sales growth in Wa Municipal's beverage industry. A phenomenological research approach would be highly suitable for qualitative research on the impact of innovation in the carbonated beverage industry. The study explores how individuals make sense of their experiences and the meaning they attribute to these experiences (Creswell, 2013). This strategy enhances the credibility and depth of the findings, enabling a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics. This study can uncover individuals' subjective experiences and interpretations regarding innovation in the carbonated beverage industry, shedding light on the significance of innovation in shaping consumer preferences and industry dynamics (Creswell, 2013). This research utilizes a qualitative method to thoroughly examine the connection between innovation and sales growth in Wa Municipal's beverage industry. A phenomenological research approach would be highly suitable for qualitative research on the impact of innovation in the carbonated beverage industry. The study aims to explore how individuals make sense of their experiences and the meaning they attribute to these experiences (Creswell, 2013). This strategy enhances the credibility and depth of the findings, enabling a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics. This study can uncover the subjective experiences and interpretations of individuals regarding innovation in the carbonated beverage industry, shedding light on the significance of innovation in shaping consumer preferences and industry dynamics (Creswell, 2013).

3.5 Population of the Study

The research commenced by identifying the specific target population, emphasizing the importance of precision to attain the desired outcomes. This precision is imperative as reaching every member of the population may pose formidable challenges or even be unattainable. In the context of Ghana's population of 32.83 million, the Upper West region stands at 3%, encompassing around 901,502 individuals. Within this region, the town of Wa takes the lead, with a population of 224,066, constituting 24.84% of the region total population. Moreover, delineating the target group enables the study to economize on time, expenses, and effort while laying the foundation for interpreting the study's findings. It also aids in honing the research focus. In this instance, the study focused on Ghanaian businesses in Wa Municipality as the target group due to their

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accessibility and the concentration of companies in the municipality. This facilitated the use of a representative sample.

3.6 Unit of Analysis

The concept of "unit of analysis" in research pertains to the particular entity or level of observation under examination and analysis. It may encompass individuals, groups, organizations, countries, or any other separate unit of interest in the research inquiry (Nassè, 2018). The selection of the unit of analysis holds significant importance as it defines the extent and emphasis of the research and shapes the understanding of the results (Christensen, 2016). This focus can differ based on the research inquiry and goals, covering persons (employees, clients, duration of tenure within a company), collectives or corporations, geographical regions, occurrences or procedures, and written material or records. The research is concentrated on the beverage industry in Wa Municipal, specifically examining the relationship between innovation and sales growth. Thus, businesses are evaluated based on their innovation initiatives, sales data, and marketing approaches, while consumers are assessed based on their preferences, satisfaction, and buying habits. The unit of analysis of this research is the experienced beverage consumer who has at least one year of experience of beverage consumption.

3.7 Sampling

3.7.1 Sampling Technique

The influence of innovation on beverage consumption holds significant importance in the global market. To save time the researchers have used unsystematic sampling and snowballing technique to select the participants based on their availability and convenience (Nassè, 2026 a). The conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews allow the researchers to capture genuine experiences, enabling participants to express viewpoints beyond existing frameworks. This method uncovers the unique meanings individuals associate with their consumption habits.

3.7.2 Sample Frame

A sample frame is a list or source from which researchers draw a sample for a research study. It provides a defined population from which researchers can select their sample. The sample frame is essential for ensuring that the sample is representative of the target population and that the research findings can be confidently generalized (Drucker, 2012). Ghana has a total population of 32.83 million inhabitants. The Upper West region is 3% of Ghana's total, encompassing which is around 901,502 individuals. The town of Wa takes the lead within this region, with a population of 224,066, constituting 24.84% of the regional total. The technique of sampling is crucial for acquiring precise data while minimizing expenses. In this study, the population of interest was the residents of the Wa Municipality, which is representative of the Upper West District and was chosen due to practical time and money constraints. Exploring the inhabitants of the Wa district can provide insights into risky behavior in the area. This evaluation utilized the convenience

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sampling method, a non-probability approach. This method is straightforward and less resource-intensive, but it may yield results beyond the researcher's expertise due to its simplicity.

