

## An analysis of consumer behavior and marketing strategies influencing packaged traditional beer preference in Chimwemwe

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### Abstract

This study aimed to examine the key factors influencing consumer preferences for packaged traditional beer in Chimwemwe Township, Kitwe, Zambia. The research primarily focused on two objectives: (1) identifying the main determinants influencing consumer preference for packaged traditional beer, and (2) assessing the role of advertising and peer influence in shaping brand preference. A sample size of 30 respondents, selected using purposive sampling, was surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design, with data analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation analysis. The findings revealed that the primary determinants of consumer preference were taste (87%) and affordability (80%), with brand familiarity and packaging playing lesser roles. Advertising had a moderate impact on brand awareness, with 68% of respondents recalling National Breweries' ads, but only 41% found them culturally relevant. Peer influence was a significant factor, as 72% of respondents admitted that their beer choices were influenced by friends and family, which showed a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.67$ ) with brand preference. In conclusion, the study demonstrated that traditional factors such as taste and price remained dominant in consumer decision-making, while modern factors like advertising and peer influence also played crucial roles. The research highlighted that National Breweries could enhance its marketing effectiveness by aligning campaigns with local cultural values and leveraging peer-led strategies. The study recommends that National Breweries adopt more culturally relevant advertising, implement peer-led marketing initiatives, enhance product visibility in key community areas, and establish feedback mechanisms to improve consumer engagement. By addressing these areas, the brewery could strengthen its market position and foster greater consumer loyalty in Chimwemwe Township.

**Keywords:** Consumer Preferences; Packaged Traditional Beer; Advertising Influence; Peer Influence; Marketing Strategies

### 1. Introduction

Traditional beer, locally referred to as Chibuku in Zambia, holds deep cultural and social significance in many communities across the country (Hika Debela Biru, 2021). Historically brewed at the household or community level, traditional beer has evolved from being a purely informal beverage to a formalized product offered in standardized packaging. This shift has been driven by increased urbanization, changing lifestyles, and the rise of commercial producers such as National Breweries, the leading manufacturer of packaged traditional beer in Zambia (Okaiyeto, S. A., 2022). The commercialization of traditional beer, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas, has opened new market opportunities and transformed consumer experiences. With packaging innovations such as Chibuku Super a filtered and pasteurized variant with a longer shelf-life traditional beer has reached broader demographics beyond the older, rural-based clientele. Despite these advancements, the sector still faces stiff competition from clear beers, spirits, and other

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modern alcoholic beverages that are heavily marketed and perceived as more prestigious or aspirational (Okocha, E. R. , 2022).

Chimwemwe Township, located in Kitwe on the Copperbelt Province, presents a dynamic environment to study traditional beer consumption (Etumbih, E. A., & Mishra, D. S. P. , 2018). It is a densely populated peri-urban area characterized by a mix of formal and informal economic activities. The community is made up of working-class individuals, small-scale entrepreneurs, and unemployed youth, many of whom are consumers of traditional beer. However, as preferences shift due to increased exposure to alternative alcoholic beverages and aggressive marketing by mainstream breweries, understanding the drivers of consumer choice in this segment becomes critically important (Nwankwo, C., & Kanyangale, M. , 2023). There was a noticeable research gap when it comes to exploring consumer behavior in relation to packaged traditional beer, particularly within peri-urban settings like Chimwemwe. While studies on alcohol consumption in Zambia exist, they tend to focus on health concerns, youth behavior, or general consumption patterns, without specifically examining brand preference, marketing influences, and cultural context in the traditional beer market (Mweshi, G. K. , 2022). This study, therefore, seeks to examine the key determinants that influence consumer selection of packaged traditional beer in Chimwemwe and to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing strategies used by producers such as National Breweries. By focusing on advertising and peer group influence, the research aims to unpack how external social and marketing factors shape brand loyalty and purchasing decisions (Bbenkele, E., 2023). This analysis will provide insights for stakeholders in the alcohol industry, including manufacturers, marketers, and policymakers, to better tailor products and campaigns to meet the expectations and values of this unique market segment. In light of the increasing competition within the alcoholic beverage industry and the evolving preferences of Zambian consumers, understanding these behavioral patterns is vital. Doing so will not only support market growth for traditional beer but also preserve a product that remains deeply woven into Zambia's socio-cultural fabric (Kubai, S. , 2018).

