

Consumer Perception of Brand Positioning In Dingalan, Aurora: Basis for Marketing Plan in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in Business Administration

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

“A brand is both, tangible and intangible, practical and symbolic, visible and invisible under conditions that are economically viable for the company.” (Kapferer, 1986)

In today’s fast-changing and evolving world, consumers are always flooded with different product and services choices amongst different companies, and the ability of the brand to stand- out among the competition is very tricky and risky. That’s when brand positioning takes its place, it is more than just a marketing strategy, it is about shaping and developing how people see and feel about a certain brand. It is one of the many reasons why some brands become a household name while others are still struggling to make an impact.

Consumer perception plays a very important and crucial role in this process. How a brand presents itself in the market through its campaigns, mission, vision, overall customer experience and even pricing affects the way consumers view its value and trustworthiness. A strong and well- defined brand positioning can create the utmost loyalty, influence purchase decisions and gives a business the best competitive edge in the market.

A brand success does not only rely on what a company says, it is more about how consumers perceive their products and services offered. Every connection starting from the advertisements and social media presence to product quality and customer service, plays a very important role in shaping that perception. A good, strong, well- defined brand positioning can make people choose one brand over the other, even though the products and services they offered are similar.

This research study aims to explore the impact and relationship between brand positioning and consumer perception in Dingalan, Aurora and the laying foundation for an effective marketing plan. By understanding what makes a brand stand out, make an impact with its target audience and how customers form opinions, businesses/companies can make and design strategies that will not only attract customers but also keep them engaged and loyal in the long run.

The goal of this study is simple, it is to help businesses build brands that people will love, trust, remember and stand out amongst others.

2. Review of Related Literature and Studies

2.1. Brand Positioning and Its Importance

Brand positioning has been widely studied especially in marketing literature, emphasizing its role in shaping consumer perception and influencing their purchasing and buying behavior. (Kotler & Keller, 2016) stated that brand positioning is the process of creating a distinct image of a brand in the consumer's mind. Meanwhile, Aaker (1996), highlights that successful brand positioning relies on differentiation, relevance, and consistency. The concept of positioning as introduced by Ries and Trout (1981) argues that a strong position is necessary to stand out in a competitive market.

2.2 Influence of Brand Positioning on Consumer Perception

Consumer perception plays a very important role in identifying and determining the success of a brand in the market. According to Solomon (2018), consumer perception is the process by which the individuals organize and interpret information to form an understanding of a brand. Brand positioning affects how consumers perceive a brand's attributes, quality and overall value proposition.

Positioning is normally an aggressive market status of any brand in opposition to its opponent. (Porter & Evans, 1996). Brand positioning is the brand icon that builds in consumer mind by his or her idea it is basically shaped from side to side consumer psychoanalysis whether normal or exciting (Zinkhan & Dobni, 1990). The actual or authenticated positioning is basically the positioning the company or a brand tends and wants the consumer to perceive the gadgets used to form it is the TVC television commercials, advertising the main weapon to make the positioning (Krishnan, Lilien & Rangaswamy, 2003). Marketing wires a bridge for positioning (Dillon & Seggev, 1986). As far as any illustration commercial is concerned it consists of a distinctive & inventive element the innovative part contains the brand information, which is represented to grab the attention of the consumer, and so it is directed to the brand positioning (Easingwood & Mahajan, 1989). Rivkin and Trout (1996) gave their support to the commercial with images only and without any positioning claim that is associate to the mind frame of the consumer give the consumer refusal cause on the way to purchase the particular product or brand since they find no need to buy that. Therefore, the discrepancy intended or projected and actual or authenticated positioning what is essentially converse mendacity in the carrying out of the advertisement plan (Blankson, Kalafati & Roth, 2007). Sustaining the authenticated or genuine positioning as confined in the ad as well as the word of mouth and intuitive thinking about the brand consumers build their own observation or perception about the brand and position the conclusions about the brand inside their minds this is apparent or perceived positioning which basically point out the bundle of emotions, feelings, values, viewpoints and impressions consumer thinks for the brand compared to the rivals of that particular brand (Ellson, Ries & Trout, 1986).

2.3 Brand Positioning and Consumer Behavior

Brand positioning is associated to consumer behavior, particularly in terms of purchase decisions and brand loyalty. According Schmitt (1999), emotional and experiential factors often drive consumer behavior, and a strong brand position can tap into these emotional triggers to enhance consumer perception.

Moreover, research done by Lane (2015) suggests that successful brand positioning not only influences initial consumer perceptions but also fosters long-term loyalty. When a brand consistently delivers on the promises made through its positioning strategy, it reinforces consumer trust and builds a loyal customer base.

2.4 Brand Positioning as a Basis for Marketing Plans

Brand positioning serves as the basis for the development of an effective marketing plan. As emphasized by Armstrong and Kotler (2017), companies must align their marketing strategies with the positioning of the brand to ensure that all communication, product development, pricing, and distribution efforts reflect the desired brand image. This alignment helps in crafting marketing messages that resonate with target audiences and enhance consumer perception.

The relationship between brand positioning and marketing strategy is also underscored by the work of Kapferer (2012), who discusses the concept of "brand identity" and how it guides strategic decisions. A clear and consistent brand positioning helps businesses craft marketing messages that are coherent and persuasive, leading to stronger consumer engagement and improved brand loyalty. Preliminary a brand's positioning is a long term process which may goes for 3 to 5 years with huge investments particularly in advertisements (Bhat & Reddy, 1998) choosing companies wrong positioning strategies may decreases their sales because of the un sufficient from the consumers view point not differentiating the brand from the competitors brands it also runs the perceived value of harming the brand positioning. Menacing problems might be occur if the projected positioning is very well selected but the implementation that is the authenticated or actual positioning fall short to produce an outcome in a successful perceived positioning by consumers. Although the combination of the two wrong positioning can be result in a sound strategy as it can be compromised the positioning effectiveness selecting the wrong positioning strategy (Poor projected positioning) and poor authenticated or actual positioning. The consequence of ambiguity for different brands features or property in more broad-spectrum defined like brand position in the attribute aspect on consumer selection has been the center of economics comes close to to branding efficiently. Ambiguity hits consumer perceptions or standpoint of brand features the difference of their viewpoint and their knowledge worth. The writing in the two i.e. financial side and marketing has pointed on quality vagueness which is evaluated and designed as a multiple assemble. Aaker (1991) other factors remain constant the brand with strong demand are connected with highest seeming superiority which refers to trust for excellence. Uncertainty about quality also involves that there is a difference with end user viewpoint about quality for a provided consumer it builds consumer apparent risk and consumer become a risk unenthusiastic in most of the circumstance. Risk aversion an attitude of the consumer hits the consumer decision-making in several means (Rao & Bergen 1992; Shimp & Bearden, 1982). Risk Averse consumers are afraid of vague commodities assessment. In the circumstance brands minimize professed risk by consistent mark of quality (Redem & Swait, 1998; Montgomery & Wernerfelt, 1992). When there is quality vagueness for the brand particularly in the occurrence of risk aversion consumer's start searching more knowledge and reviews about the product quality prior to making the judgment to get it. (Money, Gilly & Graham, 1998; Shipm& Bearden, 1982). Trustworthiness is defined as the believability of an individual purpose at a specific time. Trustworthiness has major parts. Expertise & dependability (Rao & Ruekkert, 1994; Wernerfelt, 1988). On the whole brand trustworthiness or brand standing is the brand belief by the consumer that the information or knowledge that is communicated and positioning that has been created in the brand it requires that consumers supposed the brand as having the capacity and eagerness to deliver on a regular basis that has been promised as it can leads to the signals of brands because if there would be no promise fulfilling the brand equity might be erased or eliminated. The researches in the past also said about the link of brand selection to different cultural extent (Cray & Mallory, 1998; Trompenaars & Hampden-turner, 1997; Voich, 1995) significant effort on cultural cross assessment scheme recognize different characteristic of cultures that can vary the brand

choice as the concept is given by Hofstede. He conducted the research in organizational setup the value he define more or less connected with the consumer behavior like consumer tipping behavior or attitude (Lynn, Zinkhan & Harris 1993). A significant trait of a brands position in a product grouping is how similar or differentiated the brand is perceived to be in contrast with the other brands available in the market and in evaluation with the product category. For a positioning of a brand that is newly born or bit old several choice are there for the marketers initially he can make a positioning of the brand different in the overall market. By this advancement the brand is positioned and it shows a mix features and characteristics of the product in the grouping with different products and it shows as better on the differentiating the features of the product (Dickson & Ginter, 1987). Secondly similarly based on the differentiating perspective it is like differentiating the brands from the other brands includes an effort to generate a different submarket for the newly born brand. With this approach an effort is made to setup the brand apart from the generic grouping slightly than to position the brand within the entire market as in the 1st phase the differentiating features is used to build a solid perception of difference and it makes that the brand is in a class by itself. A subtype is consequently a brand exclusive enough in contrast with the other brands in the market that a fine distinct perceptual state line differentiates it from the other rival brands upsetting marketing behaviors like brand changing and going for another better brand. (Day, Shocker, & Srivastava, 1979; Srivastava, Alpert & Shocker, 1984). Quality that is perceived is the universal evaluation by the consumer that they judge about the better product or brand. (Zeithml,1988) . Contradictory prove whether best quality perceptions of the center brand boost consumer assessments of an addition owing to the relocate of positive quality associations from the center brand to the addition. Center brand quality to forecast addition and center brands assessments may not be adequate when used in segregation Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research www.iiste.org ISSN 2422-8451 An International Peer-reviewed Journal Vol.14, 2015 112 (Aaker &keller, 1990). The recommendations are the best fit judicious move of center brand quality to the addition (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Bottomley & Doyle, 1996). Comparatively it is also been planned that the impact of fit on addition or extension and center brand assessments is temperate by the point of quality (Keller & Aaker ,1992). Last viewpoint is assumed and symbolized in the proposed framework specially forecasted that the professed quality of the center brand temperate the affiliation among fit and consumer assessments for the extensions i.e. addition and the center brand. The vital mechanism of positioning are the picking up the right customer targets , picking up the competitor targets and briefing down the competitive advantage as it is the unique attribute that the brand holds against its rivals which is very important in gaining the trust of the consumers and making a positive perception for consumers (Brooksbank, 1994). Being a manager of the brand as it holds a very significant role to play to make a brand to success or a failure he or she must have the confidence in the brand and must communicate the perception of the brand to the target consumer's mentality. (Ghodeswar, 2008). In creating a positioning strategy and to make it a successful weapon marketer must make sure and deem the target market and communicate to them that how the product is better from the other available rival brands and how it will be beneficial for them (Gwin & Gwin, 2003). Association with the marketing is in fashion for more than decades (Harger & Egan, 2006).

3. Theoretical Framework

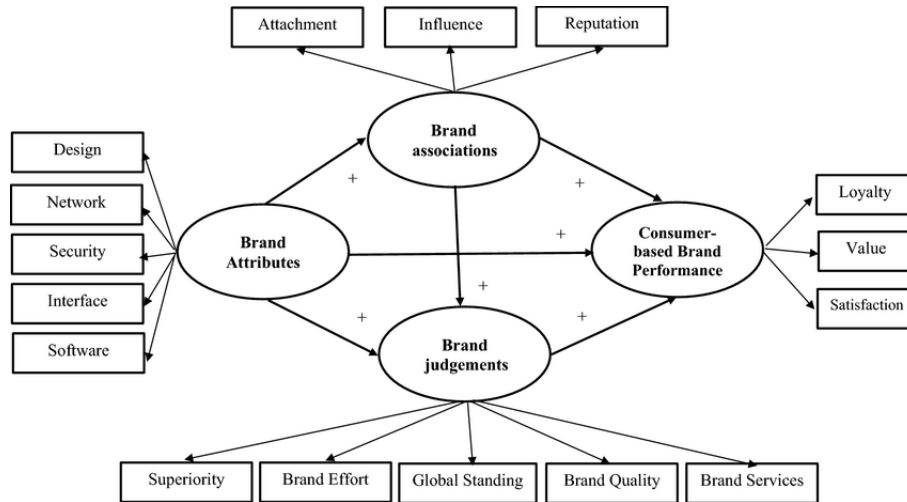
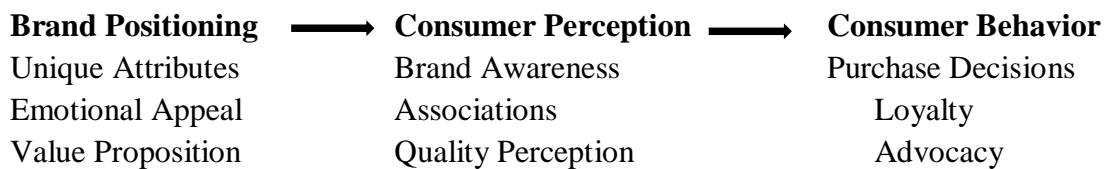


Figure 1. The Customer- Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model



The theoretical framework for this study is based on the CBBE Model (Keller 2003) of brand positioning and consumer behavior. This will help explain how brand positioning will influence consumer perception and decision-making. The framework will also explain the relationship of brand positioning, customer perception and marketing strategies to better understand the relationship between these elements and the impact it will have on consumer perception and ultimately will lead to the development of a marketing plan.

According to Keller’s (2003) Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model, consumer perception is influenced by factors such as brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. These perceptions play a critical role in consumer decision-making. A strong brand position enhances these factors, shaping how consumers evaluate and relate to a brand. The proposed theoretical framework integrates the above theories to illustrate the relationship between brand positioning, consumer perception, and consumer behavior, ultimately informing the development of a marketing plan. The framework is outlined below:

1. Brand Positioning (Independent Variable)

The strategic placement of the brand in the market, differentiating it based on attributes, benefits, and emotional appeal.

Unique selling proposition (USP), emotional appeal, quality, value, lifestyle alignment. A well-defined and clear brand position increases brand awareness and strengthens brand associations in the minds of consumers.

2. Consumer Perception (Mediator)

The way consumers interpret, evaluate, and form opinions about a brand based on their experiences and exposures. Its elements are brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty. Strong consumer perceptions, shaped by effective brand positioning, lead to favorable brand attitudes, influencing consumers' purchase decisions, loyalty, and brand advocacy will be its impact on consumer behavior.

3. Consumer Behavior (Dependent Variable)

The final decision-making process influenced by consumers' perceptions of the brand. Its elements are purchasing intention, brand loyalty, willingness to recommend, willingness to pay premium. Understanding consumer behavior is crucial for developing an effective marketing strategy that resonates with the target audience will be its impact in the consumer behavior.

4. Relationship between Variables

Effective brand positioning creates favorable consumer perceptions by highlighting the brand's unique attributes and aligning with consumers' values, needs, and aspirations. The perceptions formed through brand positioning shape consumer attitudes and behaviors. Positive perceptions lead to stronger brand loyalty, repeat purchases, and brand advocacy. A well-positioned brand influences consumer behavior by fostering positive attitudes, increasing purchase intentions, and encouraging brand loyalty.

5. Application to Marketing Plan

This framework guides the development of a marketing plan by showing how to use brand positioning strategically to influence consumer perceptions and drive consumer behavior. Understanding the relationship between these variables allows businesses to craft marketing messages and campaigns that align with consumer needs and preferences, fostering stronger connections and increasing the likelihood of consumer engagement, loyalty, and advocacy.

