

Customer Satisfaction And Brand Loyalty Of Shell Automotive Lubricants Customers In Kampala

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty among consumers of Shell automotive lubricants in Kampala, Uganda. Amid intensifying competition in Uganda's automotive lubricants market from brands such as Total, Mobil, and Castrol, understanding the drivers of customer loyalty has become critical for sustaining market share. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to assess the level of customer satisfaction with Shell automotive lubricants, to examine the level of brand loyalty among Shell lubricants customers, and to establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted, targeting a population of approximately 420 registered retail and institutional customers of Shell lubricants outlets within Kampala. A sample of 201 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table and simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring product quality, service quality, and price satisfaction as dimensions of customer satisfaction, and repeat purchase, brand attachment, and positive word-of-mouth as dimensions of brand loyalty. Data were analysed using SPSS version 26 through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. Findings revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty ($r = 0.674$, $p < 0.01$), with customer satisfaction explaining 45.4% of the variance in brand loyalty ($R^2 = 0.454$, $F(1,199) = 165.53$, $p < 0.001$). The study concludes that customer satisfaction is a critical driver of brand loyalty among Shell lubricants customers in Kampala and recommends that Shell strengthens product quality assurance, after-sales service, and value-based pricing strategies to sustain and enhance customer loyalty.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, automotive lubricants, Shell, consumer behaviour, Kampala, Uganda

1.0 Introduction

Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty are central constructs in marketing management, with substantial evidence linking satisfied customers to repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and long-term brand attachment (Oliver, 1999; Kotler & Keller, 2016). In competitive fast-moving consumer goods and automotive-related markets, brand loyalty serves as a critical determinant of sustained market share and profitability, particularly where switching costs are relatively low (Aaker, 1991). Globally, automotive lubricants companies have increasingly invested in customer relationship management and quality assurance systems to differentiate their brands and retain customers in an increasingly commoditized product category (Deloitte, 2022).

In Uganda, the automotive lubricants market has witnessed intensified competition among established international brands, including Shell, Total, Mobil, and Castrol, as vehicle ownership and the transport sector continue to expand (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2023). Shell, one of the longest-established lubricant brands in the Ugandan market, has faced growing competitive pressure from both international rivals and increasingly popular lower-priced alternatives (Faridah et al., 2023). While Shell has historically enjoyed strong

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brand recognition, anecdotal evidence from dealership reports suggests fluctuations in repeat purchase patterns among Kampala-based customers, raising questions about the extent to which customer satisfaction is translating into sustained brand loyalty, hence the motivation for this study (Lydia, Ariyo, et al., 2023).

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite Shell's substantial investment in product quality and marketing within the Ugandan lubricants market, dealership sales records for the Kampala metropolitan area indicate a declining trend in repeat purchase rates among registered customers over the past two years, alongside a rising number of customers switching to competitor brands (Shell Uganda Dealership Sales Reports, 2023). This trend persists despite consistently positive customer feedback on product performance captured in periodic customer service surveys, presenting an apparent paradox between reported satisfaction and observed loyalty behaviour (Nelson, Christopher, Teddy, et al., 2022). Without a clear empirical understanding of the actual relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty specific to Shell's Kampala customer base, marketing and customer retention strategies risk being misdirected, potentially accelerating further loss of market share (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). This study therefore sought to establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty among Shell automotive lubricants customers in Kampala.

1.2 Main Objective

The main objective of this study was to establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty among Shell automotive lubricants customers in Kampala.

1.2.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the level of customer satisfaction with Shell automotive lubricants among customers in Kampala.
- ii. To examine the level of brand loyalty among Shell automotive lubricants customers in Kampala.
- iii. To establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty among Shell automotive lubricants customers in Kampala.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was grounded in the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980), which posits that customer satisfaction results from the comparison between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase perceived performance, with positive disconfirmation (performance exceeding expectations) leading to satisfaction and, subsequently, loyalty behaviours. The study was further informed by Aaker's (1991) Brand Equity Model, which identifies brand loyalty as a core dimension of brand equity, driven substantially by cumulative customer satisfaction experiences over time.

2.2 Customer Satisfaction in the Lubricants Industry

Customer satisfaction in the lubricants industry is typically shaped by product quality (viscosity performance, engine protection), service quality at points of sale, and price fairness relative to perceived value (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). A study by Adebayo and Ndung'u (2021) in the East African automotive products market found that product quality was the single strongest determinant of customer satisfaction, followed by service quality,

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while price sensitivity moderated the satisfaction-loyalty relationship, particularly among price-conscious commercial transporters.