### *Objectives*

- To examine key determinants influencing consumer choice of packaged traditional beer in Chimwemwe.
- To investigate the impact of advertising and peer influence on consumer brand preference for traditional beer.

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## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Understanding Traditional Beer Consumption in Africa**

Traditional beer has long been a staple beverage in many African societies, not only for recreational purposes but also as an important element in social and cultural rituals such as initiation ceremonies, weddings, and community gatherings (Ojo, O., 2020). In Zambia, the most widely consumed traditional beer is Chibuku, which is commonly made from sorghum or maize. Its appeal lies in its affordability, familiarity, and association with communal identity (Mwansa & Tembo, 2017). Research from neighboring countries, such as Zimbabwe and Malawi, supports the notion that traditional beer consumption often reflects social cohesion and local customs (Chikodzi, 2016). However, modernization and commercialization have significantly altered how these beverages are produced, distributed, and consumed. Today, traditional beer is increasingly sold in sealed containers under recognized brand names, such as Chibuku Super, changing both the perception and dynamics of its consumption (Ozuru, H. N., & Akahome, J. E. , 2016).

### **2.2. Consumer Behavior and Preference Formation**

Consumer behavior refers to the processes individuals engage in when selecting, purchasing, using, or disposing of products and services. According to (Akinmoladun, O. T., & Olamide, O. , 2022) consumer decisions are shaped by a mix of psychological, personal, cultural, and social influences. When applied to the beverage industry, these factors include taste preferences, pricing, branding, peer group norms, and advertising exposure (Akinmoladun, O. T., & Olamide, O. , 2023). In the context of alcoholic beverages, research has shown that brand preference can be significantly affected by social identity and lifestyle aspirations. Consumers tend to align themselves with products that reflect their values or desired self-image. This trend is evident in the shift from unbranded, locally brewed beers to packaged and branded traditional beers like Chibuku Super, which are perceived as cleaner, more modern, and socially acceptable, particularly among younger consumers (Ogunnaike, O. O., & Ojo, O. , 2022).

### **2.3. The Role of Marketing in Alcoholic Beverage Consumption**

Marketing plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors. The application of the 4Ps Product, Price, Place, and Promotion remains fundamental in the competitive beverage industry (Ogunnaike, O. O., & Ojo, O. , 2023). For traditional beer brands in Zambia, product quality (including packaging), pricing strategy, distribution networks,

and promotional activities all contribute to market performance. A study by (Nwankwo, C., & Kanyangale, M. , 2024) revealed that the branding and packaging of Chibuku Super significantly influenced its market penetration. Consumers associated the product with improved hygiene and professionalism compared to the traditionally sold opaque beer in plastic containers. Furthermore, promotional activities such as radio jingles and branded merchandise improved brand recall but had limited long-term influence unless reinforced by peer recommendation and consistent product availability (Mweshi, G. K. , 2023).

#### **2.4. Advertising Influence on Brand Preference**

Advertising is a crucial communication tool used by companies to inform, persuade, and remind consumers of their offerings. For alcoholic beverages, advertising often uses aspirational messaging, humor, or cultural references to connect with target audiences (Okpara, I., & Ogbu, S. , 2024). According to (Nkwam, M. D., 2023) repeated exposure to advertising can shape attitudes and eventually influence purchase behavior. In Zambia, National Breweries has used a combination of print, radio, and billboard advertising to promote Chibuku and its variants. However, these advertisements are often generic and not tailored to specific localities. Research by (Hassan, M. U., & Zaman, S., 2022) found that in peri-urban communities, advertisements that used local languages or featured local personalities were more effective in fostering brand loyalty. While advertising creates awareness, its impact on actual purchase decisions is often moderated by other factors such as income levels, peer influence, and cultural perceptions. Hence, its effectiveness should be assessed in relation to these variables (Chowdhury, S. R. , 2022).