The Research Problem

In an increasingly competitive market, effective brand positioning plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perception and influencing purchasing decisions. This study seeks to explore how businesses in Dingalan, Aurora position their brands and how these strategies impact consumer perception. The ultimate goal is to develop a data-driven marketing plan that enhances brand visibility, consumer trust, and market competitiveness. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Frequency of purchases from local businesses
 - Factors influencing purchase decisions
2. How do consumers perceive local brands in Dingalan in terms of:
 - Brand awareness and recognition
 - Marketing strategies and consumer engagement
 - Perceived brand value
3. How do the 4Ms of marketing (Man, Machine, Method, and Material) influence consumer perception of local brands?

4. What are the key factors that contribute to successful brand positioning in Dingalan, Aurora?
5. Based on the findings, what strategic marketing plan can be developed to enhance brand positioning and consumer loyalty for local businesses?

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: A strong brand position boost consumer perception. Consumers who are familiar with brands with clear and distinct positioning are more likely to patronize these brands because they are unique, valuable, and relevant to their needs. This perception will drive positive emotional connections, making consumers feel more loyal and willing to choose the brand over competitors.

When a brand has a clear positioning whether it's focused on quality, affordability, or lifestyle, it becomes easier for consumers to relate to it. A brand that is relevant to the consumer's needs and preferences can shape their perception in a positive way, encouraging repeat purchases and stronger brand affinity.

Hypothesis 2: Effective Brand Positioning leads to stronger brand loyalty among consumers who recognized the brand's positioning are more likely to develop a sense of loyalty towards the brand. This loyalty will show a higher willingness to repurchase, recommend the brand to others, and ignore competitors' offerings.

When customers feel that a brand can connect or is connected with their personal values or lifestyle, they are more likely to stick with it over time. A strong emotional bond created through brand positioning fosters trust, which contributes to long-term customer loyalty.

Hypothesis 3: The alignment of brand positioning with consumer values influences their purchasing decisions. The more that is aligned between a brand's positioning and a consumer's personal values, the more likely the consumer will choose that brand over others. This effect will be stronger for consumers who highly value brand authenticity and relevance.

Hypothesis 4: Brand positioning strategies has a direct impact in the success of a marketing plan. A well-developed brand positioning strategy will provide a solid foundation for marketing campaigns, leading to greater effectiveness in terms of brand recognition, engagement, and consumer behavior. Brands that invest in clear and targeted positioning strategies are more likely to see measurable success from their marketing efforts.

These hypotheses make a starting point in understanding how brand positioning can influence consumer behavior and perceptions, providing a foundation for developing a robust marketing plan. By trying- out these hypotheses, companies and businesses can gain valuable ideas into the effectiveness of their brand positioning strategies.

Scope, Delimitation and Limitations

This study, Brand Positioning and Its Influence on Consumer Perception: Basis for Marketing Plan, focuses on analyzing how consumers in Dingalan, Aurora established their brand positioning and how it affects their perception kin buying and patronizing products or a company. This study will examine different branding strategies, such as price, quality, packaging, customer service, and promotion, to analyze their effect on consumer trust, preference, and buying behavior. Through the analysis of these variables, the research hopes to give insights that will assist local companies in creating

successful marketing strategies to increase brand awareness, customer interaction, and market competitiveness.

The research will only cover small businesses based in Dingalan, Aurora, and will not include big corporations and brands from other places. It will only concentrate on brand positioning and consumer perception, and not on financial performance, production operations, or supply chain management. The study would be undertaken over a period of time, with surveys and interviews conducted among business owners and consumers to yield the necessary data. As the findings will derive from Dingalan's local business sector, the findings may not necessarily be applied to other places or industries.

Significance of the Study

The significance of studying Brand Positioning and Its Influence on Consumer Perception: Basis for Marketing Plan:

For NEUST: This research enhances its commitment to academic excellence by providing valuable insights into consumer perception and brand positioning, which can be integrated into business, marketing, and entrepreneurship courses. The findings can serve as a reference for faculty members in designing curricula that align with real-world business challenges, fostering a more practical learning experience for students. This study serves as a valuable reference for future research on brand positioning, consumer behavior, and marketing strategies, particularly in local business settings. It provides insights that can be used to enhance course materials in business administration, marketing, and entrepreneurship programs.

For Future Researchers: This study will be a useful guide for future researchers who want to investigate brand positioning, consumer behavior, and marketing strategy. It offers an understanding of how companies create their brand identity and how consumers react to them, providing a basis for additional studies in marketing, entrepreneurship, and business development.

Subsequent researchers can utilize this research as a foundation for broadening the scope of brand positioning studies in other markets, geographies, or market segments. It can also be used as a reference in developing methodologies for the analysis of consumer perception, especially in local business environments. The results of this research can also motivate subsequent studies on digital marketing strategies, customer loyalty schemes, and competitive branding strategies.

From this study, future researchers can build further and add to the ongoing refinement of marketing concepts and be able to give more informed solutions that can be utilized by businesses to enhance their market reach and customer interaction.

For Additional Literature: This study will add up to the existing body of literature on brand management, consumer behavior, and marketing. It offers empirical evidence and insights regarding how companies position their brands and how these influence consumer perceptions, trust, and buying behavior. The results of this research can be used as

a basis for ensuing academic discourse and studies on brand positioning, with emphasis on small and local enterprises.

It contributes to current literature by examining the impact of branding strategies on competitiveness in the market within a local context, providing evidence-based uses for researchers and industry stakeholders alike. In addition, this research can make a contribution to regional marketing strategy literature to enable scholars to examine how firms in developing regions build their brands relative to firms in major urban markets. It can also be a valuable reference for consumer psychology, marketing communication, and digital marketing's influence on brand positioning studies.

Through the contribution to the academic community, this study enables the formation of a better picture of branding dynamics across different business contexts.

Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and a better understanding of key concepts used in this study, the following terms are defined operationally:

Brand Positioning. The strategic process of creating a unique image and identity for a brand in the minds of consumers to differentiate it from competitors.

Consumer Perception. The way consumers interpret, evaluate, and form opinions about a brand based on their experiences, marketing messages, and overall brand image.

Marketing Plan. A structured approach that outlines strategies and tactics businesses use to promote their brand, attract customers, and enhance market presence.

Brand Awareness. The extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand, influencing their purchasing behavior and trust in the brand.

Competitive Edge. The advantage a brand has over competitors due to strong positioning, customer loyalty, and effective marketing strategies.

Customer Loyalty. The likelihood of consumers repeatedly choosing a particular brand over others due to positive experiences and trust.

Market Segmentation. The process of dividing a target market into specific groups based on characteristics like demographics, preferences, and buying behavior.

Consumer Behavior. The study of how individuals make decisions regarding the selection, purchase, and use of products and services.

Brand Identity. The combination of visual elements (logo, colors, design) and messaging that define a brand's personality and differentiate it from competitors.

Digital Marketing. The use of online platforms, including social media, email, and websites, to promote brand awareness, engage customers, and drive sales.

Chapter 2

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive research design with a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to analyze the influence of brand positioning on consumer perception in Dingalan, Aurora.

The quantitative approach employs the use of structured questionnaires given to consumers in order to obtain measurable data regarding their perception, liking, and buying habits. The data will be treated using statistical means in order to find trends and relationships between positioning strategies of the brand and the consumer's buying decisions.

The qualitative approach encompasses interviews with business leaders and marketers to have insights into their brand strategies, concerns, and processes in positioning companies. This will offer deeper analysis of consumer sentiments and business minds that cannot be realized from statistical data alone.

By combining both approaches, this study seeks to present an in-depth analysis of the impact of branding on consumer perception. The mixed-method approach ensures that the study not only gives statistical results but also contextual information, making the findings more relevant to actual marketing practices.

Locale of the Study

This study will be conducted in Dingalan, Aurora, a coastal municipality known for its growing tourism industry and local businesses. Dingalan is home to various enterprises, including resorts, restaurants, and retail establishments, making it an ideal setting to examine the impact of brand positioning on consumer perception.

The economic activities of the town are shaped by its natural features, including white sandy beaches, caves, and waterfalls, which are visited by local and foreign tourists. As the competition among businesses in the region is on the rise, branding strategies and consumer tastes need to be understood to increase market presence and customer interaction.

With the focus on Dingalan, Aurora, this research will gain insights into how local businesses create their brand identity and consumers react to them, thus assisting in formulating effective marketing strategies that are specifically suited to the economic conditions of the town.



Figure 2: Dingalan, Aurora Map

Population and Sampling

Population

The Municipality of Dingalan is a municipality in the province of Aurora, Philippines. According to the latest census conducted in the province, it has a population of 27, 878 people. The municipality has eleven (11) barangays namely, Barangays Aplaya, Butas na Bato, Matawe (Cabog), Caragsacan, Davildavilan, Dikapanikian, Ibona, población, Tanawan, Umiray (Malamig) and Paltic which will be the main locale of this study. The premier barangay north of the town is Paltic which is the best sampling area for this research study.

Barangay Paltic in Dingalan, Aurora has a population of 5,754 which represents 20.64% of the population of the Municipality of Dingalan in Aurora. The household population of Paltic in the 2020 Census was 5,754 broken down into 1,098 households or an average of 4.62 members per household. According to the 2015 Census, the age group with the highest population in Paltic is 10 to 14, with 619 individuals. Conversely, the age group with the lowest population is 80 and over, with 26 individuals.

Combining age groups together, those aged 14 and below, consisting of the young dependent population which include infants/babies, children and young adolescents/teenagers, make up an aggregate of 34.88% (1,770). Those aged 15 up to 64, roughly, the economically active population and actual or potential members of the work force, constitute a total of 60.77% (3,084). Finally, old dependent population consisting of the senior citizens, those aged 65 and over, total 4.35% (221) in all.

The computed Age Dependency Ratios mean that among the population of Paltic, there are 57 youth dependents to every 100 of the working age population; there are 7 aged/senior citizens to every 100 of the working population; and overall, there are 65 dependents (young and old-age) to every 100 of the working population.

The median age of 22 indicates that half of the entire population of Paltic are aged less than 22 and the other half are over the age of 22.

Sampling

A recommended sample size of 50 individuals and business owners will be the target respondents in the area.

A **Stratified Random Sampling Technique** will be used to ensure correct representation of data from the different respondents. The sample size will be divided into:

Consumers- A random selection of 40 respondents across Brgy. Paltic in Dingalan Aurora will be interviewed and ask to answer questionnaire prepared by the researchers of this study ensuring diversity in the area's demographics such as age, occupation, and purchasing habits.

Business Owners- at least 20 entrepreneurs from various industries (e.g. retail, food, tourism, and services) will be selected to provide insights regarding their brand positioning strategies.

The sample size is determined using Slovin's Formula:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

where:

- n = sample size
- N = population size
- e = acceptable margin of error

For business owners, a **Purposive Sampling** will be used to ensure responses from those with relevant brand positioning experience.

This sampling techniques will provide balanced insights into both consumer perceptions and brand positioning strategies in Barangay Paltic in Dingalan, Aurora.

Research Instruments

This study will utilize survey questionnaires and interviews as primary research instruments to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on brand positioning and consumer perception in Dingalan, Aurora.

The questionnaire for the survey will be designed with closed-ended questions in a Likert scale to gauge consumer attitudes toward brand positioning approaches, including pricing, quality, promotions, and customer service. The questionnaire will be administered to Dingalan consumers to gather quantifiable data amenable to statistical analysis.

The guide for interview will contain open-ended questions meant to collect thorough information from marketing practitioners and entrepreneurs about their branding efforts, challenges, and consumer interactions. This qualitative method accommodates a fuller understanding of variables that affect brand positioning within the local market.

Both instruments will be pilot tested by experts prior to data collection to establish reliability and accuracy. Pre-testing will also be done to perfect questions and enhance clarity. Using these research instruments, the study hopes to gain balanced data that can offer significant conclusions and recommendations.

Questionnaire

Instructions:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by selecting the most appropriate response. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

Part I: Consumer Profile

Demographic details to be filled by the respondent

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male Female Prefer not to say
3. How often do you purchase or avail yourself of services from local businesses in Dingalan, Aurora?
 Rarely Occasionally Frequently Always

PART II: Direction: Kindly submit your response by utilizing the rating scale provided:

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

INDICATORS	4	3	2	1
Brand Awareness and Recognition				
1. I am familiar with the brands of businesses operating in Dingalan, Aurora.				
2. I can easily recall local business brands in Dingalan.				
3. Local businesses in Dingalan have a strong and consistent brand identity.				
4. Local brands differentiate themselves effectively from competitors.				
5. I recognize local brands due to their logo, slogan, or packaging.				
Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement				
1. Local businesses use digital marketing and social media effectively.				
2. Promotions (discounts, loyalty programs, etc.) influence my purchasing decisions.				
3. I follow or engage with local brands on social media platforms.				
4. The customer experience (service, responsiveness) affects my brand perception.				
5. Word-of-mouth recommendations influence my decision to try local brands.				

Consumer Perception of Brand Value				
1. The quality of products/services from local businesses meets my expectations.				
2. Local brands provide better value for money compared to national brands.				
3. I associate local businesses with high credibility and trustworthiness.				
4. Pricing strategies of local businesses reflect fair value for their offerings.				
5. I am willing to pay a premium price for a well-positioned local brand.				

Market Analysis (4Ms – Man, Machine, Method, Material)				
1. Man: The skills and professionalism of employees enhance my trust in local brands.				
2. Machine: The use of technology (e.g., online selling, digital payments) improves my experience with local businesses.				
3. Method: The customer service and business processes of local brands influence my perception.				
4. Material: The quality of raw materials used in local products affects my trust in the brand.				
Brand Positioning and Purchase Behavior				
1. I prefer local brands over national/international brands due to their unique positioning.				
2. Local brands that emphasize sustainability and social responsibility attract my interest.				
3. A well-positioned brand makes me more likely to recommend it to others.				
4. I believe a strong marketing plan can improve the competitiveness of local businesses.				

Suggestions for Business Growth

What factors influence your decision to purchase from local businesses? (Please specify)

What improvements would you suggest for businesses in Dingalan, Aurora to enhance their branding?

Thank you for your participation! Your feedback is valuable to this research.

Data Analysis Technique

To successfully analyze the impact of brand positioning on consumer perception in Barangay Paltic in Dingalan, Aurora both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques will be used. The data that will be collected from the surveys and interviews will be systematically assessed to extract meaningful conclusions.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Responses from consumers and business owners will be analyzed using **Descriptive Statistics** (to summarize the demographic data of the area, consumer preferences and brand awareness levels.) and **Inferential Statistics** (to determine if there is significant relationship between brand positioning and consumer perception.) to identify the relationship between brand positioning and consumer perception.

Qualitative Data Analysis

For business owners and entrepreneurs, and open-ended survey and interviews will be conducted and analyzed using thematic analysis to display the insights of branding strategies and challenges faces/d by the business owners.

Ethical Consideration

This research maintains ethical integrity by providing informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and ethical approval. Steps will be taken to ensure participants' rights are protected and the highest levels of research integrity are maintained.

Informed Consent

Participants will be thoroughly briefed on the aim of the study, procedures involved, possible risks, and the right to withdraw at any time with no repercussions. Their involvement will be on a clear basis of understanding the goals of the research.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants' responses, all responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. Data will be kept safe, accessible to the research team only, and used exclusively for research purposes.

Voluntary Participation

The study participation will be voluntary, to allow individuals to give their opinions freely, free from coercion or pressure.

Data Usage and Security

The data thus gathered will be utilized solely for research purposes and in aggregated form to ensure that individual respondents cannot be identified. Stringent data protection measures will be employed.

Ethical Approval

The study will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate ethics boards or committees to comply with established ethical standards and research integrity.