3.7.3 Sample Size

The sample size of this research is 19 respondents who are taken from the pool of 901,502 inhabitants of the Upper West Region. Saturation is reached at 15 respondents but the researchers still conducted additional interviews to have larger sample with because the phenomena is diverse or complex (Nassè, 2018). This sample size is representative for an in-depth exploration of viewpoints through interviews and focus groups involving various stakeholders, including consumers, industry experts, retailers, and local vendors in the Wa Municipal area. Incorporating a diverse range of participants, such as consumers from different demographic groups and industry professionals with distinct perspectives, helped the research to gain a thorough understanding of how innovation influences consumer purchase behavior in the local carbonated beverage market.

3.8 Data Collection Tools

The study used an interview guide as a research instrument. A survey is a tool used for research, consisting of a series of questions employed to conduct a study or collect statistical data. In this instance, a semi-structured interviews was utilized. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide. An interview guide is a tool that aids interviewers in maintaining focus on the study objectives, enabling exploration of unexpected issues during interviews, and ensuring coverage of essential areas. These interviews provided comprehensive insights into people's viewpoints, experiences, beliefs, and actions. Qualitative research involves gathering non-numeric data to understand concepts, opinions, and experiences. Its objective is to offer comprehensive insights into complex phenomena and examine subtleties that quantitative approaches may overlook. Qualitative research emphasizes "grasping the significance that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem." This method enables researchers to explore the subjective facets of a subject, revealing underlying motivations, beliefs, and viewpoints. Qualitative research involves interviews, observations, and content analysis, facilitating an in-depth exploration of human behavior and societal phenomena. Semi-structured interviews is conducted with key stakeholders such as business owners, marketing managers, and customers to gain deeper insights into consumer behaviors, preferences, and attitudes toward innovation in the beverage sector. Group discussions were organized with consumers to gather diverse viewpoints on brand loyalty and innovation.

3.9 Validity

The survey's design, the development of the review process, and the thoroughness of the pilot testing all impact the legitimacy and reliability of the collected data and the achieved response rate. Conducting a pre-test helped in ensuring the consistency of the gathered data. Authenticity and consistency are maintained when the respondent understand the interview's themes well, and when the researcher sets up the interview with a clear understanding of the information

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requirements. The alternative construction process was utilized to improve the quality of the collected data. Responses to similar questions were categorized into different groups based on well-researched criteria. A casual selection of friends and colleagues was chosen for the pilot test to maintain authenticity, making it easier to identify questions needing improvement. The maintenance of validity and reliability in qualitative research necessitates the utilization of various rigorous methodological approaches. Validity is upheld through methodologies such as triangulation, which entails using multiple data sources to corroborate findings and guarantee a comprehensive comprehension of the research subject (Paton et al., 2023). Continuous involvement with participants aids researchers in establishing credibility by attaining a profound understanding of the context, fostering trust, and augmenting the authenticity of interpretations (Ogunyemi, 2020) Member checking further reinforces the validation of findings by involving participants in confirming the accuracy of interpretations. (Miller and Miller, 2020), while peer debriefing offers external validation through constructive feedback from colleagues (Andronikidis et al., 2021). Elaborate, detailed depictions of the research context and methodologies also enhance validity by facilitating the applicability of findings to different contexts (Neto and Machado, 2022).

3.10 Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research is maintained through systematic and consistent approaches. This encompasses structured data collection protocols to ensure uniformity in gathering information across various participants and settings. (Fejza and Avdullahi, 2020). Methodical data analysis approaches, such as coding frameworks, guarantee that conclusions are rooted in the data and replicable (Primario et al., 2024). Maintaining an audit trail of the research process promotes dependability by documenting decisions made during data collection, analysis, and interpretation, thus allowing for transparency and scrutiny (Ogunyemi, 2020). Furthermore, researcher reflexivity plays a crucial role in acknowledging and addressing biases throughout the research process, promoting transparency, and minimizing potential sources of error (Lestari and Agnia, 2023). These combined measures ensure the thoroughness and reliability of qualitative research findings, offering robust insights into the studied phenomena. A comprehensive approach to data collection and validation underpins the reliability of this research. A pretest was conducted to fine-tune the research instruments and identify potential pitfalls before the main study. The reliability of an instrument, according to Nassè (2018), is that the instrument consistently measures the construct to be measured. Furthermore, a supervisor reviewed and validated the interview guide, ensuring the questions were well-structured and aligned with the research objectives. To strengthen the findings' credibility, the insights gathered from interviews were reviewed by two domain experts, adding a layer of expertise and validation to the research process. Additionally, considering participants' engagement throughout the interviews helped ensure that the data obtained was meaningful and reflective of their experiences and perspectives. Employing maximum variation sampling further contributed to the reliability, as it allowed for a diverse representation of participants, enhancing the generalizability and robustness of the study's conclusions. Through