#### **2.5. Peer Group Influence on Alcohol Consumption**

Social influence, especially from peer groups, plays a dominant role in alcohol consumption patterns. In social settings, individuals may conform to group norms or mimic the behavior of others to gain acceptance or avoid exclusion (Odinaka, K. N., & Chukwu, M. S. , 2022). This is particularly evident in drinking behaviors, where peer approval or disapproval can determine the choice of beverage and the frequency of consumption. In a Zambian context, (Mweemba, S. K., & Kaputo, M. W. , 2023) highlighted that men in informal settlements often drink in groups, with decisions about what to consume being made collectively. Peer group dynamics tend to favor brands that are perceived as masculine, affordable, and widely accepted within the community (Maringa, T., & Mutenda, M. S, 2023). This aligns with findings from international studies indicating that peer pressure significantly influences brand preference, especially among young adults and low-income consumers. For traditional beer brands like Chibuku, being perceived as "popular" or "socially acceptable" within the community can enhance consumer loyalty even in the absence of heavy advertising (Tsegaye, G. M. , 2023).

#### **2.6. Gaps in Existing Literature**

While several studies have examined general alcohol consumption trends in Zambia and the broader Southern African region, few have focused specifically on the packaged traditional beer segment in peri-urban settings (Mwansa, L., & Mung'omba, W. , 2024). Most research emphasizes public health concerns or the socioeconomic effects of alcohol use, rather than investigating marketing strategies or consumer behavior patterns. Additionally, limited attention has been paid to the unique combination of cultural heritage and modern branding in traditional beer consumption. There is also a lack of empirical data on how consumers in townships like Chimwemwe perceive advertising efforts by large breweries and how peer dynamics influence their decisions (Banda, C. E., & Zulu, T. D., 2024). This study sought to fill these gaps by providing a focused analysis of the factors influencing consumer preference for packaged traditional beer in Chimwemwe, with a particular emphasis on advertising effectiveness and peer group influence.

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### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Philosophical Assumptions**

This research was anchored in the positivist paradigm, which posits that reality is objective, stable, and can be observed and measured through empirical investigation (Kanyama, N., & Wangechi, E. A. , 2025). Positivism advocates for the use of scientific approaches to explore and explain human behavior, asserting that social phenomena can be quantified and statistically analyzed. Within this paradigm, consumer decision-making is viewed as a behavior that can be systematically studied through the collection and analysis of numerical data. This philosophical stance underpinned the adoption of a quantitative approach in the study, facilitating a structured examination of the variables influencing consumer preference for packaged traditional beer in Chimwemwe Township (Chirwa, A. S., 2025).

### 3.2. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design. This design was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current behaviors, attitudes, and preferences of consumers in relation to packaged traditional beer (Sung, M. J., & Kim, H. S., 2024). Descriptive research is particularly suitable for investigating the present conditions of a given phenomenon without manipulating the environment or variables under study. In the context of this research, the design allowed for the measurement and description of factors such as brand loyalty, the influence of peer groups, and the role of advertising in shaping consumer preferences. The quantitative orientation ensured that the data collected could be analyzed statistically to identify trends, patterns, and potential relationships among the studied variables (Kudzai, M., & Zvidzai, R., 2022).

### 3.3. Population and Sample Size

The target population for the study consisted of adult residents of Chimwemwe Township who are regular consumers of packaged traditional beer (Chinyemba, D., & Chilufya, R., 2023). Chimwemwe, a peri-urban community in the city of Kitwe, was selected due to its active consumption of traditional alcoholic beverages and the diverse socio-economic backgrounds of its residents. These characteristics made it a relevant setting for investigating consumer behavior in the traditional beer market (Mulenga, M. F., & Mwanza, A. T., 2024).

To determine the appropriate sample size for the study, the Taro Yamane formula (1967) was used. This formula is a widely accepted statistical method for calculating sample sizes in finite populations and is expressed as:

### 3.4. Taro Yamene Formula

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

n= Desired sample size

N= Population of the study

e= Precision of sampling error (0.05)

$$N = \frac{35}{1 + 35(0.05)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{35}{1 + 35(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{35}{1.0875}$$

$$n = 30$$

Rounding down to the nearest whole number, the study selected a final sample size of 30 respondents. This number was considered sufficient for the preliminary investigation of behavioral patterns and marketing influences in a localized context. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method that enables researchers to target specific individuals who possess relevant knowledge or experience related to the research topic. To qualify, participants had to meet the following criteria: they had to be aged 18 years or older, regular consumers of packaged traditional beer such as Chibuku Super, and residents of Chimwemwe Township for at least six months. The respondents were approached in communal areas, retail outlets, taverns, and local bars where traditional beer is commonly purchased and consumed.