Chapter 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1 Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Age

Variables	Frequency (n=60)	Percentage (100%)
AGE		
19 years old and below	12	20.0
20-30 years old	25	41.7
31-40 years old	13	21.7
41-50 years old	6	10.0
50 years old and above	4	6.7
Total	60	100

As shown in the table, the largest portion of respondents falls within the 20–30 years old age group, comprising 41.7% (25 out of 60). This indicates that young adults form the majority of the population surveyed in Dingalan, Aurora, and are likely the most engaged when it comes to expressing perceptions about brands. This aligns with findings from Kotler & Keller (2020), who noted that consumers in this age bracket are typically active in market interactions and are highly responsive to brand-related stimuli. The 31–40 years old group follows, representing 21.7% (13 out of 60), showing that middle-aged adults also form a significant portion of the consumer base and are involved in shaping brand perceptions. Respondents aged 19 years old and below make up 20.0% (12 out of 60), indicating that younger consumers also participate in brand evaluation, though slightly less than those in the 20–30 and 31–40 brackets. Solomon (2019) emphasizes that youth often engage with brands through trends and peer influence, making their opinions notable despite their smaller proportion. The 41–50 years old and 50 years old and above groups make up the smallest portions of respondents, at 10.0% (6 out of 60) and 6.7% (4 out of 60), respectively. According to Schiffman & Wisenblit (2019), older consumers tend to be more selective and cautious in forming brand perceptions, which may explain the lower response rate from these age brackets. These results suggest a higher representation of younger age groups in the dataset, reflecting their more active participation in evaluating and perceiving brands within Dingalan, Aurora.

Table 2. Sex

Sex	Frequency (n=60)	Percentage (100%)
Male	32	53.3
Female	28	46.7
Total	60	100

Based on the data, male respondents represent the slight majority at 53.3% (32 out of 60), while female respondents account for 46.7% (28 out of 60). This indicates a relatively balanced participation between the two sexes, with only a modest difference of 6.6 percentage points. The data reflects that both male and female consumers in Dingalan, Aurora, are similarly engaged in expressing their perceptions regarding brand positioning. This balanced representation provides a well-rounded view of consumer insights across genders, which is important because gender can influence consumer behavior in various ways. Solomon (2019) explains that while traditional gender roles once dictated distinct consumption patterns—with males often associated with utilitarian buying motives and females with more experiential or emotional brand engagement—these distinctions have blurred over recent years. Today, both men and women participate actively in brand interactions, evaluate marketing messages critically, and base their purchasing decisions on factors such as quality, value, and brand image. Schiffman & Wisenblit (2019) point out that consumer preferences are now more individualistic than gender-driven, especially as lifestyle, education, and digital access redefine how people interact with brands. The close gap in male and female respondent counts supports this shift, suggesting that brand perception studies must consider the nuanced and overlapping behaviors of both sexes. The findings reveal that both male and female consumers in Dingalan have a strong presence in brand perception, and their nearly equal participation helps ensure that consumer insights are not skewed toward one gender, allowing for more balanced conclusions.

Table 3. How often do you purchase or avail yourself of services from local businesses in Dingalan, Aurora?

<i>How often do you purchase or avail yourself of services from local businesses in Dingalan, Aurora?</i>	Frequency (n=60)	Percentage (100%)
Rarely	23	38.3
Occasionally	7	11.7
Frequently	23	38.3
Always	7	11.7
Total	60	100

The data reveals that the majority of respondents are divided between two key behaviors: 23 respondents (38.3%) report that they "rarely" purchase or avail services from local businesses, while another 23 respondents (38.3%) say they do so "frequently." This split indicates a significant variation in

consumer engagement with local enterprises, suggesting that while some consumers maintain consistent support for local businesses, an equally large portion interacts with them infrequently. Meanwhile, only 7 respondents (11.7%) state that they "always" patronize local businesses, reflecting a small segment of highly loyal consumers. Similarly, 7 respondents (11.7%) report "occasional" purchases, pointing to a group that interacts with local businesses in a more

irregular or spontaneous manner. These findings suggest that consumer behavior in Dingalan, Aurora, is diverse and segmented. According to Nguyen et al. (2020), purchasing frequency is influenced by factors such as product availability, pricing, perceived quality, and customer satisfaction. Consumers who purchase frequently may find local businesses reliable or conveniently located, whereas those who rarely engage may perceive limitations in product selection, customer service, or value for money. A study by Chen & Popovich (2021) emphasizes that consumer trust and community connection are crucial in encouraging more regular patronage of local businesses. The equal percentage between the "rarely" and "frequently" groups may suggest that while some consumers have developed a degree of loyalty or habit, others still hesitate due to unmet expectations or a stronger preference for alternatives outside the local market. This distribution underscores the importance of understanding why some consumers remain loyal while others do not, as this can inform more effective strategies to enhance consumer engagement and brand positioning among local businesses.

Table 4. Which factor most influences your purchase decision?

<i>Which factor most influences your purchase decision?</i>	Frequency (n=60)	Percentage (100%)
Price	5	8.3
Brand reputation	34	56.7
Product quality	16	26.7
Customer service	2	3.3
Promotion	3	5.0
Total	60	100

The data shows that the most dominant factor influencing consumer purchase decisions in Dingalan, Aurora, is brand reputation, chosen by 34 out of 60 respondents (56.7%). This indicates that more than half of the consumers place a high level of importance on how a brand is perceived in terms of trustworthiness, image, and reliability. This finding aligns with the research of Chinomona (2016), which highlights that brand reputation significantly impacts consumer confidence and loyalty, particularly in small markets where word-of-mouth and community-based perceptions play a key role. The second most influential factor is product quality, selected by 16 respondents (26.7%). This suggests that consumers in Dingalan are also highly concerned with the functionality, durability, and overall performance of the products they purchase. According to Zeithaml et al. (2020), perceived product quality remains a strong determinant of consumer satisfaction and repeat buying behavior, especially in local markets where consumers may have limited access to alternative brands or higher-end goods. Price was chosen by 5 respondents (8.3%), indicating that while cost is a consideration, it is less of a primary

concern compared to brand and quality. This implies that consumers may be willing to pay more if the brand is reputable and the product quality meets their expectations. This supports the findings of Kotler & Keller (2020), who argue that in many cases, value perception overrides mere affordability, especially when brand trust is established. Promotion and customer service were the least selected factors, with only 3 (5.0%) and 2 (3.3%) respondents respectively identifying them as their top influence. This suggests that while these elements may support or enhance the overall consumer experience, they are not the primary motivators for purchase decisions in this locality. As noted by Huang & Sarigöllü (2014), promotional tactics may capture attention, but brand credibility and consistent product quality are more likely to drive long-term consumer commitment. The findings reveal that brand reputation and product quality are the most significant drivers of consumer purchase behavior in Dingalan, while price, promotion, and service play secondary roles.

SOP 2 HOW DO CONSUMERS PERCEIVE LOCAL BRANDS IN DINGALAN, AURORA?

Table 5: How do consumers perceive local brands in Dingalan Regarding Brand awareness and recognition

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I am familiar with the brands of businesses operating in Dingalan, Aurora.	38	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
2. I can easily recall local business brands in Dingalan.	3.23	<i>Agree</i>
3. Local businesses in Dingalan have a strong and consistent brand identity.	3.03	<i>Agree</i>
4. Local brands differentiate themselves effectively from competitors.	3.5	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
5. I recognize local brands due to their logo, slogan, or packaging.	3.43	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Grand Mean	3.31	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Strongly Agree; 2.5-3.24 – Agree 1.75-2.49 – Disagree -1.00-1.74 – Strongly Disagree/</i>		

The data indicates that consumers in Dingalan, Aurora, have a strong positive perception of local brands, particularly in terms of their brand awareness and recognition. The statement "I am familiar with the brands of businesses operating in Dingalan, Aurora" received the highest level of agreement, with a score of 38 (Strongly Agree). This suggests that local businesses have successfully made themselves known to the community. Familiarity is a critical aspect of brand awareness and is an indicator that the local businesses have effectively established a presence within the region. According to Keller (2023), brand familiarity is essential for building a foundation of trust, as consumers are more likely to choose brands they recognize and are familiar with. The statement "I can easily recall local business brands in Dingalan" received a mean score of 3.23 (Agree). While this reflects a relatively high level of recall among respondents, it suggests there may be room for improvement in ensuring that local business brands are not only recognized but easily recalled in consumers' minds. A study by Aaker (2022) suggests that for a brand to develop a strong position in the market, it must be both recognizable and memorable, as this facilitates consumer choice when purchasing decisions are made. Regarding the

statement "Local businesses in Dingalan have a strong and consistent brand identity," the mean score of 3.03 (Agree) indicates that local businesses are generally perceived as having a cohesive identity. However, it suggests that some consumers might feel the need for greater consistency in the branding efforts of these businesses across various touchpoints. Consistent branding fosters trust and helps maintain a unified market presence, as emphasized by Kotler & Keller (2020), who argue that brand identity consistency plays a critical role in reinforcing a brand's message and building long-term consumer loyalty. The statement "Local brands differentiate themselves effectively from competitors" received a score of 3.5 (Strongly Agree), suggesting that a significant portion of respondents believes local brands are successfully carving out a unique space in the market. Brand differentiation is a key element in building consumer loyalty and preference (Porter, 1985), as it ensures that consumers recognize the distinct value of local brands compared to other options available in the market. The statement "I recognize local brands due to their logo, slogan, or packaging" received a high score of 3.43 (Strongly Agree), indicating that local businesses in Dingalan have effectively used visual branding elements such as logos, slogans, and packaging to create recognition among consumers. Research by Schmitt (2017) confirms that brand recognition through visual elements like logos and slogans significantly enhances the consumer's ability to identify and recall a brand, which can positively influence purchasing decisions. The Grand Mean of 3.31 (Strongly Agree) suggests that, on the whole, consumers in Dingalan have a high level of awareness and recognition of local brands. This reflects a strong overall perception of the effectiveness of local businesses in building brand awareness and ensuring recognition through various branding elements. However, it also indicates that there is room for local businesses to enhance their brand consistency and recall strategies to further solidify their position in the minds of consumers.

Table 6: How do consumers perceive local brands in Dingalan Regarding Marketing strategies and consumer engagement

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. Local businesses use digital marketing and social media effectively.	3.51	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
2. Promotions (discounts, loyalty programs, etc.) influence my purchasing decisions.	3.33	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
3. I follow or engage with local brands on social media platforms.	3.34	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
4. The customer experience (service, responsiveness) affects my brand perception.	3.7	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
5. Word-of-mouth recommendations influence my decision to try local brands	3.51	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
Grand Mean	3.49	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Strongly Agree; 2.5-3.24 – Agree 1.75-2.49 – Disagree -1.00-1.74 – Strongly Disagree</i>		

The data reveals that consumers in Dingalan, Aurora, hold strong perceptions of local businesses' marketing strategies and their engagement efforts, with a general consensus of agreement on the

effectiveness of these strategies. The highest score was observed for the statement "Local businesses use digital marketing and social media effectively", which received a mean of 3.51 (Strongly Agree). This suggests that local businesses are perceived as successfully leveraging modern digital tools to reach and engage their target audience. Social media platforms, in particular, have become a critical avenue for brand visibility and consumer interaction, aligning with the findings of Alalwan et al. (2018), who emphasize that digital marketing and social media are essential for building consumer relationships and enhancing brand awareness. The second highest mean score, 3.51 (Strongly Agree), was recorded for "Word-of-mouth recommendations influence my decision to try local brands." This shows that word-of-mouth plays a significant role in consumer decision-making. Recommendations from peers or community members can be more persuasive than traditional advertising, as highlighted by Sweeney et al. (2015), who found that word-of-mouth has a substantial impact on consumer behavior, particularly in community-driven environments where trust is essential. Consumers also strongly agreed that promotions (discounts, loyalty programs, etc.) influence their purchasing decisions, with a mean score of 3.33 (Strongly Agree). This suggests that price-based incentives are an effective way for local businesses to drive consumer purchases and enhance loyalty. Promotions and loyalty programs are important for reinforcing brand engagement and increasing consumer retention (Goh et al., 2020). Furthermore, 3.34 (Strongly Agree) was the score for "I follow or engage with local brands on social media platforms." This indicates that many consumers are actively engaging with local brands online, whether through following their social media pages, commenting, or sharing content. Engagement on these platforms allows brands to create a more personalized connection with consumers, encouraging stronger brand loyalty and long-term relationships, as noted by Zhu & Chen (2015), who argue that social media engagement fosters brand loyalty and community building. Lastly, the statement "The customer experience (service, responsiveness) affects my brand perception" received a mean score of 3.7 (Strongly Agree), which underscores the critical role of customer service and responsiveness in shaping consumer perceptions. Positive experiences with customer service, especially in terms of quick responses and assistance, can significantly enhance a brand's reputation and foster loyalty. As emphasized by Grégoire et al. (2018), the customer experience is essential in driving consumer satisfaction and creating emotional connections with the brand. The grand Mean of 3.49 (Strongly Agree) suggests that consumers in Dingalan have a highly positive view of local businesses' marketing strategies and engagement efforts. This highlights the effectiveness of digital marketing, promotions, social media engagement, word-of-mouth, and customer service in driving consumer decisions and perceptions in the local market.

Table 7: How do consumers perceive local brands in Dingalan Regarding Perceived brand value

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. The quality of products/services from local businesses meets my expectations.	3.28	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
2. Local brands provide better value for money compared to national brands.	3.28	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
3. I associate local businesses with high credibility and trustworthiness.	3.28	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

4. Pricing strategies of local businesses reflect fair value for their offerings.	3.2	<i>Agree</i>
5. I am willing to pay a premium price for a well-positioned local brand.	3.21	<i>Agree</i>
Grand Mean	3.25	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Strongly Agree; 2.5-3.24 – Agree 1.75-2.49 – Disagree -1.00-1.74 – Strongly Disagree</i>		

The data reveals that consumers in Dingalan, Aurora, generally have a positive perception of the perceived value of local brands, with a high level of agreement on several key indicators. The statement "The quality of products/services from local businesses meets my expectations" received a mean score of 3.28 (Strongly Agree). This suggests that local businesses are seen as consistently providing products and services that align with consumer expectations, which is a critical component of perceived brand value. According to Aaker (2016), brand quality directly influences consumers' perceptions of value, fostering loyalty and satisfaction. Another indicator, "Local brands provide better value for money compared to national brands", also scored 3.28 (Strongly Agree). This indicates that consumers perceive local brands as offering competitive or superior value for money relative to their national counterparts. This aligns with the findings of Huang & Benyoucef (2018), who argue that local brands can often differentiate themselves by offering products that meet local consumer needs while being more affordable than national brands. Consumers also rated the statement "I associate local businesses with high credibility and trustworthiness" with a mean of 3.28 (Strongly Agree), which suggests that local brands are perceived as reliable and trustworthy. Trust is a significant driver of brand equity, as highlighted by Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2019), who note that trustworthiness directly contributes to long-term brand loyalty, especially when consumers have regular, personal interactions with businesses. Regarding pricing, "Pricing strategies of local businesses reflect fair value for their offerings" received a mean of 3.2 (Agree), which indicates that while local businesses are generally perceived to have fair and competitive pricing strategies, there is still room for improvement in aligning perceptions of value with the actual pricing. This suggests that local businesses could further refine their pricing models to enhance the perceived fairness of their offerings. Lastly, the statement "I am willing to pay a premium price for a well-positioned local brand" scored 3.21 (Agree), showing that consumers are somewhat willing to pay higher prices for local brands they perceive as well-positioned or offering exceptional value. This suggests that consumers may associate higher pricing with quality and brand status, supporting the notion that brand positioning plays an important role in shaping consumer willingness to pay a premium (Kapferer, 2015). The Grand Mean of 3.25 (Strongly Agree) suggests that, overall, consumers in Dingalan perceive local brands as offering good value in terms of quality, trustworthiness, and competitive pricing. Local businesses have succeeded in establishing strong brand value perceptions, but there is still an opportunity to further strengthen the association of premium value with local brands.