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these measures, the research demonstrates a rigorous and systematic approach to data authentication and correctness, thereby bolstering the overall reliability of the thesis.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

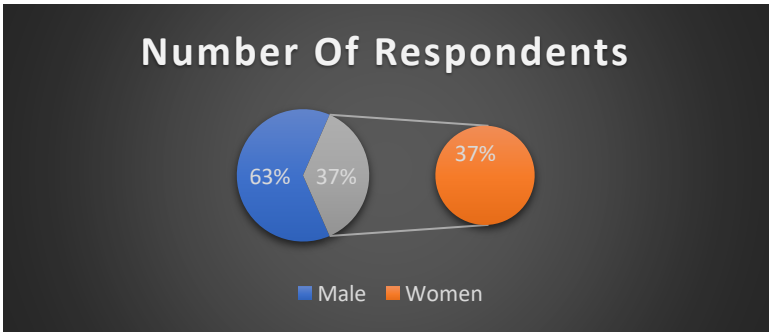
The moral considerations of research pertain to how the researcher's actions align with the rights of the individuals involved in the study, as discussed by Nathan and Rosso (2022). Ethics also encompasses the behavioral standards that guide ethical decision-making and interactions. Ethics serve as a compass in research, directing actions and ensuring integrity, respect, and accountability. Albats et al. (2023) stressed the significance of ethical considerations in research. Nassè (2018) demonstrates that it is important for researchers to obtain informed consent from participants. Providing clear and comprehensive information about the study's purpose, methods, risks, benefits, and participant rights is crucial to ensure voluntary consent and avoid coercion. Again, Nassè (2018) highlights the importance of preserving participant confidentiality and identity, including removing or concealing personal identifiers from any publications or reports to prevent individual identification. Thus, the researchers have sought the consent of the participants before collecting data and their data and their identity are kept confidential. Additionally, the researchers have given freedom to participants to choose whether to join the interview, and to withdraw from the interview at any point without facing any negative repercussions. Researchers need to be transparent and truthful about the research's objectives and nature.

4. Findings

4.1 Demographic Information Results

Demographic information is an essential element in our research. It is crucial to examine different socio-economic factors, such as religious affiliations, gender distribution, age categories, socioeconomic status, level of education, and employment, among other aspects, to ensure a thorough comprehension of the participants in our study and to accomplish particular research goals. The information gathered from these demographic details is essential for advancing our research.

Figure 3. Gender



Source: Authors' constructed, 2024

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The findings shown in Figure 3 provide essential insights into the gender breakdown of the respondents. Within the pool of 19 participants, 63% were men and 37% were women. The gender representation in our sample is significant as it enables a thorough examination of both male and female consumers' perspectives and behaviors. This representation indicates that our research has the potential to generate diverse insights by considering gender-related factors in the findings.

Table 1. Age of Respondents in the Qualitative Research

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
Under 18	3	15.79%
18-25	5	26.32%
26-35	4	21.05%
36-45	2	10.53%
46-55	3	15.79%
56 and above	2	10.53%
Total	**19**	**100%**

Source: Authors' constructed, 2024

In our qualitative research, we analyzed the age distribution of the respondents in Table 2. According to the data, the largest segment consisted of respondents aged 18 to 25, accounting for 26.32% of the total. Additionally, 15.79% of the respondents fell into the 18 and below age group, 21.05% were in the 26 to 35 age range, another 10.53% were between 36 to 45 years old, and another 10.53% were between the ages of 56 and above. It is worth noting that our sample did not include any respondents aged 55 and above. The diverse age range in our study allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives and behaviors of different age groups among consumers, providing valuable insights.