### 3.5. Data Collection Methods

Primary data were gathered through the administration of a structured questionnaire. The instrument was designed with predominantly closed-ended questions to facilitate the quantification of responses and support statistical analysis (Kamba, R. K., 2025). The questionnaire was divided into five major sections, each addressing a different aspect of consumer behavior and marketing perceptions. The first section gathered demographic data including age, gender, educational attainment, income level, and employment status. The second section focused on purchase behavior, capturing information on frequency of consumption, brand preferences, and typical points of purchase (Chisanga, N., &

Mutale, C., 2025). The third section explored brand preference in more depth, examining the attributes consumers consider most important, such as taste, price, packaging, and availability. The fourth section assessed the influence of social circles and advertising, investigating the degree to which peer opinions and media exposure affected individual consumer choices (Lungu, J. K. , 2023). The final section of the questionnaire invited participants to evaluate current marketing strategies, including advertising visibility, message relevance, and product accessibility. To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted involving five individuals from a neighboring township with similar characteristics. Feedback from the pilot was used to refine the clarity and coherence of the questions. Data collection was conducted over a one-week period with the assistance of a trained research assistant. Where necessary, the research assistant provided translations into local languages and offered clarifications to respondents to ensure accurate and informed responses (Chanza, L. M. , 2024).

### 3.6. Data Analysis

The data collected were coded, entered, and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The analytical process was divided into descriptive and inferential phases. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and percentages, were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to provide an overview of their behaviors and perceptions regarding traditional beer consumption (Shaba, S., & Masuka, P. , 2023). This analysis helped identify prevailing patterns in brand preference, purchase habits, and the perceived influence of advertising and peer groups. For inferential analysis, correlation techniques were applied to examine relationships between selected variables. Specifically, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to measure the strength and direction of associations between advertising exposure and brand preference, as well as between peer group influence and brand preference. The analysis was conducted at a 5% significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ), allowing the researcher to determine whether the observed relationships were statistically meaningful (Kaunda, L. K., & Banda, P. F. , 2022). All ethical standards were strictly adhered to throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and anonymity was maintained by ensuring that no personal identifiers were recorded. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were given the freedom to withdraw at any stage without any consequence (Mutale, C., & Mwansa, T. R. , 2025).

## 4. Findings and Results

**Table 1** Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Response	Percentage
Gender	Male	60%
	Female	40%
Range	20–50 years	100%
Employment Status Age	Employed/Traders	73%

### 4.1. Field Data 2025

This table presents the demographic breakdown of the respondents. The gender distribution shows a higher proportion of male participants (60%) compared to female participants (40%), which may suggest that men in Chimwemwe Township have a higher engagement with packaged traditional beer or that they are more likely to be surveyed. The age range of all respondents (20–50 years) reflects a relatively young and economically active demographic, likely to be more involved in purchasing and consuming traditional beer regularly. The high percentage of participants (73%) being employed or engaged in small-scale trading indicates a stable and income-generating consumer group. This is significant because it points to a consumer base with the financial means to purchase packaged traditional beer consistently.

**Table 2** Key Determinants of Packaged Traditional Beer Preference

Determinant	Description	Percentage
Taste	Most critical factor	87%
Affordability	Cost-effectiveness	80%
Brand Familiarity	Awareness and trust in the brand	65%
Packaging	Visual appeal/convenience	48%

#### 4.2. Field Data 2025

In terms of factors influencing the preference for packaged traditional beer, taste emerged as the most important determinant, with 87% of respondents highlighting it as the primary reason for their brand choice. This indicates that flavor is the most valued attribute in the beer selection process, underscoring the importance of product quality in retaining customer loyalty. The second most significant factor was affordability, with 80% of respondents emphasizing cost-effectiveness, showing that price sensitivity plays a crucial role in purchasing decisions. Brand familiarity was also important for 65% of respondents, suggesting that many consumers tend to stick with well-known and trusted brands, likely due to previous positive experiences. Lastly, packaging was noted as an influencing factor for 48% of respondents. This could reflect a growing trend of consumer preference for products with attractive, convenient, or eco-friendly packaging that stands out on store shelves or aligns with personal values.