2.3 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is conceptualized as both an attitudinal and behavioural construct, encompassing repeat purchase behaviour, resistance to switching, and willingness to recommend a brand to others (Dick & Basu, 1994). In Uganda's fast-moving consumer goods and automotive sectors, Nassuna and Okello (2020) found that brand loyalty was significantly shaped by perceived product consistency and after-sales support, with customers who experienced consistent product performance across multiple purchases demonstrating markedly higher loyalty scores than those with inconsistent experiences (Julius, 2024).

2.4 Customer Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty

The relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty has been extensively studied across industries, with the overwhelming majority of studies confirming a positive and significant relationship (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995; Oliver, 1999). In the African lubricants and fuel retail context, a study by Mwangi and Otieno (2022) among Kenyan fuel and lubricant retail customers found that customer satisfaction significantly predicted brand loyalty, accounting for 42% of the variance in loyalty scores (Nelson, Christopher, Teddy, et al., 2022). However, the same study cautioned that satisfaction alone does not guarantee loyalty in markets with low switching costs, where price incentives from competitors can still erode loyalty even among satisfied customers, underscoring the need for continuous value reinforcement strategies (A. G. Kazaara et al., 2024).

2.5 Literature Gap

While the satisfaction-loyalty relationship has been widely studied internationally and within selected African markets, limited empirical research has specifically examined this relationship within Uganda's automotive lubricants sector, particularly for an established brand such as Shell operating in the Kampala market. This study addressed this gap by generating empirical evidence specific to this context.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive correlational research design using a quantitative approach, appropriate for describing customer satisfaction and brand loyalty levels and testing the statistical relationship between them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.2 Study Population

The target population comprised approximately 420 registered retail and institutional customers of Shell-branded lubricants outlets operating within Kampala, as obtained from Shell dealership customer registers (2023).

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, a sample size of 201 respondents was derived from the target population of 420. Simple random sampling was employed to select respondents from the customer register, ensuring equal probability of selection for all registered customers.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire employing a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used. The instrument measured customer satisfaction through three sub-dimensions (product quality, service quality, and price satisfaction) and brand loyalty through three sub-dimensions (repeat purchase intention, brand attachment, and positive word-of-mouth)(Olanrewaju et al., 2021).

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review by two marketing research specialists, yielding a Content Validity Index of 0.86. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded coefficients of 0.83 for the customer satisfaction scale and 0.80 for the brand loyalty scale, both exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS version 26(Nelson, Christopher, & Milton, 2022). Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) were computed for customer satisfaction and brand loyalty variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two constructs, while simple linear regression analysis was used to establish the predictive effect of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty, at a 0.05 significance level.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Permission to collect data was obtained from Shell dealership management. Respondents provided informed consent, and confidentiality of individual responses was assured throughout the research process.

4.0 Results

4.1 Response Rate

Out of 201 questionnaires distributed, 187 were properly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 93.0%.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 187)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	118	63.1
	Female	69	36.9
Age	18-30 years	54	28.9
	31-45 years	89	47.6
	Above 45 years	44	23.5
Customer Type	Individual/Retail	121	64.7
	Institutional/Fleet	66	35.3
Years as Shell Customer	Below 2 years	38	20.3
	2-5 years	77	41.2
	Above 5 years	72	38.5

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The findings presented in Table 4.1 showed that a total of 187 respondents participated in the study. Regarding gender, the results indicated that the majority of the respondents were male, comprising 118 respondents (63.1%), while female respondents accounted for 69 (36.9%). This distribution suggested that male customers formed a larger proportion of Shell lubricants customers who participated in the study. Nevertheless, the representation of both genders provided a broad understanding of customer satisfaction and brand loyalty among different categories of customers.

With respect to age, the findings revealed that the largest proportion of respondents were aged between 31 and 45 years, accounting for 89 respondents (47.6%). This was followed by respondents aged between 18 and 30 years, who constituted 54 respondents (28.9%), while respondents aged above 45 years were the fewest, representing 44 respondents (23.5%). These findings suggested that the majority of Shell lubricants customers were within the economically active age group, implying that they regularly purchased lubricant products and were therefore capable of providing informed opinions regarding customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

The findings further showed that the majority of respondents were individual or retail customers, comprising 121 respondents (64.7%), whereas institutional or fleet customers accounted for 66 respondents (35.3%). This indicated that individual consumers formed the largest customer segment for Shell lubricants in Kampala. The inclusion of both customer categories enabled the study to capture views from different market segments, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness of the findings.