SOP 3 MS OF MARKETING (MAN, MACHINE, METHOD, AND MATERIAL) INFLUENCE CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF LOCAL BRANDS

Table 8: 4Ms of marketing (Man, Machine, Method, and Material) influence consumer perception of local brands

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. Man: The skills and professionalism of employees enhance my trust in local brands.	3.13	<i>Agree</i>
2. Machine: The use of technology (e.g., online selling, digital payments) improves my experience with local businesses.	3.16	<i>Agree</i>
3. Method: The customer service and business processes of local brands influence my perception.	2.8	<i>Agree</i>
4. Material: The quality of raw materials used in local products affects my trust in the brand.	2.95	<i>Agree</i>
Grand Mean	3.01	<i>Agree</i>
<i>Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Strongly Agree; 2.5-3.24 – Agree 1.75-2.49 – Disagree -1.00-1.74 – Strongly Disagree</i>		

The data highlights that multiple factors related to the Man, Machine, Method, and Material framework have a positive but moderate influence on consumer perceptions of local brands in Dingalan, Aurora.

For Man, the statement "The skills and professionalism of employees enhance my trust in local brands" received a mean score of 3.13 (Agree). This suggests that consumers value the expertise and professionalism of the staff in building trust and confidence in local brands. This aligns with the findings of Lee & Hosanagar (2017), who assert that the behavior and skillset of employees directly influence consumers' brand perceptions, especially in service-oriented sectors.

Regarding Machine, "The use of technology (e.g., online selling, digital payments) improves my experience with local businesses" scored 3.16 (Agree). This indicates that digital tools and technological advancements are seen as enhancing the consumer experience. Local businesses' ability to adopt and integrate technology—such as online selling platforms and digital payment systems—appears to positively influence consumer satisfaction. According to Sorescu et al. (2018), the integration of technology is increasingly important for creating seamless and efficient customer experiences, making it a vital factor for modern consumers.

For Method, "The customer service and business processes of local brands influence my perception" received a slightly lower mean score of 2.8 (Agree). This indicates that while customer service and business processes are seen as important factors in shaping brand perception, they are not as impactful as other elements such as employee professionalism and technology. This suggests that local brands might still have opportunities to improve their service processes and customer interactions. Research by Pereira & Pereira (2020) suggests that customer service has a moderate impact on brand loyalty, and there is always room for improvement to meet consumer expectations.

For Material, "The quality of raw materials used in local products affects my trust in the brand" scored 2.95 (Agree). This shows that consumers are aware of the importance of raw material quality in shaping their perceptions of the brand, though it is not the highest-rated factor. Quality materials are essential to build brand credibility and trust, as noted by Chen & Xie (2016), who found that product quality, including the raw materials used, significantly affects consumer loyalty and brand trust.

The Grand Mean of 3.01 (Agree) suggests that Man, Machine, Method, and Material all have an influential yet moderate effect on consumer perception. The findings indicate that local businesses are generally seen as capable and trustworthy, particularly in areas related to employee professionalism and technological adoption. However, there is potential for further improvement in service processes and raw material quality to increase trust and enhance overall consumer experience.

SOP 4 KEY FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESSFUL BRAND POSITIONING IN DINGALAN, AURORA?

Table 9: Key factors that contribute to successful brand positioning in Dingalan, Aurora

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I prefer local brands over national/international brands due to their unique positioning.	3.15	Agree
2. Local brands that emphasize sustainability and social responsibility attract my interest.	3.26	Strongly Agree
3. A well-positioned brand makes me more likely to recommend it to others.	3	Agree
4. I believe a strong marketing plan can improve the competitiveness of local businesses.	3.18	Agree
Grand Mean	3.12	Agree
<i>Legend: 3.25-4.00 – Strongly Agree; 2.5-3.24 – Agree 1.75-2.49 – Disagree -1.00-1.74 – Strongly Disagree</i>		

The data suggests that several key factors significantly influence successful brand positioning in Dingalan, Aurora, and these factors are largely seen as important by consumers.

First, the statement "I prefer local brands over national/international brands due to their unique positioning" received a mean score of 3.15 (Agree), indicating that local brands are perceived as offering distinctive advantages that set them apart from larger national or international competitors. Consumers in Dingalan value the uniqueness and local relevance of these brands, which suggests that local businesses are succeeding in carving out a niche in their market. Aaker (2016) emphasizes that brand differentiation is crucial for establishing a strong market presence, and local brands appear to be leveraging this effectively. The statement "Local brands that emphasize sustainability and social responsibility attract my interest" received the highest score of 3.26 (Strongly Agree), which highlights the growing importance of social responsibility and sustainability in brand positioning. Consumers in Dingalan are drawn to brands that prioritize environmental impact and community well-being. This aligns with the findings of Kotler et al. (2019), who argue that brands that adopt sustainable practices can foster stronger emotional connections with consumers, which, in turn, can lead to brand loyalty and consumer advocacy. The statement "A well-positioned brand makes me more likely to recommend it to others" scored 3.00 (Agree), showing that consumers are more likely to engage in word-of-mouth promotion for brands they perceive as well-positioned. Effective brand positioning increases consumer trust and satisfaction, which leads to greater recommendation potential. This finding aligns with

Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2019), who suggest that a well-defined brand position can turn satisfied customers into brand advocates, amplifying the brand’s reputation through personal recommendations. Finally, "I believe a strong marketing plan can improve the competitiveness of local businesses" scored 3.18 (Agree), indicating that consumers recognize the importance of strategic marketing in enhancing competitiveness. A clear and targeted marketing plan is seen as a key driver of success for local brands in Dingalan, helping them to effectively communicate their unique selling propositions and build consumer trust. As Sweeney et al. (2015) noted, a well-crafted marketing strategy can significantly improve a brand's ability to differentiate itself in competitive markets.

The Grand Mean of 3.12 (Agree) indicates that, overall, local brand positioning in Dingalan is perceived positively, with a strong emphasis on social responsibility, sustainability, and strategic marketing as the primary factors contributing to their success.

SOP 4 MARKETING PLAN CAN BE DEVELOPED TO ENHANCE BRAND POSITIONING AND CONSUMER LOYALTY FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

Marketing Plan for Local Brands in Dingalan, Aurora

Key Area	Objective	Strategy	Action Steps	Expected Outcome
Brand Positioning	Differentiate local brands from national/international brands.	Emphasize local identity, uniqueness, and the distinctive offerings of local products.	- Highlight local sourcing, cultural relevance, and unique brand stories in marketing campaigns.	Increased brand loyalty and differentiation in the marketplace.
Sustainability & Social Responsibility	Strengthen brand appeal through sustainability and community responsibility.	Promote sustainability initiatives, such as eco-friendly packaging and community engagement, to resonate with eco-conscious consumers.	- Collaborate with local environmental groups and advertise sustainability efforts on social media and packaging.	Stronger consumer connection and positive brand perception.
Technology Integration	Enhance customer experience through digital platforms and services.	Invest in online platforms, digital payment systems, and e-commerce to improve convenience and accessibility for consumers.	- Develop a user-friendly website and mobile app for easy online purchases and payments.	Improved customer experience and increased sales through digital channels.
Customer Service & Business Processes	Improve service quality and responsiveness to boost consumer trust.	Train staff to offer exceptional customer service and streamline business processes for faster and more efficient service.	- Implement regular training for employees on communication and service skills.	Enhanced customer satisfaction and repeat business.
Brand Recognition & Awareness	Build brand awareness through consistent and impactful brand identity.	Utilize brand logos, slogans, and packaging that are easy to recall, and	- Conduct local advertising campaigns using recognizable visuals and	Increased brand recognition and recall.

Brand Recognition & Awareness	Build brand awareness through consistent and impactful brand identity.	Utilize brand logos, slogans, and packaging that are easy to recall, and ensure consistency across all touchpoints.	- Conduct local advertising campaigns using recognizable visuals and slogans, both online and offline.	Increased brand recognition and recall.
Promotion & Customer Engagement	Increase consumer engagement and drive sales through targeted promotions and loyalty programs.	Offer discounts, loyalty programs, and special promotions to incentivize purchases and repeat business.	- Launch seasonal promotions, bundle deals, and create loyalty programs with rewards for frequent purchases.	Higher customer retention and increased purchase frequency.
Word-of-Mouth & Recommendations	Encourage consumers to recommend brands to others.	Leverage word-of-mouth marketing by creating referral programs and rewarding customers for bringing in new clients.	- Introduce a referral program with incentives for customers who refer friends or family.	Increased customer base through positive referrals and recommendations.
Pricing Strategy	Ensure local brands are perceived as offering good value for money.	Position local brands as offering fair pricing, reflecting the quality of products while remaining affordable for the target market.	- Conduct market research to fine-tune pricing strategies and ensure competitive pricing relative to national brands.	Increased perception of value, leading to higher sales.
Brand Loyalty & Trust	Foster long-term relationships with consumers by enhancing brand trust and loyalty.	Build brand trust by maintaining product quality and transparency, and showing commitment to customer satisfaction.	- Provide warranties or guarantees on products, communicate openly about product sourcing, and maintain high-quality standards.	Increased customer loyalty and repeat purchases.
Community Engagement	Strengthen community ties and create a sense of belonging to the local brand.	Engage in community-building activities such as sponsoring local events, supporting local causes, and collaborating with other local businesses.	- Sponsor local events, support charity drives, and collaborate with other local businesses to host community-building events.	Strengthened local community support and deeper brand connection.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The following findings were derived based on the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data:

1. Demographic profile of respondents

The largest group of respondents falls within the 20-30 years old age range (41.7%), indicating that young adults are the most active in shaping brand perceptions in Dingalan, Aurora. This age group is highly engaged with brands, making them a crucial target audience for marketing efforts. The second largest group is the 31-40 years old demographic, which comprises 21.7% of respondents. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with 53.3% male and 46.7% female respondents. This equal representation suggests that both men and women are equally engaged in the consumer decision-making process in Dingalan. There is a significant split in how often consumers engage with local businesses. 38.3% of respondents report purchasing from local businesses "rarely," while the same percentage (38.3%) purchase "frequently." This shows diverse consumer behavior in Dingalan, where some are loyal, while others engage more sporadically with local businesses. The most influential factor in purchase decisions is brand reputation (56.7%), followed by product quality (26.7%). Consumers in Dingalan prioritize how trustworthy and reliable a brand is, with product quality also playing a critical role. Price, promotion, and customer service are less influential, indicating that brand perception and product performance are more critical than cost in driving purchase behavior. These findings emphasize that young adults and brand reputation are key drivers of consumer behavior in Dingalan, and that local businesses should focus on enhancing their brand image and product quality to better attract and retain customers

2. How do consumers perceive local brands in Dingalan, Aurora?

The data reveals that consumers in Dingalan, Aurora, have a generally positive perception of local brands across several key aspects. Brand recognition and awareness stand out as a strength, with the highest agreement on the statement "Local brands differentiate themselves effectively from competitors" (mean = 3.5). This suggests that local businesses in Dingalan have successfully carved out a unique market position, setting themselves apart from competitors. Additionally, digital marketing and social media are perceived as highly effective, with a mean score of 3.51, indicating that local businesses are successfully leveraging these platforms to reach and engage with their audience. When it comes to consumer engagement, word-of-mouth recommendations are highly influential, with a mean score of 3.51, highlighting the significant role that community-driven recommendations play in shaping purchasing decisions. Customer experience also holds substantial weight in shaping perceptions, scoring 3.7, reflecting the critical role of service quality and responsiveness in reinforcing brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction. In terms of perceived brand value, consumers rate the quality of local products/services highly (mean = 3.28), suggesting that local businesses meet or exceed consumer expectations in terms of product quality. This is coupled with the perception that local brands offer better value for money compared to national brands, which also received a mean of 3.28. These insights

suggest that local brands are seen as providing strong value and are trusted by the community, making them an attractive option for consumers in Dingalan.

3. 4Ms of marketing (Man, Machine, Method, and Material) influence consumer perception of local brands

The Man, Machine, Method, and Material (4Ms) framework highlights the factors influencing consumer perceptions of local brands in Dingalan, Aurora.

Regarding Man, consumers value the skills and professionalism of employees, as it enhances their trust in local brands. The mean score of 3.13 suggests that while the professionalism of employees is an important factor in building consumer trust, it is not the highest-rated aspect, indicating that there may still be room for improvement in employee training or service delivery. For Machine, the use of technology, such as online selling and digital payment systems, was seen as a significant improvement in the consumer experience, with a mean score of 3.16. This shows that local businesses are positively perceived when they adopt modern technology, facilitating a smoother and more efficient consumer interaction. Technological integration is crucial in today's digital world, where seamless experiences are highly valued by consumers. The Method factor, which encompasses customer service and business processes, received a mean score of 2.8. This suggests that while customer service and business processes do play a role in shaping brand perception, they are not as impactful as the other factors. Local businesses could benefit from improving service processes and interactions to better meet consumer expectations and increase brand loyalty. Material—the quality of raw materials used in products—had a mean score of 2.95. This indicates that consumers do consider the quality of the materials used in products, but it is not as influential as other aspects like employee professionalism or technological use. While important, businesses may need to further emphasize the quality of their materials to build stronger consumer trust. The 4Ms framework shows that while consumers in Dingalan perceive local brands positively in terms of employee professionalism, technological integration, customer service, and material quality, there is room for improvement in certain areas to enhance overall brand trust and consumer satisfaction.

4. Key factors that contribute to successful brand positioning in Dingalan, Aurora?

The highest score in the data is 3.26, which was given to the statement "Local brands that emphasize sustainability and social responsibility attract my interest." This suggests that consumers in Dingalan, Aurora, place significant importance on sustainability and social responsibility when choosing brands. Compared to the other indicators, this score is the highest, highlighting that these values are more influential than other factors. For example, the statement "I prefer local brands over national/international brands due to their unique positioning" scored 3.15, indicating that while consumers appreciate the uniqueness of local brands, sustainability and social responsibility are seen as more compelling factors. Similarly, the statement "A well-positioned brand makes me more likely to recommend it to others" scored 3.00, showing that while effective brand positioning is important, it has less influence than sustainability efforts. Lastly, the statement "I believe a strong marketing plan can improve the competitiveness of local businesses" received a score of 3.18, suggesting that while a strong marketing strategy is valuable, it still does not surpass the importance of sustainability and social responsibility in shaping consumer preferences. In conclusion, the data demonstrates that sustainability and social responsibility are the key drivers of successful brand positioning for local businesses in

Dingalan, outweighing other factors like brand uniqueness, marketing strategies, and recommendation likelihood.