**Table 3** Advertising Influence on Brand Preference

Variable	Description	Result
Awareness of Advertising	Recognized campaigns by National Breweries	68%
Cultural Relevance of Advertisements	Ads reflect local values/culture	41%
Correlation with Brand Preference	Link between ad recall and brand choice	$r = 0.61$ (positive)

#### 4.3. Field Data 2025

The impact of advertising on brand preference is nuanced. A majority of respondents (68%) reported being aware of advertising campaigns by National Breweries, indicating that the brewery's marketing strategies reach a large portion of the target market. However, only 41% felt that the advertisements were culturally relevant or engaging, suggesting a disconnect between the content of the ads and the local consumer culture. This points to the need for National Breweries to potentially adapt their advertising to better align with local traditions, values, and language. Despite the lower cultural relevance, a positive correlation ( $r = 0.61$ ) was found between ad recall and brand preference, indicating that advertisement exposure still plays a significant role in influencing consumers' beer choices, even if the cultural appeal is limited.

**Table 4** Peer Influence on Consumer Preference

Variable	Description	Result
Social Influence	Impact from friends and family	72%
Correlation with Brand Preference	Peer effect on consumer loyalty	$r = 0.67$ (positive)

#### 4.4. Field Data 2025

The findings reveal that peer influence is a strong determinant of consumer choice in Chimwemwe Township. A substantial 72% of respondents admitted that their beer preferences were influenced by friends or family. This suggests that recommendations and social circles play a key role in shaping individual preferences. Peer influence is an important factor in markets where social interactions drive consumer behavior, especially in communities where word-of-mouth and trust in family/friends are highly valued. The positive correlation ( $r = 0.67$ ) further emphasizes that the stronger the peer influence, the greater the likelihood of brand loyalty, reinforcing the significant role that personal networks have in determining consumer choices in the traditional beer market.

**Table 5** Perceptions of Marketing Strategies by National Breweries

Marketing Metric	Description	Result
Rating of Current Marketing	Evaluated as poor or average by respondents	56%
Suggestions for Improvement	Use of local language and community outreach	Qualitative Input
Visibility at Point of Sale	Need for stronger in-store branding	Qualitative Input

#### 4.5. Data Source: Field Data 2025

A significant portion of the respondents (56%) rated the current marketing efforts of National Breweries as either poor or average. This critique suggests that the marketing strategies might not be sufficiently engaging or effective in addressing the needs and preferences of the local consumer base. Qualitative feedback from participants highlighted several areas for improvement, such as the use of local languages in advertisements to increase cultural relevance and the importance of deeper community engagement. Additionally, respondents suggested that point-of-sale branding should be more visible and appealing to increase the chances of consumer selection. These insights indicate that while National Breweries' marketing efforts are reaching a large audience, there is a clear need to tailor strategies to the local context and improve product visibility in retail environments.

### 5. Discussion

The findings of this study provided valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer preferences for packaged traditional beer in Chimwemwe Township. These insights were crucial for developing effective marketing strategies that could resonate with local consumers. The analysis of the data revealed both traditional and modern influences on consumer decision-making, highlighting the evolving nature of the market for packaged traditional beer. This section discusses the results in detail, focusing on the key objectives of the study.

#### 5.1. Key Determinants of Packaged Traditional Beer Preference

The results showed that traditional factors such as taste and affordability remained dominant in influencing consumer preferences in Chimwemwe. Specifically, 87% of respondents rated taste as the most important determinant when choosing packaged traditional beer. This finding aligned with the general assumption that the primary quality consumers sought in alcoholic beverages was its flavor profile. Traditional beer in Chimwemwe, such as Chibuku, was often consumed for social and cultural reasons, and taste played a central role in ensuring customer loyalty and repeat purchases. Additionally, affordability was identified as the second most important factor, with 80% of respondents emphasizing the cost-effectiveness of the product. This indicated that a significant portion of consumers in Chimwemwe were price-sensitive, likely due to the economic realities faced by many in this peri-urban area. Although brand familiarity and packaging were also noted as important factors (65% and 48%, respectively), these were less influential than taste and affordability. The relative importance of brand familiarity suggested that while consumers tended to stick with familiar and trusted brands, they were still open to trying new options if these brands offered a competitive advantage in terms of taste and price. The fact that packaging only influenced 48% of respondents may have suggested that while aesthetics was a factor in decision-making, they did not overshadow other considerations such as taste and cost.