Table 2. Educational Level of Respondents

Educational level	Number of respondents	Percentage
Primary	3	15.79%
Secondary	5	26.32%

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Tertiary	11	57.89%
Total	**19**	**100%**

Source: Authors' constructed, 2024

Table 3 presents the educational levels of the research participants. Among the 19 respondents, most (57.89%) had finished tertiary education. Secondary school graduates made up 15.79% of the sample, while 26.32% had completed only primary education. This table emphasizes the diversity in educational backgrounds among the participants, offering valuable insight into the study's findings.

Table 3. Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Number of respondents	Percentage
Student	9	47.37%
Employed	3	15.79%
Self-employed	4	21.05%
Unemployed	3	15.79%
Total	**19**	**100%**

Source: Authors' constructed, 2024

The analysis presented in Table 4 provides a detailed examination of the occupations of the survey respondents, a fundamental component of the study. The data depicts a heterogeneous occupational profile, revealing that 47.37% of the respondents are students, 15.79% are employed, 21.05% are self-employed, and a further 15.79% are unemployed.

Table 4. Social Class of Respondents

Social Class	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very Poor	3	15.79%
Poor	9	47.37%
Rich	3	15.79%

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Very Rich	4	21.05%
Total	**19**	**100%**

Source: Author's constructed, 2024

The findings from Table 5 offer valuable insights into the socioeconomic status of the participants in our research, demonstrating a wide-ranging distribution across different social classes. Notably, 15.79% of the respondents identified themselves as "Rich," while 38% belonged to the "Poor" category. Additionally, the largest segment, comprising 47.37% of the participants, fell into the "Very poor" category, while 21.05% were categorized as "Very rich." This diverse representation of social classes within our sample allows for a thorough examination of how varying economic backgrounds might influence consumer behavior. These results underscore the importance of taking into account socioeconomic factors in our study's analysis.

Table 5. Brand of the Most Preferred Carbonated Beverage

Brand of Carbonated Beverage	Number of respondents	Percentage
Malta Guinness	6	31.6%
Coca-Cola	3	15.79%
Bel Cola	5	26.32%
Beta Malt	2	10.53%
Pukka Herbal Drink	3	15.79%
Total	**19**	**100%**

Source: Authors' constructed, 2024

The distribution of respondents' preferences for various brands of carbonated beverages is shown in Table 6. It shows the number of respondents who chose each brand and the corresponding percentage of total respondents. Among the respondents, Malta Guinness was the top choice, selected by 6 out of 19, representing 31.6%. Following closely behind was Bel Cola, which was chosen by 5 respondents, constituting 26.32% of the total. Coca-Cola and Pukka Herbal Drink were each chosen by 3 respondents, making up 15.79% of the total for each brand. Beta Malt had 2 respondents selecting it, representing 10.53% of the total. The table offers insight into the brand preferences of respondents in the Wa Municipal area, illustrating the popularity and distribution of different carbonated beverage brands among the surveyed population.

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4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 Innovation and Consumer Purchase Behavior

The first proposition in the study asserts that innovation plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer buying behavior. Respondents generally understand innovation as creating new flavors, improved packaging, or healthier options in carbonated beverages, which aligns with Eddie's (2024) definition. Many respondents noted that innovation plays a crucial role in their purchasing decisions. One Respondent stated that:

"Whenever I see a new flavor or an eco-friendly packaging option, I am inclined to try the product because it feels fresh and appealing" (*Respondent 1*).

Another respondent highlighted that their purchasing behavior is influenced by innovation for the following reason:

"Innovation adds something unique and different from what is already available in the market" (Respondent 3).

This reflects the idea that consumers are often driven by the novelty of a product or service that offers a better solution to their needs, directly impacting their purchase decisions.