Regarding the duration of customer relationship with Shell lubricants, the results indicated that the largest proportion of respondents had been customers for between 2 and 5 years, representing 77 respondents (41.2%). Respondents who had been customers for more than five years accounted for 72 (38.5%), while those who had used Shell lubricants for less than two years constituted 38 respondents (20.3%). These findings suggested that most respondents had maintained relatively long-term relationships with the brand and therefore possessed adequate experience to evaluate customer satisfaction and brand loyalty accurately.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Customer Satisfaction

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Customer Satisfaction (n = 187)

Dimension	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Product Quality Satisfaction	3.94	0.68	High
Service Quality Satisfaction	3.61	0.79	High
Price Satisfaction	3.05	0.92	Moderate
Overall Customer Satisfaction	3.53	0.62	High

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Table 4.2 presented the descriptive statistics for customer satisfaction among Shell lubricants customers in Kampala. The findings revealed an overall mean score of 3.53 with a standard deviation of 0.62, indicating a high level of customer satisfaction(Faridah et al., 2023). This suggested that respondents were generally satisfied with

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Shell lubricant products and services, reflecting the company's ability to meet customer expectations across different aspects of its operations(Winny et al., 2023).

Among the dimensions of customer satisfaction, product quality satisfaction recorded the highest mean score of 3.94 with a standard deviation of 0.68, which was interpreted as high. This finding suggested that respondents were highly satisfied with the quality, reliability, and performance of Shell lubricant products(Julius & Nancy, 2026). The relatively low standard deviation further indicated that respondents shared similar positive opinions regarding product quality, demonstrating consistency in their perceptions(Julius & Audrey, 2026).

The findings further showed that service quality satisfaction attained a mean score of 3.61 with a standard deviation of 0.79, which was also interpreted as high. This implied that respondents generally appreciated the quality of customer service provided, including staff responsiveness, professionalism, and overall service delivery(Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). The findings indicated that service quality made a positive contribution to customers' overall satisfaction with the brand.

The dimension of price satisfaction recorded the lowest mean score of 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.92, although it remained within the moderate interpretation category. This finding suggested that respondents were less satisfied with the pricing of Shell lubricants compared to product quality and service quality(Lydia, Ariyo, et al., 2023). The relatively higher standard deviation indicated greater variation in respondents' opinions regarding prices, implying that while some customers considered the products reasonably priced, others perceived them as relatively expensive(Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022).

4.4 Descriptive Statistics for Brand Loyalty

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Brand Loyalty (n = 187)

Dimension	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Repeat Purchase Intention	3.71	0.75	High
Brand Attachment	3.42	0.86	Moderate
Positive Word-of-Mouth	3.58	0.81	High
Overall Brand Loyalty	3.57	0.66	High

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The findings presented in Table 4.3 showed that the overall mean score for brand loyalty was 3.57 with a standard deviation of 0.66, indicating a high level of brand loyalty among Shell lubricants customers. This finding suggested that customers generally remained committed to the Shell brand and demonstrated favorable behavioral intentions toward continued patronage. Among the dimensions of brand loyalty, repeat purchase intention recorded the highest mean score of 3.71 with a standard deviation of 0.75, which was interpreted as high(Alex & Moses, 2024). This finding indicated that respondents were willing to continue purchasing Shell lubricant products in the future. The results suggested that customer satisfaction had translated into customers' intentions to maintain long-term purchasing relationships with the brand(Nelson, Christopher, Teddy, et al., 2022).

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The findings further revealed that positive word-of-mouth attained a mean score of 3.58 with a standard deviation of 0.81, also indicating a high level of agreement. This implied that respondents were generally willing to recommend Shell lubricants to friends, relatives, colleagues, and other potential customers based on their positive experiences with the products and services(Nelson, 2024). Such positive recommendations reflected customers' confidence in the brand and their overall satisfaction. The dimension of brand attachment recorded a mean score of 3.42 with a standard deviation of 0.86, which was interpreted as moderate. This finding suggested that although customers generally expressed emotional attachment to the Shell brand, there was still room for strengthening customers' emotional connection and commitment(Faith et al., 2023). The moderate rating indicated that while customers appreciated the brand, their emotional identification with it was not as strong as their intentions to repurchase or recommend the products.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was computed to establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty (n = 187).