5. Marketing plan can be developed to enhance brand positioning and consumer loyalty for local businesses

The provided strategies offer a comprehensive approach for local brands in Dingalan, Aurora to improve their market positioning and consumer engagement. The key areas identified include brand positioning, sustainability, technology integration, customer service, and community engagement. Local brands can differentiate themselves from national competitors by emphasizing their unique local identity and sustainability efforts, which resonate strongly with consumers. Additionally, investing in technology for improved customer experience and streamlined business processes will enhance convenience and customer satisfaction. Building strong brand recognition, offering targeted promotions, and leveraging word-of-mouth referrals are also essential strategies for increasing customer engagement and driving sales. A well-structured pricing strategy will ensure that local brands offer good value, strengthening consumer trust and fostering long-term loyalty. Community engagement efforts, such as sponsoring local events and supporting causes, further solidify the brand's relationship with its customers. Overall, the combination of these strategies is aimed at creating a strong, sustainable, and customer-centric brand that stands out in the competitive market. The strategies outlined focus on differentiating local brands from national competitors by highlighting local identity, sustainability, and community involvement. By integrating technology, improving customer service, and enhancing brand recognition, local businesses can increase consumer loyalty and sales. Additionally, adopting competitive pricing strategies and leveraging word-of-mouth marketing will strengthen brand appeal. Community engagement efforts will further solidify local support, contributing to long-term growth and market success.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers formulated the following conclusions:

1. The respondents in Dingalan, Aurora represent a diverse consumer base in terms of age, gender, and purchasing behavior. Younger individuals, particularly those aged 20-30, are more likely to engage in purchasing from local businesses, influenced by socio-economic factors and peer pressures. Gender did not significantly impact purchasing decisions, while frequent purchases from local businesses were mostly driven by product quality, affordability, and customer service. The factors that heavily influence purchase decisions include brand reputation, product quality, and the convenience of purchase.
2. Consumers in Dingalan, Aurora exhibit a generally positive perception of local brands, with a high level of brand awareness and recognition. Marketing strategies that highlight local identity and emphasize sustainability significantly enhance consumer engagement. Local brands that incorporate social responsibility initiatives resonate well with consumers, increasing their loyalty and positive perception. Consumers are also influenced by personalized promotions, loyalty programs, and community-oriented marketing efforts, which strengthen the emotional connection between the brand and the consumer.
3. The study reveals that the 4Ms of marketing have a substantial impact on how consumers perceive local brands. The professionalism and expertise of employees (Man) are critical in building trust, with consumers valuing the competence and friendliness of local staff. Technological integration (Machine) such as online selling and digital payment systems is

positively regarded, improving overall convenience for customers. The business processes and customer service (Method) are also important but have a more moderate impact compared to the other factors. Material quality, including the raw materials used in local products, is essential for building trust, although it was not rated as highly impactful as employee professionalism or technological integration.

4. The key factors that contribute to successful brand positioning for local brands in Dingalan, Aurora include effective differentiation through unique products, strong community ties, and the incorporation of sustainability and social responsibility into the brand identity. Consumers in Dingalan, Aurora appreciate brands that are not only locally sourced but also environmentally conscious and active in supporting local causes. Additionally, a clear and consistent brand message communicated through both traditional and digital channels helps build recognition and consumer trust.
5. Based on the findings, a comprehensive strategic marketing plan can be developed to further enhance the brand positioning and foster consumer loyalty of local businesses in Dingalan, Aurora. The plan should emphasize leveraging local identity and sustainability in all marketing efforts, while also integrating technology to improve customer experience through online platforms and digital payment systems. Strengthening customer service through staff training and improving business processes will ensure greater customer satisfaction. The plan should also focus on addressing operational challenges such as delivery delays and product availability. Offering personalized promotions, loyalty programs, and enhancing community engagement will significantly boost consumer loyalty and increase the competitive edge of local businesses.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researchers propose the following recommendations:

1. To Local Businesses it is recommended that local businesses in Dingalan, Aurora focus on enhancing their brand positioning by emphasizing local identity and sustainability. Marketing efforts should highlight the unique cultural relevance and community involvement of their products. Businesses should consider adopting eco-friendly practices and integrating social responsibility into their brand narratives to attract a growing market of eco-conscious consumers. Additionally, investing in both physical and digital touchpoints can help create a seamless omnichannel experience, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.
2. To Local Government Units (LGUs) are encouraged to support local businesses through initiatives that promote entrepreneurship and innovation. Programs such as small business development workshops, grants for technology adoption, and digital marketing training can help local brands compete more effectively with national and international counterparts. The LGUs should also invest in infrastructure improvements, particularly in areas like internet connectivity and logistics, to support the digitalization of local businesses and ease of product distribution.
3. To Local Brands it is recommended for local brands to further invest in improving customer service and business processes. Training programs for employees to enhance service delivery and interpersonal skills can improve the overall customer experience. Brands should also focus on leveraging technology, such as implementing online platforms, digital payment systems, and social media marketing, to strengthen their market presence and improve engagement with a

broader audience. Regular consumer feedback should be incorporated to understand evolving needs and continuously improve the business's offering.

4. To Future Researchers future studies on consumer behavior and brand perception in Dingalan should delve deeper into how local businesses can further differentiate themselves in a competitive market. Research should explore the specific role of local community engagement, sustainability efforts, and customer service practices in shaping consumer loyalty. Investigating the impact of omnichannel strategies and technology adoption on local brand success will provide valuable insights into how businesses can optimize their marketing and operational strategies in the digital age.

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APPENDICES

a. Correspondence

April 7, 2025

Dear Sir/Ma'am:

Greetings of peace and prosperity!

We are a Master of Arts in Business Administration student at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, and we are conducting a research study titled "CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF BRAND POSITIONING IN DINGALAN, AURORA: BASIS FOR MARKETING PLAN".

In line with this, we are humbly soliciting your support by allowing us to conduct a short survey via Google Forms and interview some of your office personnel who are also buying products and rendered services in Dingalan, Aurora. We have attached a copy of the questionnaire for data collection and sample interview questions regarding the perception of you and your personnel/s in brand positioning in Dingalan, Aurora.

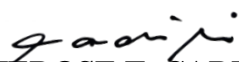
Rest assured that the requested data will be strictly for research purposes only and will be kept confidential.

Thank you very much in advance, and we are looking forward to this request for your most favorable response.

Very sincerely yours,



GLADYS ANNE E. CADAY



MELVEROSE T. CARDONA

Researchers

Noted by:

DR. NOEL B. AGUSTIN, PH.D.

Subject Professor (Organizational Behavior)

Received by:

b.Data Gathering Instrument

Questionnaire

Instructions:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by selecting the most appropriate response. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

Part I: Consumer Profile

Demographic details to be filled by the respondent

- 4. Age: _____
- 5. Gender: Male Female Prefer not to say
- 6. How often do you purchase or avail yourself of services from local businesses in Dingalan, Aurora?
 Rarely Occasionally Frequently Always

PART II: Direction: Kindly submit your response by utilizing the rating scale provided:

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

INDICATORS	4	3	2	1
Brand Awareness and Recognition				
6. I am familiar with the brands of businesses operating in Dingalan, Aurora.				
7. I can easily recall local business brands in Dingalan.				

8. Local businesses in Dingalan have a strong and consistent brand identity.				
9. Local brands differentiate themselves effectively from competitors.				
10. I recognize local brands due to their logo, slogan, or packaging.				
Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement				
6. Local businesses use digital marketing and social media effectively.				
7. Promotions (discounts, loyalty programs, etc.) influence my purchasing decisions.				
8. I follow or engage with local brands on social media platforms.				
9. The customer experience (service, responsiveness) affects my brand perception.				
10. Word-of-mouth recommendations influence my decision to try local brands.				
Consumer Perception of Brand Value				
6. The quality of products/services from local businesses meets my expectations.				
7. Local brands provide better value for money compared to national brands.				
8. I associate local businesses with high credibility and trustworthiness.				
9. Pricing strategies of local businesses reflect fair value for their offerings.				
10. I am willing to pay a premium price for a well-positioned local brand.				

Market Analysis (4Ms – Man, Machine, Method, Material)				
1. Man: The skills and professionalism of employees enhance my trust in local brands.				
2. Machine: The use of technology (e.g., online selling, digital payments)				

improves my experience with local businesses.				
3. Method: The customer service and business processes of local brands influence my perception.				
4. Material: The quality of raw materials used in local products affects my trust in the brand.				
Brand Positioning and Purchase Behavior				
1. I prefer local brands over national/international brands due to their unique positioning.				
5. Local brands that emphasize sustainability and social responsibility attract my interest.				
6. A well-positioned brand makes me more likely to recommend it to others.				
7. I believe a strong marketing plan can improve the competitiveness of local businesses.				

Suggestions for Business Growth

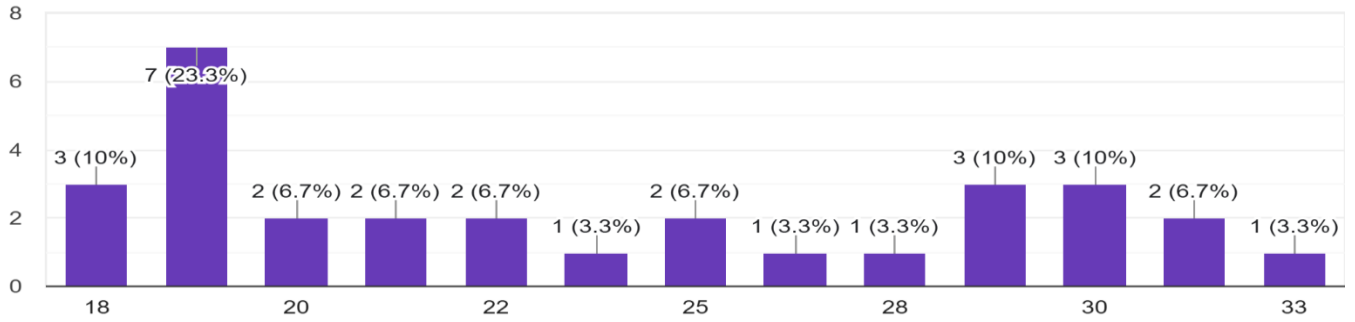
What improvements would you suggest for businesses in Dingalan, Aurora to enhance their branding

Thank you for your participation! Your feedback is valuable to this research.

c. Pilot Study

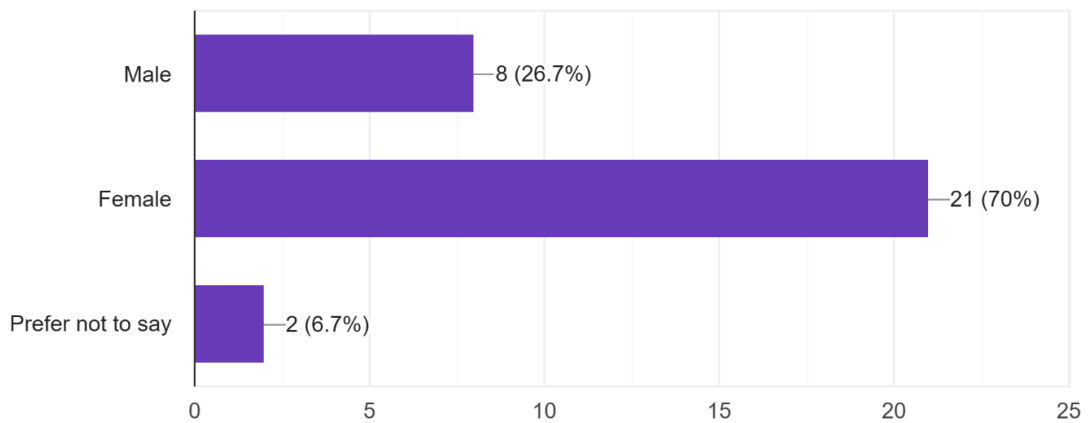
A pilot study was conducted by the researchers through google forms to assess the effectiveness of the survey and the clarity of questions related to the consumer perception of brand positioning in Dingalan, Aurora in order to make a good marketing plan .

PART I: CONSUMER PROFILE Demographic details to be filled by the respondent **1. Age**
30 responses



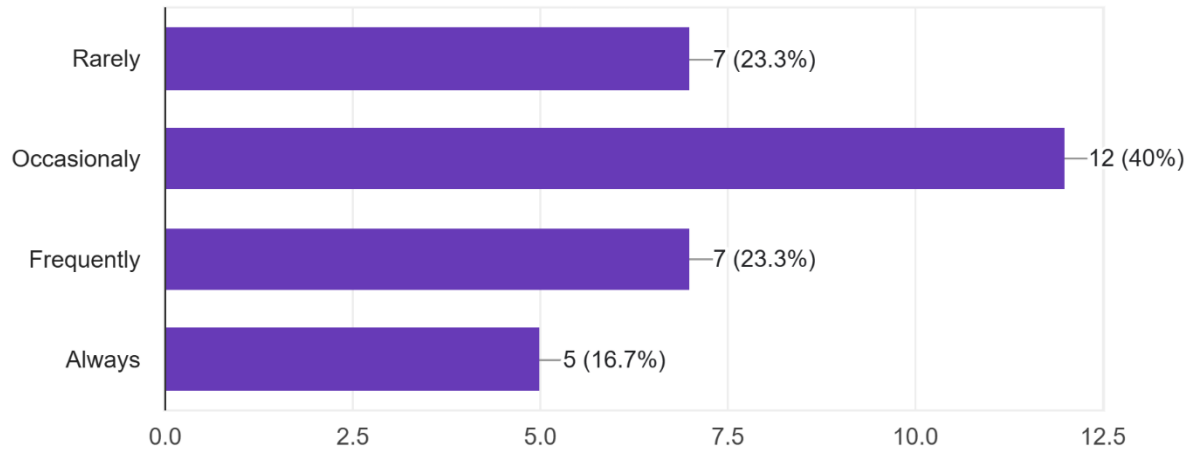
2. Gender

30 responses



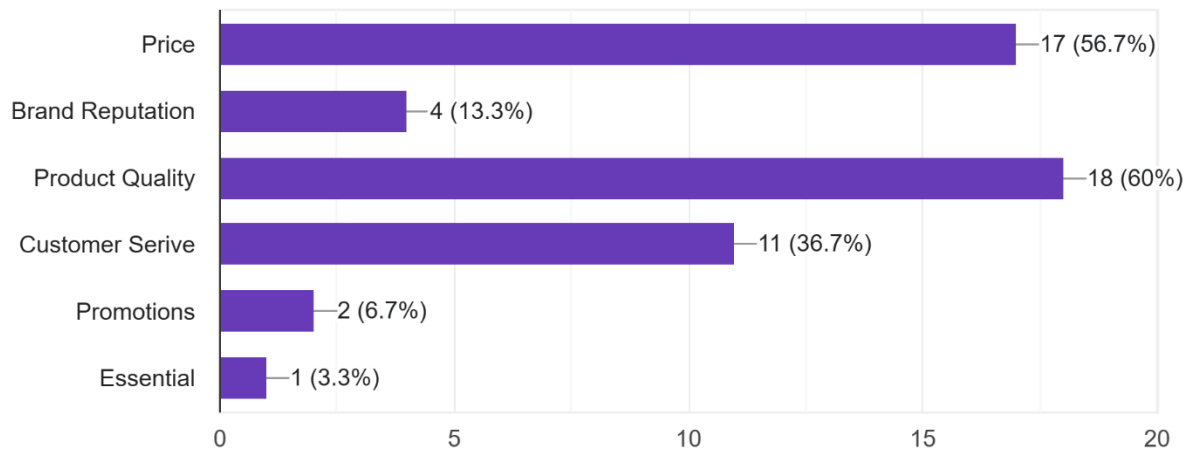
3. How often do you purchase or avail yourself of services from local businesses in Dingalan, Aurora?