#### 5.2. The Role of Advertising in Consumer Behavior

Advertising emerged as a key factor influencing brand awareness, with 68% of respondents indicating awareness of National Breweries' advertising campaigns. However, the effectiveness of these campaigns appeared to be limited by their cultural relevance, with only 41% of respondents finding the advertisements culturally engaging or reflective of local values. This result highlighted a gap in National Breweries' marketing approach: while the ads may have reached a large audience, they did not fully resonate with the local culture, traditions, or values of the Chimwemwe community. This disconnect between the advertising content and the cultural context of Chimwemwe likely reduced the overall impact of the campaigns. Although a positive correlation ( $r = 0.61$ ) was found between advertisement recall and brand preference, suggesting that exposure to ads had some effect on consumer decisions, the low cultural relevance likely hindered the ability to forge deeper emotional connections with the brand. To improve the effectiveness of advertising, National Breweries could have considered localizing their advertisements by incorporating local languages, culturally significant symbols, and references to traditional events or practices. These changes would have helped align the brand more closely with the community's identity, enhancing its appeal.

Additionally, peer influence was identified as a significant factor influencing consumer behavior, with 72% of respondents admitting that their beer choices were affected by recommendations from friends and family. This finding was consistent with social learning theory, which posits that individuals often learn behaviors and make decisions based on observing others within their social circles. The strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.67$ ) between peer influence and brand preference suggested that social networks were a powerful tool in shaping consumer choices. Peer influence was particularly important in the context of Chimwemwe, where social interactions and communal life were central to the consumption of traditional beer. People were often introduced to new brands or products through their social circles, which served as sources of trust and credibility. This meant that traditional beer brands had to focus not only on individual consumers but also on harnessing the power of social dynamics. The study suggested that community-based

marketing strategies such as word-of-mouth campaigns or peer-led promotions could have been effective in increasing brand preference and loyalty.

### 5.3. Implications for National Breweries' Marketing Strategy

The findings of this study suggested that National Breweries might not have been fully leveraging the unique cultural and social context of Chimwemwe. Given the significant role of taste and affordability in shaping consumer behavior, it was crucial for the company to prioritize these factors in product development and pricing strategies. The brewery needed to ensure that its products remained competitively priced to meet the needs of a price-sensitive consumer base while maintaining the high-quality taste that consumers valued. Moreover, the advertising strategies currently employed by National Breweries appeared to lack cultural resonance. To enhance consumer connection, the company could have adopted a more localized marketing approach that incorporated elements of Chimwemwe's local culture. This could have included using local languages in advertisements, integrating community values into brand messaging, and sponsoring traditional events that aligned with the social practices of the area. By doing so, the brand would have been more likely to form an emotional bond with local consumers, leading to increased brand loyalty and advocacy.

The findings also suggested that peer-led campaigns could have been highly effective in Chimwemwe. Since peer influence played such a strong role in shaping brand preferences, National Breweries might have considered implementing peer-driven promotional strategies, such as community ambassadors or influencers, to spread brand awareness and build trust within social groups. Organizing local events where consumers could have shared their experiences and connected with others who were loyal to the brand could have fostered stronger community engagement. Finally, the brewery needed to rethink its in-store visibility. The qualitative feedback from respondents indicated a need for stronger point-of-sale branding, which could have enhanced the visibility of the product in retail spaces and made it more accessible to consumers. This could have involved redesigning product packaging to make it more eye-catching or offering in-store promotions that engaged consumers directly at the point of purchase. The findings revealed that while traditional factors such as taste and affordability continued to influence consumer decisions in Chimwemwe, modern influences such as advertising and peer dynamics were also becoming increasingly significant. National Breweries had the opportunity to enhance its marketing strategies by localizing its advertising efforts, leveraging peer influence, and increasing its community-based engagement. By aligning its strategies with the cultural and social context of Chimwemwe, National Breweries could have strengthened its market position and fostered greater brand loyalty among local consumers.