Furthermore, several respondents indicated that price and brand reputation still play a significant role, but innovation adds an extra layer of appeal, mainly when it enhances their overall experience. One respondent stated that:

"I usually consider the price first, but if a brand introduces something innovative like healthier ingredients, I'm willing to spend more because it feels like a better investment for my health" (Respondent 2).

Thus, innovation can create a compelling value proposition, leading consumers to prioritize it in their purchasing decisions.

By integrating respondents' perspectives on innovation's impact on consumer purchase behavior, the study highlights a key finding that resonates with the evolving market dynamics. The notion that innovation positively influences consumer purchasing decisions is reinforced through real-life examples shared by participants, adding depth and authenticity to the research outcomes. As Interviewee 3 mentioned, the introduction of innovative features in products provides a unique selling point that attracts consumers seeking novel experiences. This underscores the significance of innovation as a driver of consumer engagement and preference in the competitive beverage market.

Moreover, the interplay between price, brand reputation, and innovation elucidates a nuanced consumer decision-making process. While price and brand image remain influential factors, the allure of innovation in enhancing product offerings and consumer experiences cannot be

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understated. Respondent 2's statement exemplifies how innovation can elevate perceived product value, transcending mere price considerations to encompass broader dimensions of health and well-being. This confluence of factors underscores the multifaceted nature of consumer behavior, wherein innovation serves as a catalyst for fostering deeper connections between consumers and brands, ultimately influencing purchase decisions and brand loyalty.

4.2.2 Innovation and Consumer Satisfaction

The research's second proposition stipulates that consumer satisfaction is influenced by innovation. According to Fred (2024), consumer satisfaction is closely linked to the extent to which a product either meets or exceeds the consumer's expectations. In-depth interviews conducted on the subject revealed that innovation plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer satisfaction within the carbonated beverage market. One of the interviewees articulated this connection by stating that:

"I find greater satisfaction in a beverage when it not only tastes good but also comes in an environmentally friendly package; it gives me the impression that the brand shares my values" (Respondent 6).

This observation underscores the notion that innovation, particularly when it aligns with individual preferences such as sustainability, can potentially elevate the overall satisfaction experienced when consuming a product.

Another respondent added that satisfaction comes from the perception of trying something new and different:

"When I try a new flavor or a healthier version of a carbonated drink, it makes the experience more exciting and satisfying because it's not the same old thing I am used to" (Respondent 12).

This aligns with Fred's (2024) argument that innovation can elevate the consumer experience, leading to higher satisfaction. The interviews also highlighted that while taste remains a crucial factor in satisfaction, innovations in packaging and health benefits contribute significantly to long-term contentment.

4.2.3 Innovation and Brand Loyalty

After careful analysis, the definitive inference derived from this study is as follows:

The connection between innovation and brand loyalty was a prominent theme during the interviews. Many respondents indicated they remain loyal to brands that continuously innovate and meet their evolving needs. As Juvis (2024) posits that, brand loyalty often stems from a positive experience or an emotional connection. One respondent stated that*:*

"I have been loyal to this brand for years because they keep introducing new flavors, and I trust them to offer something good every time" (Respondent 17).

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This comment emphasizes that consistent innovation strengthens the emotional bond between the consumer and the brand, reinforcing loyalty.

Additionally, some respondents pointed out that innovation fosters trust.

"When a brand consistently offers innovative products, I feel like they are investing in quality, which makes me trust them more" (Respondent 7).

This supports the notion that innovation, particularly in product development and quality improvement, can deepen trust, solidifying brand loyalty. Finally, several participants mentioned that they are more likely to recommend a brand to others when it continues to innovate, further enhancing its reputation and customer base.