30 responses

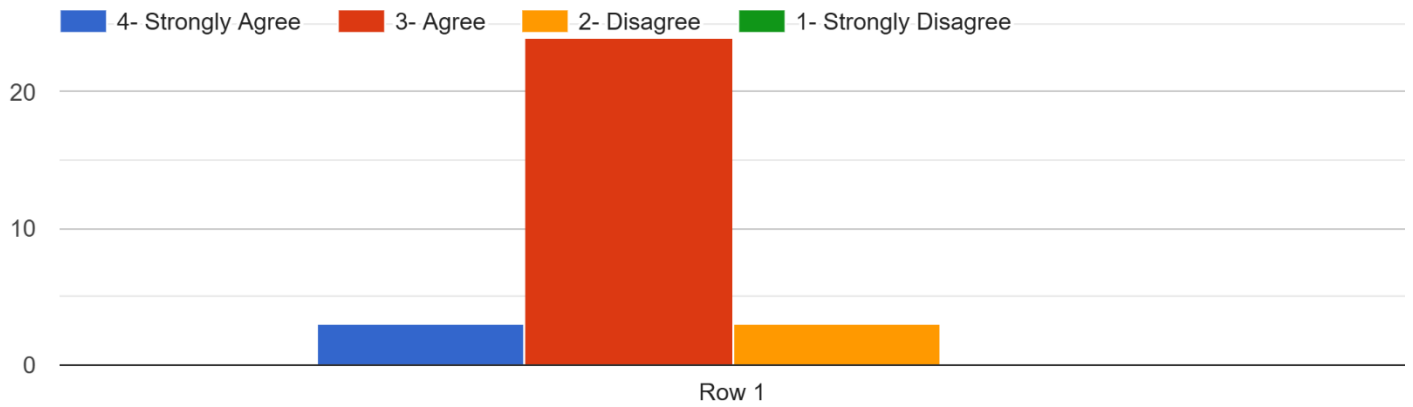


4. Which factor most influences your purchase decision?

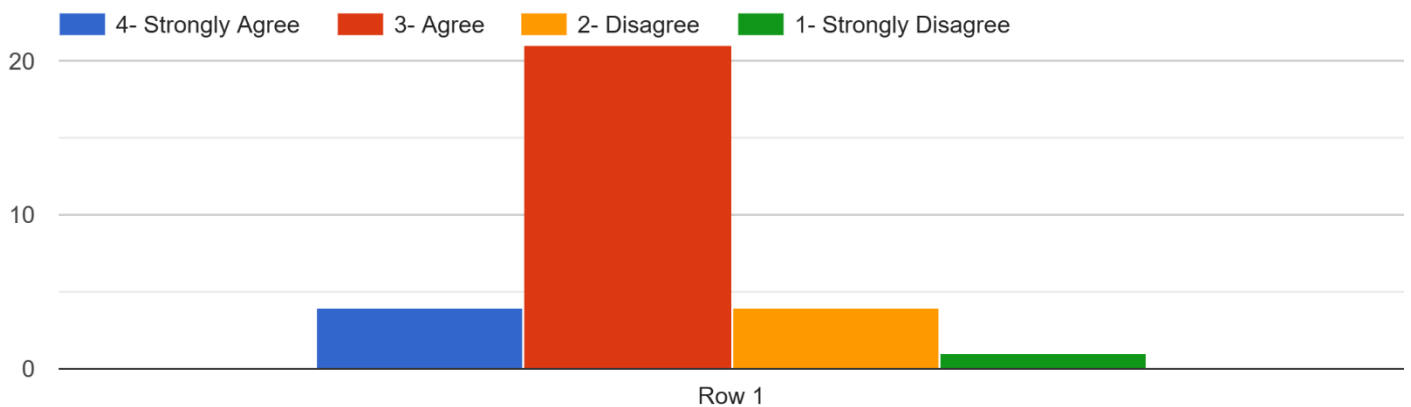
30 responses



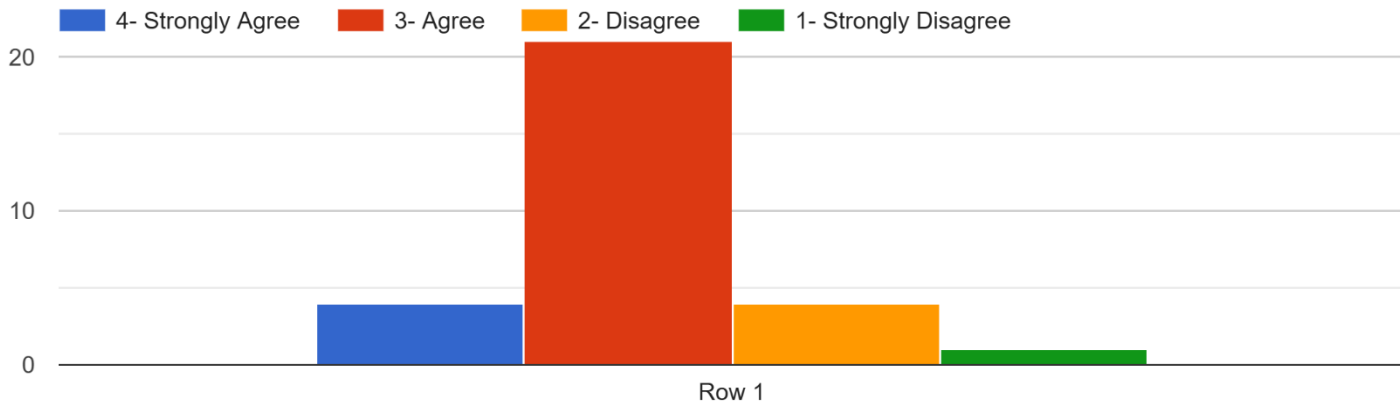
INDICATORS: 1.Brand Awareness and Recognition 1.1 I am familiar with the brands of businesses operating in Dingalan, Aurora.



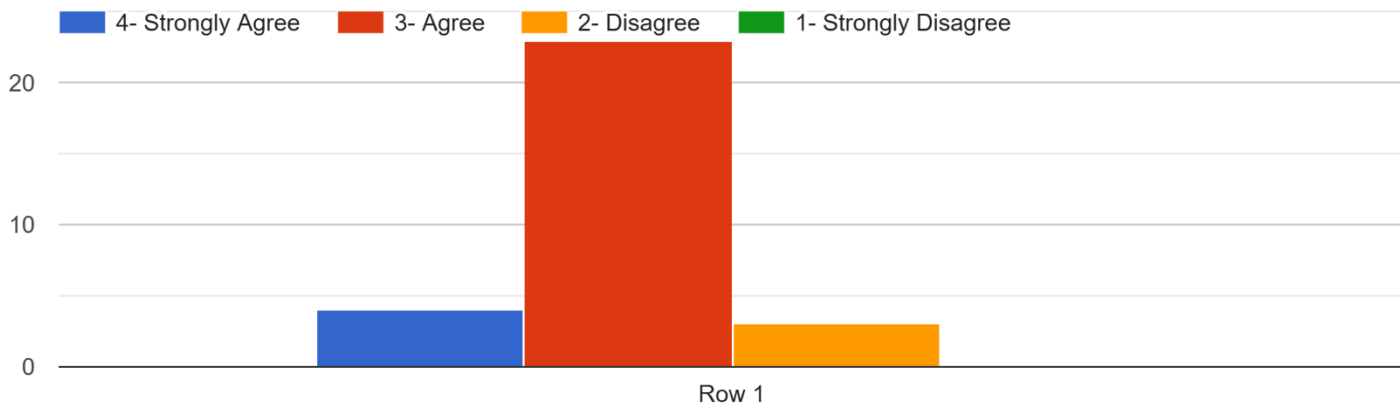
1.2. I can easily recall local business brands in Dingalan.



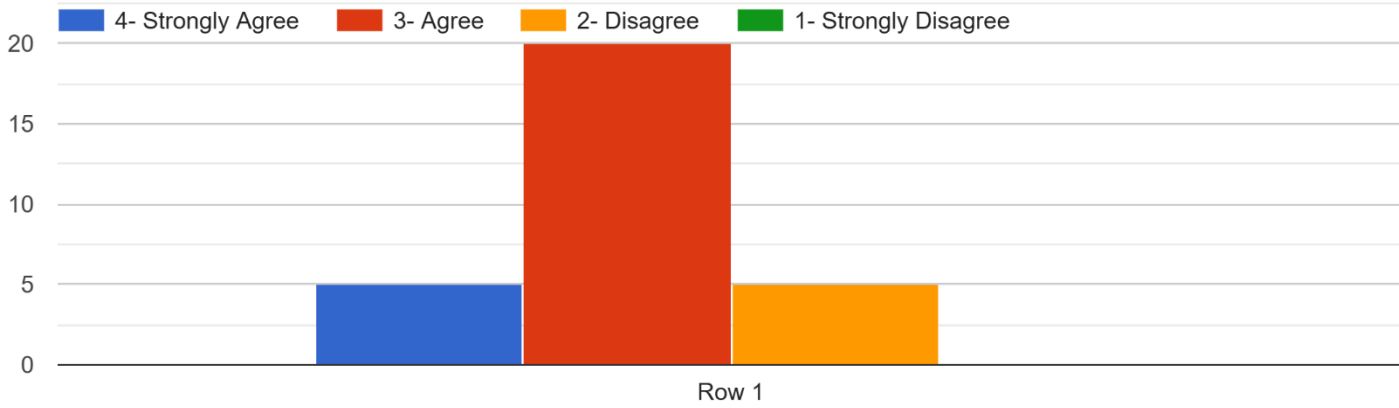
1.2. I can easily recall local business brands in Dingalan.



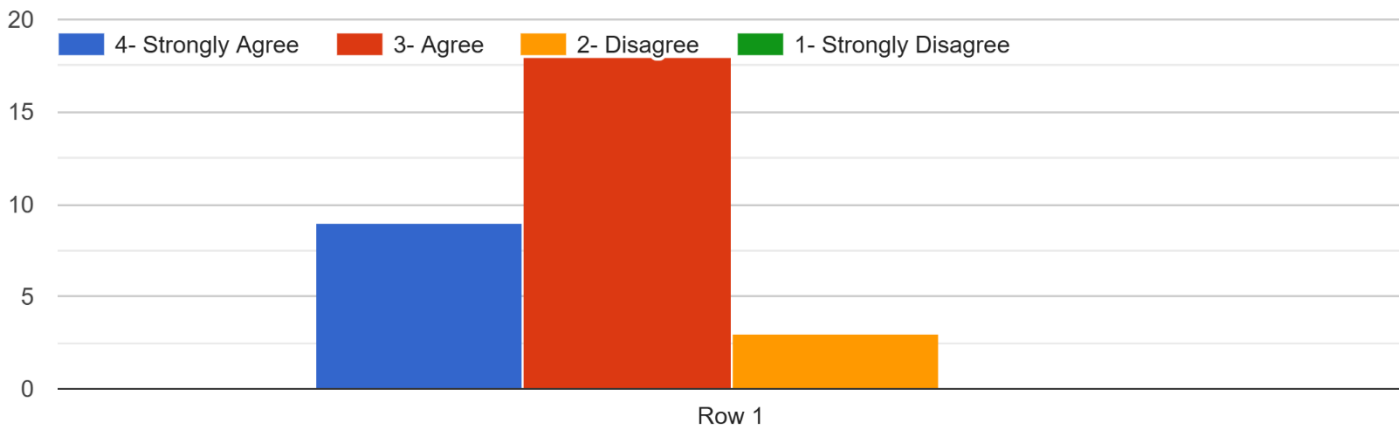
1.3. Local businesses in Dingalan have a strong and consistent brand identity.



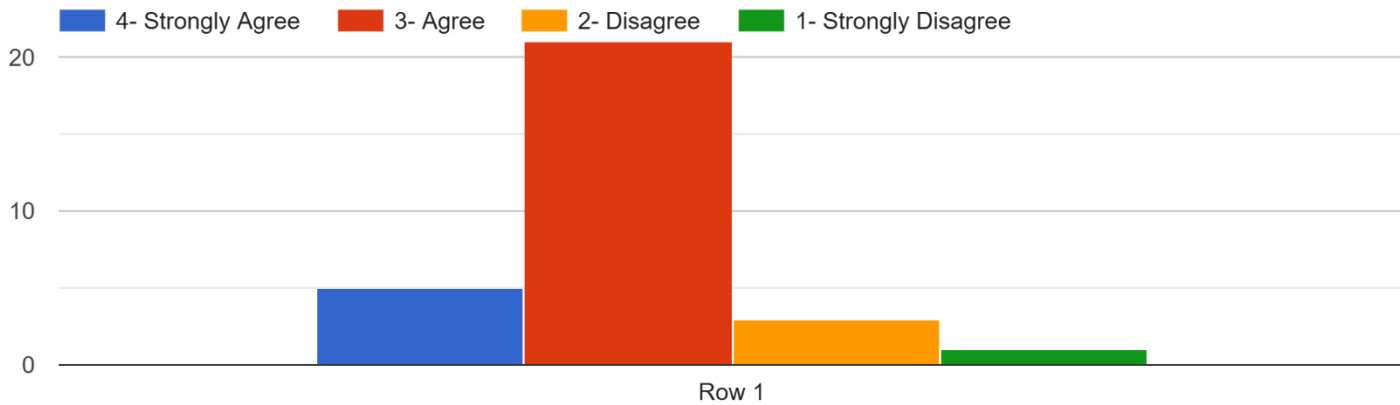
1.4. Local brands differentiate themselves effectively from competitors.



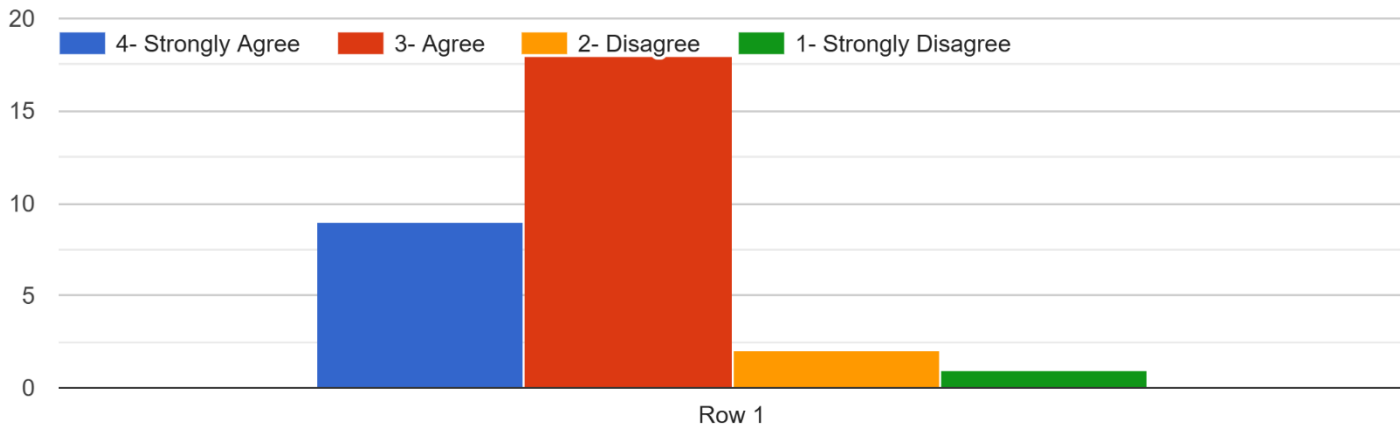
1.5. I recognize local brands due to their logo, slogan, or packaging.