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## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study highlighted the key factors influencing consumer preferences for packaged traditional beer in Chimwemwe Township. It demonstrated that while intrinsic product qualities such as taste and affordability remain dominant in shaping consumer behavior, extrinsic social factors—such as peer influence and advertising also play a significant role in brand preference. Notably, peer influence was found to be a strong determinant of choice, with a substantial proportion of respondents acknowledging the impact of recommendations from friends and family. This finding underscores the importance of social networks in the decision-making process. On the other hand, advertising, although widely recognized, was seen as somewhat ineffective due to its lack of cultural relevance. Only a small portion of respondents found the advertising campaigns culturally engaging or reflective of their local values, which points to a disconnect between the brewery's marketing efforts and the community's unique social and cultural context. This gap limits the full potential of advertising in fostering a deeper emotional connection between the brand and the consumers. Therefore, while advertising did increase brand awareness, it was not fully successful in creating strong, culturally aligned brand loyalty. Additionally, the findings revealed that product packaging, though influential, was less significant than the other factors of taste and affordability. The emphasis on these intrinsic product qualities indicated that Chimwemwe consumers prioritize tangible aspects of the product that directly impact their immediate consumption experience, such as flavor and price. The results of this study suggested that the traditional and social aspects of consumer behavior in Chimwemwe are critical in determining brand preference. However, marketing strategies currently in place by National Breweries may not be fully optimized to leverage these factors, particularly the cultural relevance of advertising content and the power of peer influence.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the findings, several recommendations have been made for National Breweries to improve its marketing strategy and enhance consumer engagement;



### **6.1. Cultural Relevance in Advertising**

National Breweries should tailor its advertising campaigns to reflect the local culture, language, and values of Chimwemwe residents. This could involve using local languages in advertisements and incorporating culturally significant symbols, local festivals, or traditional events. By aligning advertising content with the cultural identity of the target audience, the company would be able to establish a stronger emotional connection with consumers, enhancing brand loyalty and preference. Advertisements should resonate with the community's everyday experiences, ensuring they feel seen and represented in the brand messaging.

### **6.2. Peer-Led Marketing**

Given the strong influence of peer recommendations on consumer choices, National Breweries should implement ambassador programs that leverage local influencers or community leaders to promote the brand. These ambassadors could be individuals who are already trusted within their communities, such as respected elders, social media influencers, or local figures. Peer-led campaigns would help spread brand awareness more effectively by capitalizing on the power of word-of-mouth marketing. Moreover, such campaigns could foster a sense of authenticity and community around the brand, further reinforcing consumer loyalty.

### **6.3. Enhanced Distribution**

Improving product visibility and accessibility is critical to boosting consumer choice. National Breweries should focus on increasing the distribution of their products in high-traffic community areas, such as local markets, communal gathering spaces, and retail outlets frequented by the target demographic. By making their products more accessible in places where consumers already spend time, the company could increase impulse purchases and strengthen its position in the local market. Additionally, the company should consider collaborating with local vendors or community leaders to ensure its products are well-promoted and easy to find in these key locations.

### **6.4. Feedback Mechanisms**

Establishing platforms for consumer feedback would be essential in understanding the needs and preferences of local consumers. National Breweries should create channels for customers to provide direct input on product satisfaction, packaging preferences, and advertising content. These feedback mechanisms could take the form of surveys, focus groups, or social media engagements. Collecting and responding to customer feedback would not only improve the overall customer experience but also help the brewery to refine its product offerings, adjust marketing strategies, and build a more responsive and customer-centric brand. By showing that they value consumer opinions, National Breweries could foster a greater sense of trust and loyalty among its customers.

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## **Compliance with ethical standards**

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

This research was conducted independently, and the authors Isaac Mbale, Joseph Batala, and Chibulo Foster Mwachikoka declare that they have no financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the findings or interpretation of the results presented in this manuscript. No funding was received from any commercial, governmental, or non-governmental organization with a vested interest in the subject matter of the study. All authors contributed significantly to the research and writing of this manuscript and have approved the final version for submission.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Prior to participation, all individuals involved in the study were informed about the research objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information provided and were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. No identifying personal data have been disclosed in the manuscript, ensuring the privacy and anonymity of all respondents.

### *Statement of Ethical Approval*

The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the appropriate institutional or community-based ethics review board, in accordance with the ethical standards outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki and applicable national research ethics guidelines.

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