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Discussion of the Results Regarding Proposition 1

In today's business environment, innovation plays a crucial role in gaining a competitive edge. The ability to introduce new ideas, products, and processes is closely linked to consumer behavior and purchase decisions. The present research shows that innovation influences consumer purchase behavior in the context of Wa Municipal. This finding corroborates previous findings. The findings by Nassè (2026 b) emphasize the significance of product innovation in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. Introducing new products or improvements to existing offerings can enhance perceived quality and value, influencing consumer preferences. Companies prioritizing product innovation are more likely to attract and retain customers in competitive markets. By streamlining processes and adopting innovative technologies, companies can enhance the overall customer experience, increasing customer loyalty and repeat purchases. Process innovation is a key driver of sustainable competitive advantage in today's dynamic business environment. Kotler and Keller (2016) underscore the role of marketing innovation in capturing consumer attention and differentiating brands from competitors. Innovative marketing strategies and campaigns can influence consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Companies that innovate in their marketing approaches are better positioned to engage with consumers and drive sales growth. Tidd and Bessant (2018) find that organizational innovation fosters a culture of creativity and adaptability within companies. By promoting innovation at the organizational level, companies can encourage employees to generate new ideas and solutions that resonate with consumers. Thus, they find that organizational innovation is essential for driving business growth and maintaining a competitive edge in the market. For Christensen (2016), disruptive innovation involves radical changes in products or business models to create new market opportunities and growth. Companies that embrace disruptive innovation can challenge industry norms and attract consumers seeking innovative solutions. Christensen shows that disruptive innovation reshapes consumer behavior and market dynamics, leading to new consumption patterns. Chesbrough (2010) advocates for open innovation, which involves collaboration and knowledge sharing with

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external partners and customers. By engaging with a broader innovation ecosystem, companies can access valuable insights and co-create solutions that effectively meet consumer needs. Open innovation fosters creativity and drives product development and consumer engagement in dynamic markets. Product, process, marketing, and organizational innovations drive competitive advantage, consumer engagement, and business growth. Companies prioritizing innovation and adapting to changing consumer preferences are better positioned to succeed in the global marketplace. Overall, several researchers also underscore the critical role of innovation in influencing consumer purchase behavior in marketing management and their findings align with the present research finding.

4.3.2 Discussion of the results regarding Proposition 2

Consumer satisfaction is vital in business management, indicating how well a company's products or services meet or surpass customer expectations. The present research shows that innovation influences consumer satisfaction in the context of Wa Municipal. This finding corroborates previous findings. The literature on consumer satisfaction underlines the significance of grasping and fulfilling consumer needs and preferences to establish enduring relationships and loyalty. Research conducted by Anderson and Sullivan (1993) stress that satisfied consumers are more likely to make repeat purchases, recommend the brand to others, and contribute to positive word-of-mouth marketing. Consumer satisfaction encompasses different facets of the consumer experience, including product quality, service delivery, price fairness, and emotional involvement. Companies prioritizing consumer satisfaction are better positioned to retain consumers and achieve sustainable business growth. In international business management, consumer satisfaction becomes even more crucial due to diverse cultural norms, market dynamics, and competitive landscapes. Research by Nassè (2026 b) emphasizes the influence of cultural dimensions on consumer preferences and satisfaction levels, underscoring the need for companies to customize their products and services to local markets. Grasping cultural subtleties and consumer behaviors is essential for enhancing satisfaction and building strong relationships with global consumers. Consumer satisfaction is closely linked to consumer loyalty, as content consumes are likelier to display repeat purchase behavior and advocate for the brand. Nassè (2019) highlights that satisfied consumers contribute to higher profitability for companies. By consistently delivering quality products, excellent service, and innovative solutions, companies can nurture long-term relationships with content consumers who become brand advocates and ambassadors in the marketplace. Innovation plays a significant role in driving consumer satisfaction. Companies that innovate to address consumer pain points, introduce new products or services, and enhance the overall consumer experience are likely to see improvements in consumer satisfaction metrics. The digital age has transformed customer expectations and behaviors, compelling companies to innovate in digital technologies and online experiences to meet evolving consumer needs. Companies that innovate in digital solutions can create value for customers and set themselves apart in the competitive digital marketplace. Customer satisfaction is fundamental to business

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success and competitiveness in the global market. Companies that prioritize customer satisfaction through innovative strategies, personalized experiences, and market responsiveness are better positioned to build strong relationships with customers, drive loyalty, and achieve sustainable growth. Grasping the complex interplay between innovation and customer satisfaction is essential for companies aiming to thrive in the ever-evolving landscape of international business management. Overall, some researchers also underscore the critical role of innovation in influencing consumer satisfaction in marketing management and their findings align with the present research finding.