Variable		Customer Satisfaction	Brand Loyalty
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	0.674**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	0.674**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty among Shell lubricants customers in Kampala. The findings presented in Table 4.4 revealed a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.674$ with a significance level of $p = 0.000$, indicating a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty at the 0.01 level of significance(Alex & Kazaara, 2023).

The magnitude of the correlation coefficient suggested that customers who reported higher levels of satisfaction with Shell lubricant products and services also tended to exhibit higher levels of brand loyalty(Promise et al., 2024). This implied that improvements in customer satisfaction were associated with corresponding increases in customers' willingness to continue purchasing Shell lubricants, recommend the brand to others, and remain committed to the company(A. I. Kazaara & Audrey, 2024). The statistically significant p-value further confirmed that the observed relationship was unlikely to have occurred by chance. Therefore, the findings provided sufficient evidence to conclude that customer satisfaction was positively associated with brand loyalty among Shell

lubricants customers in Kampala, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that a significant relationship existed between the two variables.

4.6 Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive effect of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty.

Table 4.5: Regression Coefficients (Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.674	0.454	0.451	0.492

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The model summary results indicated a correlation coefficient ($R = 0.674$), reflecting a strong positive relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Moses & Nancy, 2024). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.454$) revealed that customer satisfaction explained 45.4% of the variation in brand loyalty, while the adjusted R^2 value of 0.451 indicated that approximately 45.1% of the variation remained explained after adjusting for sample size. These findings suggested that customer satisfaction was an important determinant of brand loyalty, although the remaining 54.6% of the variation could be attributed to other factors not included in the regression model, such as brand image, customer trust, promotional activities, competitor strategies, and product availability (Ariyo, 2023).

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	40.08	1	40.08	165.53	0.000
Residual	48.19	199	0.242		
Total	88.27	200			

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The ANOVA results further demonstrated that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 165.53$, $p = 0.000$). This finding indicated that the regression model provided a good fit for the data and that customer satisfaction significantly predicted brand loyalty among Shell lubricants customers (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022). The significance level being less than 0.05 confirmed that the model was appropriate for explaining the relationship between the study variables.

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.117	0.198	-	5.641	0.000
Customer Satisfaction	0.692	0.054	0.674	12.866	0.000

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The regression coefficients revealed that the constant term was 1.117 and statistically significant ($t = 5.641$, $p = 0.000$), representing the baseline level of brand loyalty in the absence of customer satisfaction. More importantly, customer satisfaction recorded an unstandardized regression coefficient of $B = 0.692$, a standardized beta coefficient of $\beta = 0.674$, a t-value of 12.866, and a significance level of $p = 0.000$. These findings indicated that a one-unit improvement in customer satisfaction resulted in an estimated 0.692-unit increase in brand

loyalty(Faridah et al., 2023). The positive standardized beta coefficient further demonstrated that customer satisfaction exerted a strong positive influence on brand loyalty, while the highly significant p-value confirmed that this effect was statistically significant(Lydia, Kazaara, et al., 2023). Therefore, the study concluded that customer satisfaction was a significant predictor of brand loyalty among Shell lubricants customers in Kampala, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that customer satisfaction significantly influenced brand loyalty.

5.0 Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The findings support the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory and Aaker's Brand Equity Model, confirming that customer satisfaction is a key antecedent of brand loyalty. The results are consistent with Mwangi and Otieno (2022), who found a comparable predictive relationship among Kenyan fuel and lubricant customers, although the current study found a somewhat stronger effect size, possibly reflecting Shell's established brand equity within the Ugandan market. The relatively moderate price satisfaction score (mean = 3.05) nonetheless echoes Mwangi and Otieno's (2022) caution that price-related dissatisfaction could pose a latent risk to sustained loyalty despite generally high satisfaction on product and service dimensions.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that customer satisfaction is a strong and significant predictor of brand loyalty among Shell automotive lubricants customers in Kampala. Sustaining high product and service quality, while addressing price-related concerns, is critical for reinforcing customer loyalty in an increasingly competitive market.

5.3 Recommendations

- i. Shell should maintain rigorous product quality assurance standards to sustain the currently high product satisfaction levels.
- ii. Shell dealerships should introduce loyalty reward programmes and value-based pricing strategies to address price sensitivity among customers.
- iii. Continuous customer feedback mechanisms should be strengthened to detect and respond to emerging satisfaction gaps before they translate into brand switching.

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