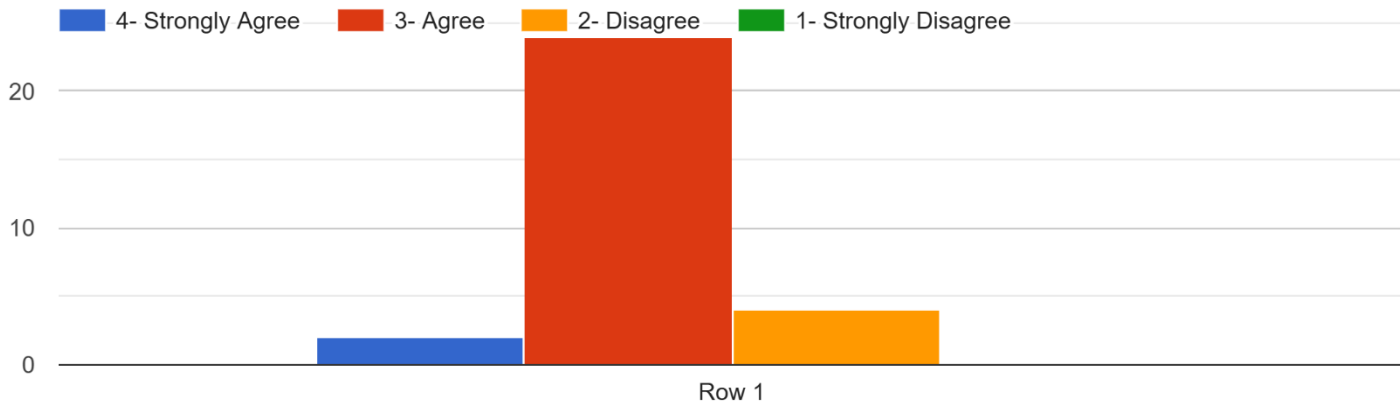
2. MARKETING STRATEGIES AND CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT 2.1 Local businesses use digital marketing and social media effectively.



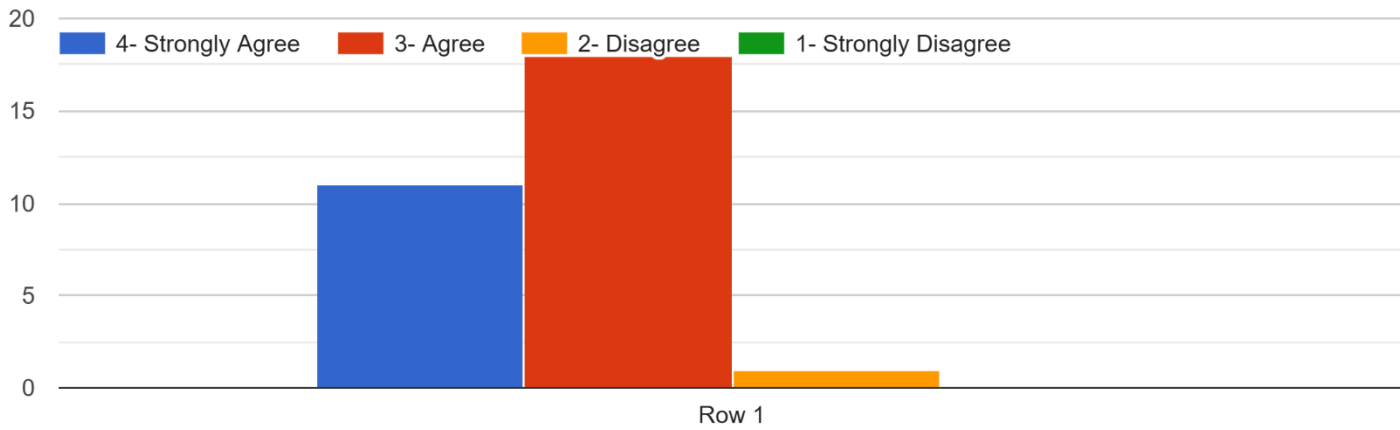
2.2. Promotions (discounts, loyalty programs, etc.) influence my purchasing decisions.



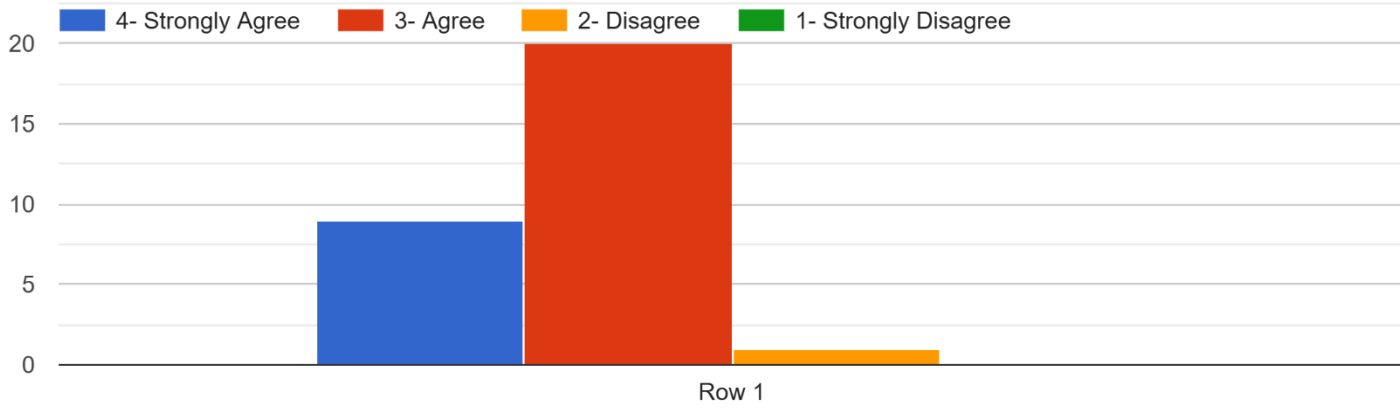
2.3. I follow or engage with local brands on social media platforms.



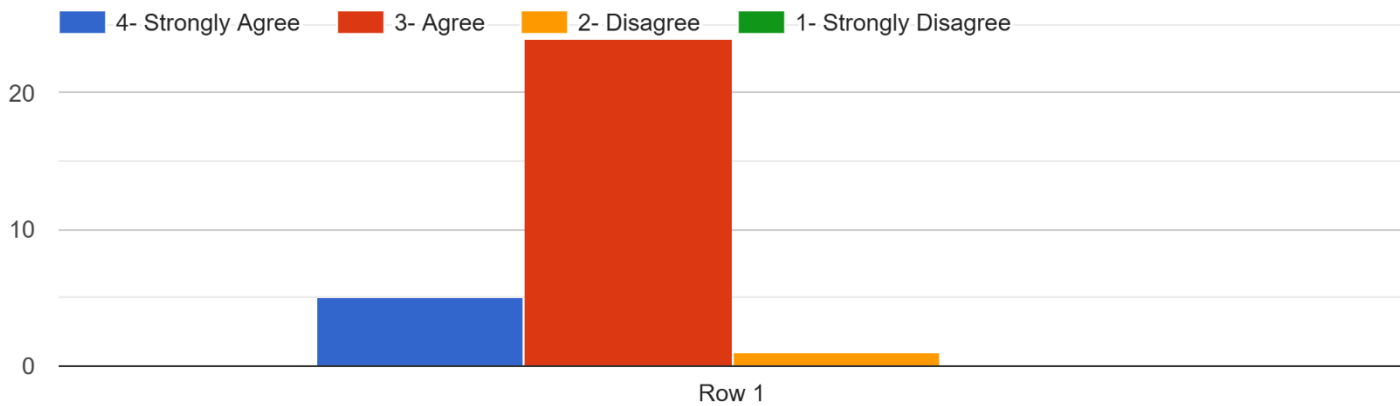
2.4. The customer experience (service, responsiveness) affects my brand perception.



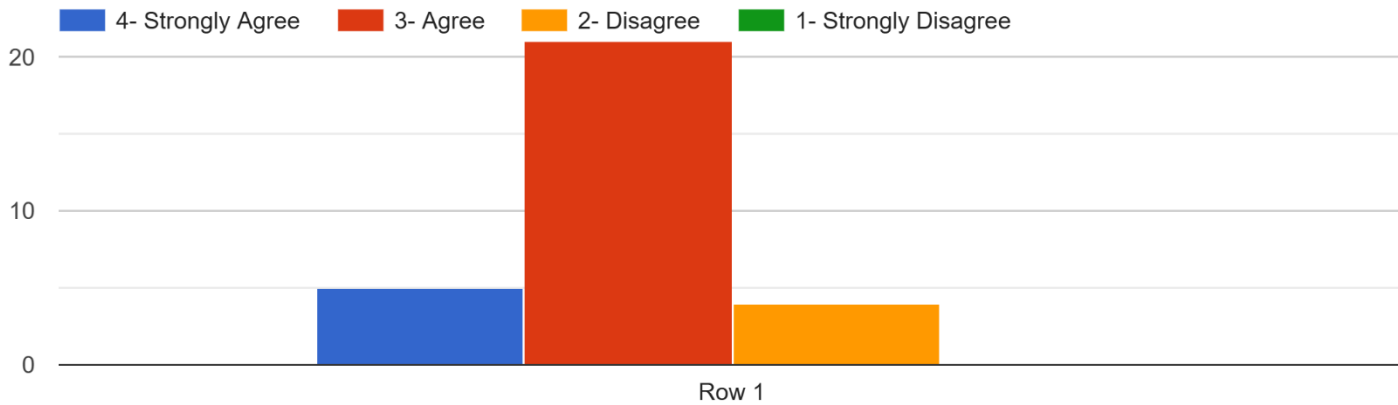
2.5. Word-of-mouth recommendations influence my decision to try local brands.



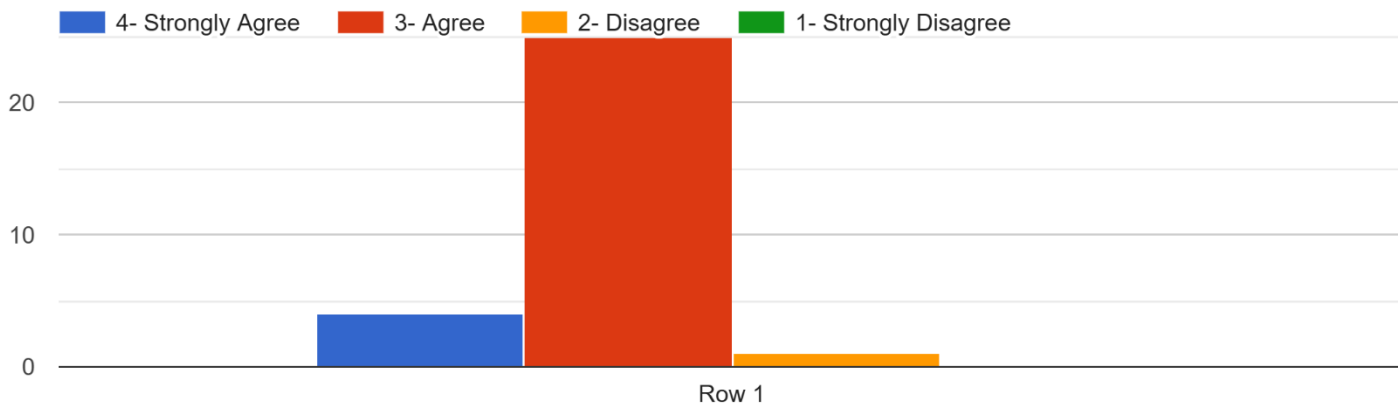
3. CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND BRAND VALUE 3.1 The quality of products/services from local businesses meets my expectations.



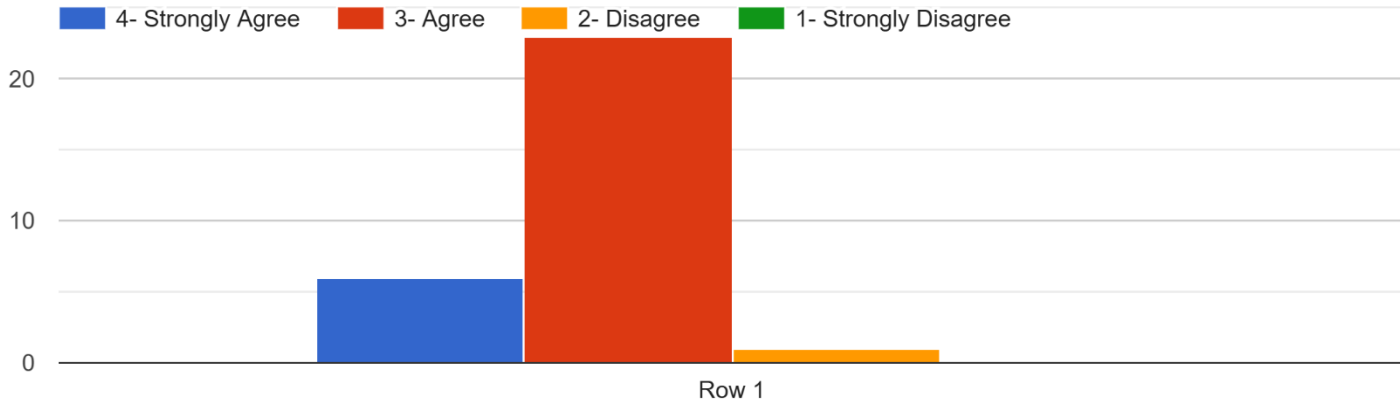
3.2 Local brands provide better value for money compared to national brands.



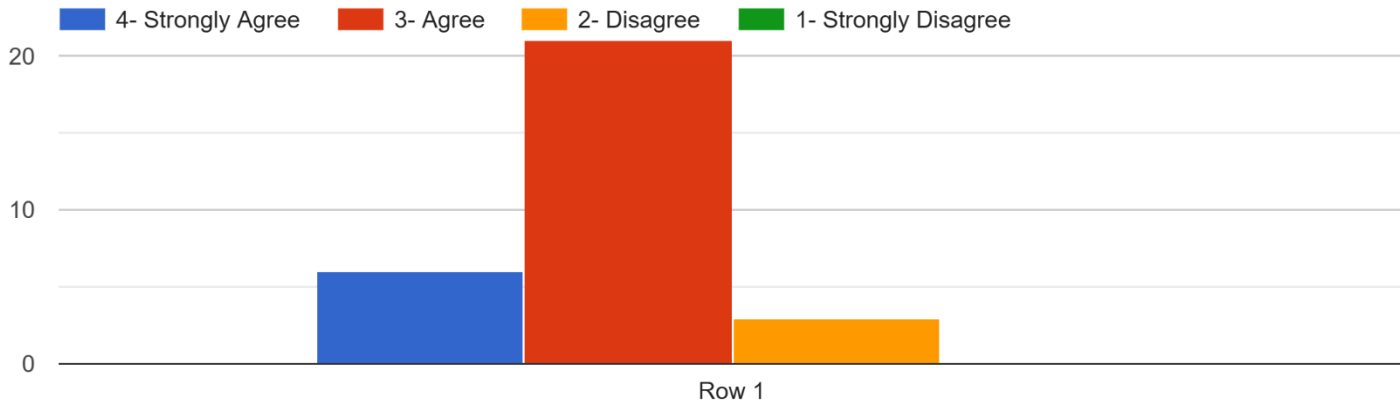
3.3 I associate local businesses with high credibility and trustworthiness.