4.3.3 Discussion of the Results concerning Proposition 3

Brand loyalty is a critical factor in brand management, reflecting how committed customers are to a specific brand and how often they make repeat purchases. The present research shows that innovation influences brand loyalty in the context of Wa Municipal. This finding corroborates previous findings. Studies by Aaker (1996) and Keller (2001) stress the importance of cultivating strong brand loyalty through consistent brand experiences, emotional connections, and perceived brand superiority. Brand-loyal customers are more likely to resist competitive offerings, engage in positive word-of-mouth, and contribute to the brand's profitability. Innovation plays a crucial role in shaping brand loyalty by setting brands apart and creating unique value propositions for customers. Research by Zhou et al. (2012) suggests that innovative brands are seen as more dynamic, forward-thinking, and customer-centric, leading to higher brand loyalty. Companies that innovate in product development, service delivery, and customer experiences can improve brand perceptions and foster stronger emotional connections with customers. Consumer perceptions of brand innovation directly impact brand loyalty, as innovative brands are often seen as more trustworthy, innovative, and relevant to consumers' changing needs. Research by Han et al. (2014) implies that brand innovation positively influences brand loyalty by enhancing brand image, perceived quality, and customer satisfaction. Companies that continually innovate and commit to meeting consumer expectations are more likely to build lasting customer relationships. Additionally, innovation can drive brand loyalty by creating memorable and unique brand experiences that resonate with consumers emotionally. Companies that innovate in creating distinct brand experiences can set themselves apart in the market and build a loyal customer base. Innovation also helps enhance brand relevance and alignment with changing consumer preferences and market trends. Research by Kotler and Keller (2016) suggests that brands that innovate to stay ahead of market shifts and anticipate consumer needs are better positioned to maintain brand loyalty. Companies can strengthen brand loyalty and maintain long-term competitiveness by using innovation to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and preferences. The digital transformation has reshaped brand loyalty, requiring companies to innovate in digital technologies and omnichannel experiences to engage and retain customers. Companies that innovate in digital strategies can enhance brand loyalty by delivering relevant and engaging experiences across digital touchpoints. Thus, the literature confirms and supports the present finding that innovation

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influences brand loyalty by enhancing brand perceptions, creating unique brand experiences, building emotional connections with customers, and staying relevant in a rapidly changing market. Companies prioritizing innovation as a strategic driver of brand loyalty are better positioned to set their brands apart, build customer trust, and cultivate long-term relationships with loyal brand advocates. Understanding the impact of innovation on brand loyalty is crucial for businesses striving for long-term success. Brand loyalty is essential for businesses seeking to thrive in the competitive landscape of international business management. Finally, some researchers also underline the critical role of innovation in influencing brand loyalty in marketing management and their findings align with the present research finding.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The key findings of this study highlight the significant role of innovation in shaping consumer purchase behavior, consumer satisfaction, and brand loyalty, especially from the perspective of Wa Municipal towards the consumption of carbonated drinks. The study revealed a profound understanding of the influence of innovation on the consumption of carbonated drinks. Notably, respondents emphasized the importance of innovation in influencing consumer behavior among consumers. The study's findings resonated strongly with existing literature and provided unique insights into the subject matter. According to the study, innovation positively impacts consumer purchasing decisions by adding appeal and value to products. Factors such as price and brand reputation still play a significant role, but innovation creates a compelling value proposition influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. The study emphasizes that innovation fosters more profound connections between consumers and brands, ultimately influencing purchase decisions and brand loyalty. The research suggests that innovation positively influences consumer satisfaction in the carbonated beverage market. Interviews revealed that consumers find greater satisfaction in beverages that align with their values, such as being environmentally friendly. Trying new flavors or healthier versions of carbonated drinks also enhances satisfaction. This highlights the importance of innovation in packaging and health benefits for long-term consumer contentment. The study also concludes that innovation positively influences brand loyalty. Many interviewees emphasized their loyalty to brands that continuously innovate and meet their evolving needs. Consistent innovation strengthens the emotional bond between the consumer and the brand, reinforcing loyalty. Furthermore, innovation fosters trust by signaling an investment in quality, further solidifying brand loyalty. Additionally, customers are more likely to recommend a brand to others when it continues to innovate, enhancing its reputation and customer base.

This research provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between innovation and consumer behavior. It highlights the significant impact of innovation, particularly within the carbonated drinks industry. The findings underscore the importance of considering innovation when analyzing consumer decisions in these contexts.

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5.1 Implications

Based on this research findings, several implications are made for businesses, policymakers, and researchers regarding the effect of innovation on consumer behavior, particularly about the consumption of carbonated drinks.

5.1.1 Managerial Implications

The findings imply that businesses should focus on continuous product innovation, such as introducing new flavors, healthier options, and eco-friendly packaging. This is a crucial driver of consumer purchases in the Wa Municipal area. Companies can enhance customer satisfaction and brand loyalty by aligning with customer preferences. Additionally, it is good for marketing managers to understanding the brand preferences in the area, such as the popularity of Malta Guinness and Bel Cola, to allow businesses to cater their product offerings to local tastes. Businesses should conduct frequent market research to stay updated on shifting preferences and tailor marketing strategies according. Marketing managers should enhance digital marketing advertising by bringing their businesses to adopt innovative digital marketing strategies to engage customers. This could include personalized promotions, leveraging social media, and offering online sales platforms. Finally, innovation in digital engagement is critical to increasing sales growth, particularly among younger consumers.

5.1.2 Implications for Policy

First of all, the findings imply that policymakers should incentivize businesses to innovate sustainably by providing tax breaks or subsidies for environmentally friendly packaging and healthier products. Consumers in the Wa Municipal area have shown a preference for sustainability, and policies encouraging such innovation can contribute to both business growth and environmental well-being. Secondly, policymakers should facilitate market entry for SMEs by creating policies that lower the barriers for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to enter the carbonated beverage market. This could include reducing licensing costs, offering innovation grants, promoting competition, and driving further innovation across the sector. Finally, policymakers should encourage Public-Private Partnerships by encouraging collaboration between the public sector, private companies, and research institutions to invest in research and development (R&D) for innovative carbonated beverages. This will support the development of healthier and more appealing products while enhancing local expertise in the industry.

5.1.3 Implications for Research

First of all, researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to understand how product packaging, flavors, and ingredient innovations affect long-term consumer behavior. This will provide businesses with data on what innovations lead to sustained growth and customer loyalty. Secondly, researchers should investigate how socioeconomic factors such as income level, education, and employment status influence carbonated beverage consumption. This can help create more

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targeted marketing strategies for different social classes. Finally, given the growing interest in health-conscious products, researchers should explore how the increasing demand for healthier beverage options could reshape the market. Studying consumer responses to new low-sugar or nutrient-enhanced beverages could provide insights into future sales trends. By implementing these recommendations, businesses, policymakers, and researchers can foster a dynamic market environment that encourages innovation and sustainable growth in the carbonated beverage industry within the Wa Municipal area.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This is a qualitative research that has some contextual-specific insights. The small sample size limits the study's ability to generalize its findings, reduces data robustness, and may not capture the full spectrum of consumer behaviors. Expanding the sample and including more diverse participants would help address these limitations and provide more comprehensive, reliable insights. It is recommended that future research focuses on longitudinal studies to examine how innovations (such as new packaging or product modifications) affect consumer behavior over time. This would help businesses and policymakers understand the long-term impacts of product innovation on brand loyalty and sales growth. Another area for future investigation is the role of socioeconomic factors, such as income and education level, in shaping consumer preferences. Understanding these variables could help companies tailor their strategies to different segments of the population. The growing consumer interest in health-conscious products presents a potential avenue for future research. It is suggested that studies explore how innovations related to health (e.g., low-sugar or nutrient-enhanced beverages) might influence market dynamics and consumer choices. These perspectives emphasize expanding the research framework to address the limitations of the current study, particularly by increasing sample size, and diversity, and incorporating longitudinal designs for better insights.

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