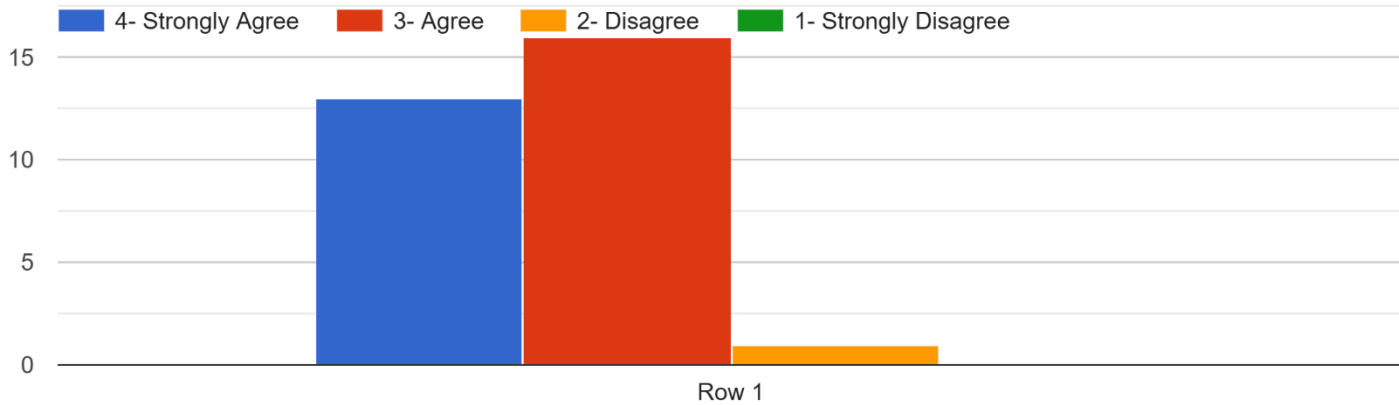
3.4 Pricing strategies of local businesses reflect fair value for their offerings.



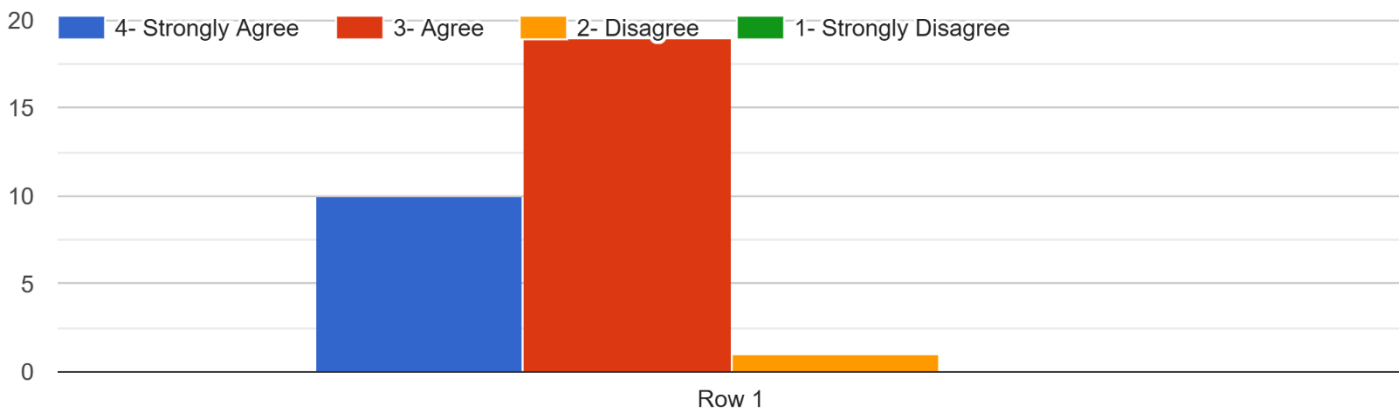
3.5. I am willing to pay a premium price for a well-positioned local brand.



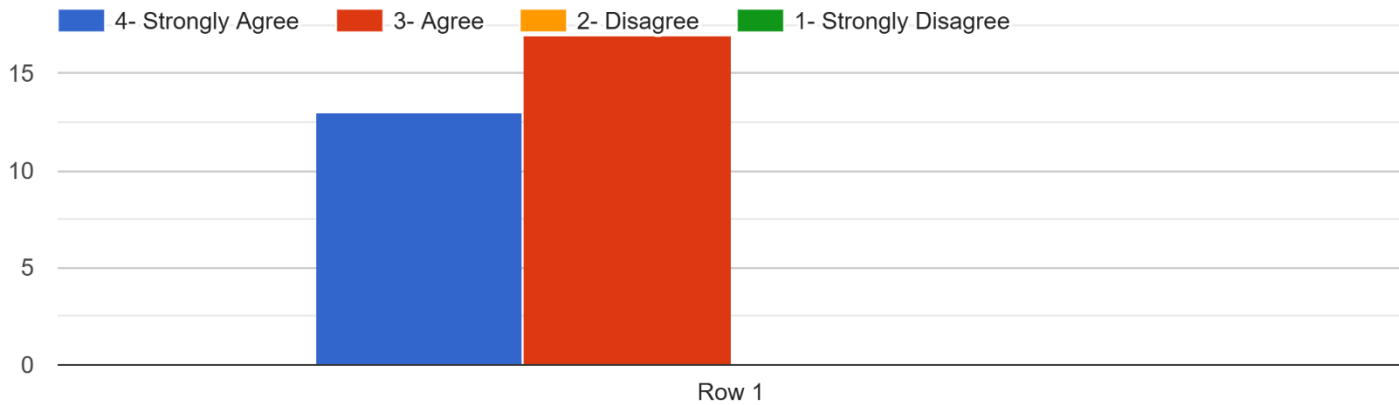
4. MARKET ANALYSIS (4Ms – Man, Machine, Method, Material) 4.1 Man: The skills and professionalism of employees enhance my trust in local brands.



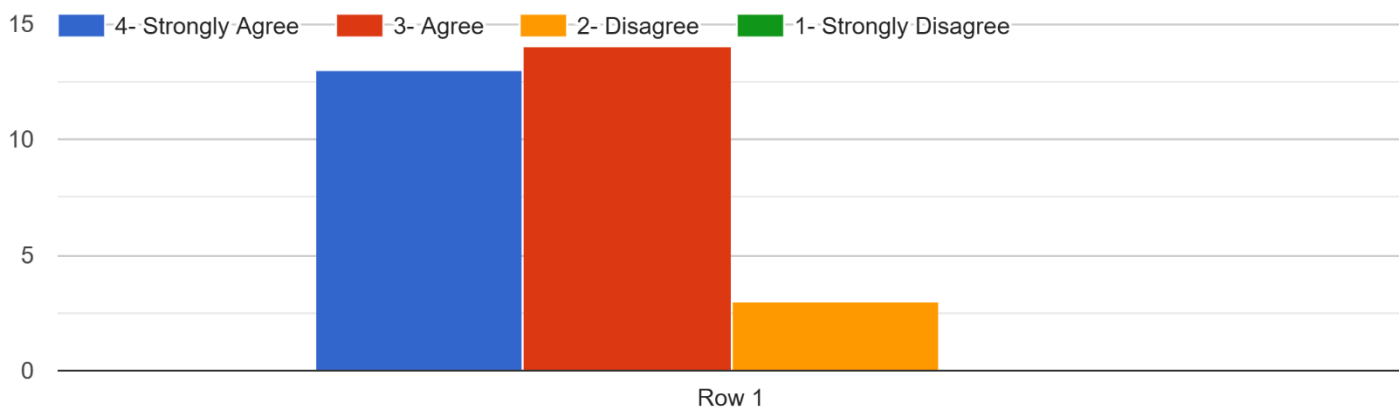
4.2 Machine: The use of technology (e.g., online selling, digital payments) improves my experience with local businesses.



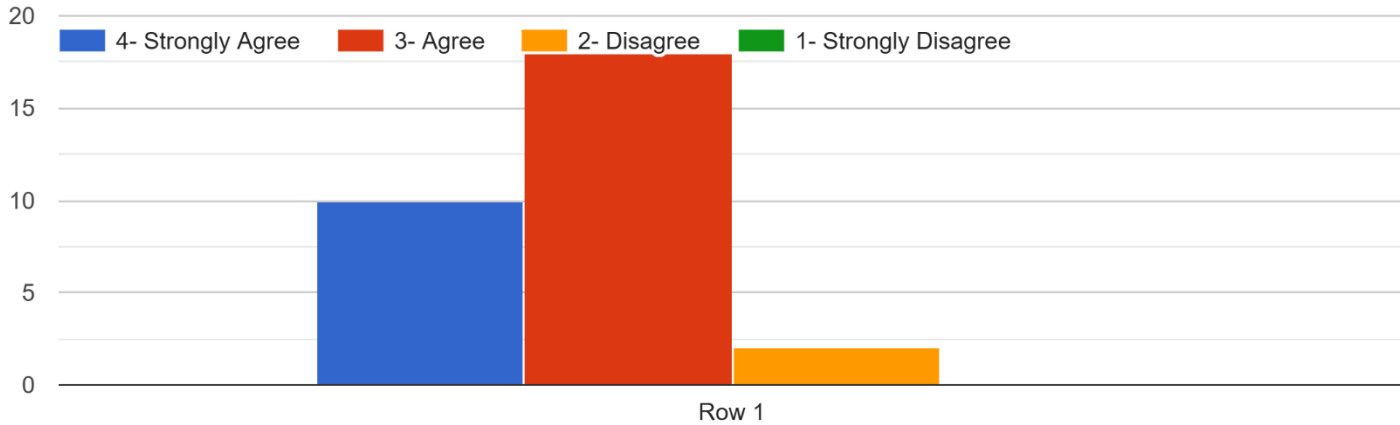
4.3. Method: The customer service and business processes of local brands influence my perception.



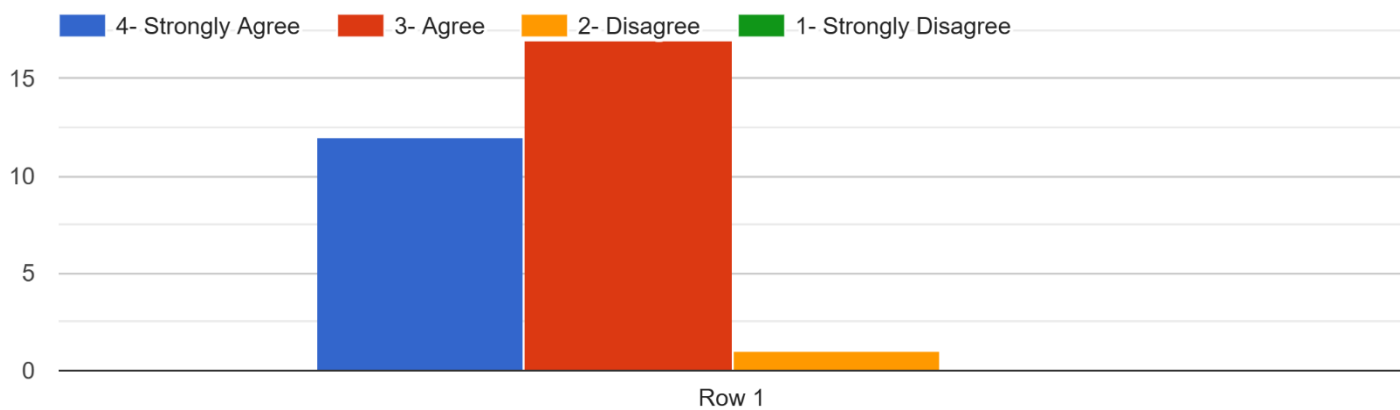
4.4. Material: The quality of raw materials used in local products affects my trust in the brand.



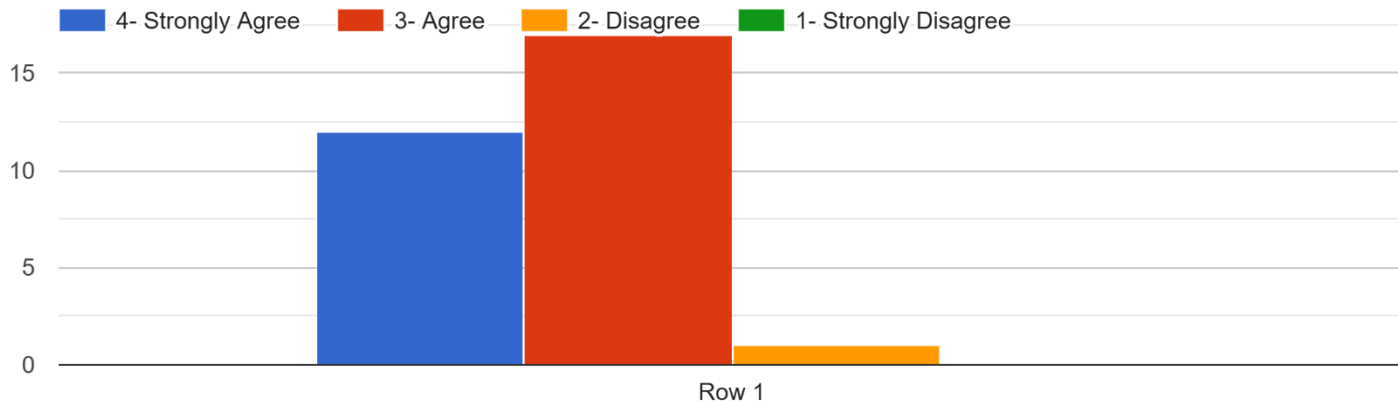
5. BRAND POSITIONING AND PURCHASE BEHAVIOR 5.1 I prefer local brands over national/international brands due to their unique positioning.



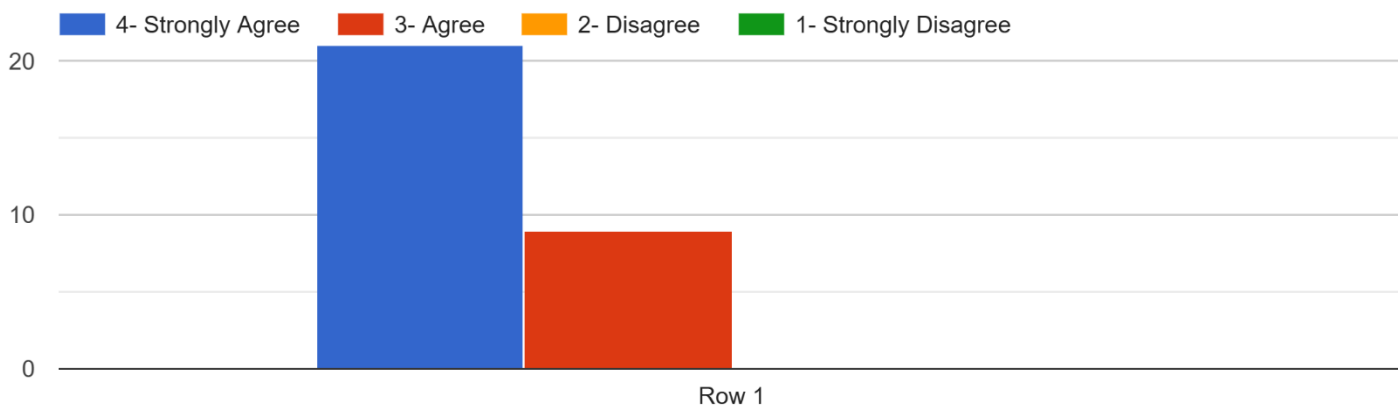
5.2 Local brands that emphasize sustainability and social responsibility attract my interest.



5.3 A well-positioned brand makes me more likely to recommend it to others.



5.4. I believe a strong marketing plan can improve the competitiveness of local businesses.



Note:

Explanation are in Chapter 3 of this study.