Market Segmentation and Product Sustainability of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG): A Study of Nestle Product in South-East Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of market segmentation on the product sustainability of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) using Nestle product in South-east Nigeria as a case of reference. The specific objective was to ascertain the extent to which demographic market segmentation, geographic segmentation, behavioural market segmentation psychographics market segmentation influence competitiveness of Nestle product in South-east Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study, on a sample respondent made up of 323 consumers of Nestlé products across South-east Nigeria. Primary data were collected from the respondents using a structured questionnaire developed in line with 5-point Likert-scale system. The analysis of the research questions was done using descriptive tools such as percentages, mean and frequency analyses. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the four null hypotheses of the study. The findings revealed the following: demographic market segmentation significantly and positively influences competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria; geographic market segmentation significantly and positively influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria; behavioral market segmentation significantly and positively influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria; psychographic market segmentation significantly and positively influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria. In conclusion, a multidimensional approach to market segmentation, with particular emphasis on psychographic factors, is essential for maintaining and enhancing the competitiveness of fast-moving consumer goods like Nestlé in the dynamic market of South-East Nigeria. The study recommends that Nestlé's product development and branding team should endeavour to align all their products with the values and lifestyles of consumers by offering products that resonate with personal values and healthy lifestyle trends, reinforcing the emotional connection with their brand.

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1. Introduction

In the current business environment, Nigeria's Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) sector faces significant challenges due to heightened competition driven by intense rivalry and aggressive actions from competing firms. Government initiatives, including the elimination of price controls, relaxation of foreign exchange restrictions, and the promotion of free-market

investment, were intended to boost the performance of these organizations but have instead intensified marketing battles among key players in the industry (Farayola & Adeleke, 2018). Additionally, while businesses are continually seeking innovative strategies to differentiate themselves and maintain relevance, the rise of digital technologies and data analytics has transformed how companies understand and engage with their customers (Chandratreya, 2024). Amid this evolution, effective market segmentation has emerged as a cornerstone of successful marketing strategies. By categorizing consumers into distinct groups based on shared characteristics or behaviours, businesses can tailor their products, services, and marketing efforts to meet specific needs and preferences. This approach not only enhances customer satisfaction but also drives brand loyalty and improves overall business performance (Nwabufo, et al, 2024).

Market segmentation involves the process of dividing a broad market into smaller, more manageable segments based on shared characteristics (Jatau et al., 2023) and Chandratreya (2024). This practice is particularly pertinent in the FMCG sector, where consumer preferences can vary significantly based on various factors. Key segmentation strategies include geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioural segmentation. Geographic segmentation considers factors such as region, climate, and population density, allowing businesses to tailor their products to suit local preferences and needs (Benjamin et al., 2021). For example, in South-East Nigeria, different regions may have distinct culinary traditions, influencing the types of food products consumers prefer. Demographic segmentation involves categorizing consumers based on quantifiable attributes such as age, gender, income, and education level. This type of segmentation is essential for FMCG companies to target specific groups effectively; for instance, Nestlé might develop specific product lines aimed at families, young professionals, or healthconscious consumers. Psychographic segmentation delves into consumers' lifestyles, values, interests, and attitudes, providing hints on their motivations and purchasing behaviours. Behavioural segmentation, on the other hand, focuses on consumers' interactions with the brand, including their purchasing habits, product usage, and brand loyalty. By leveraging these segmentation strategies, companies like Nestlé can better align their products with consumer preferences, thereby enhancing their market positioning (Benjamin et al., 2021).

Market segmentation plays a pivotal role in enhancing product sustainability of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms by enabling these companies to tailor their offerings to meet the specific needs and preferences of diverse consumer groups. In a rapidly changing market, where consumer tastes and purchasing behaviours are influenced by various factors such as culture, income level, and lifestyle (Pahari et al., 2023), effective market segmentation allows FMCG firms to develop targeted marketing strategies that resonate with distinct segments (Kanyoro, 2018). Market segmentation aids FMCG firms in Nigeria to enhance product sustainability through more efficient resource allocation and strategic innovation. By focusing on specific segments, companies can streamline their production processes, reduce waste, and optimize supply chain management. For instance, a firm targeting health-conscious consumers can prioritize the use of sustainable materials and environmentally friendly packaging, thus appealing to a growing demographic that values sustainability.

However, many FMCG companies face challenges in accurately identifying the distinct needs of their target market segments perhaps as a result of hurdles posed by fluctuating consumer preferences, supply chain disruptions, and regulatory change (Holloway, 2024; Iyadi & Itimi, 2023). As a result, these companies tend to often resort to broad-brush approaches that fail to address the unique preferences of consumers in the region. This anomaly makes companies in the FMCG sector to miss crucial opportunities to enhance product sustainability and fulfill the evolving expectations of their consumers. The lack of effective segmentation may lead to diminished customer satisfaction and loyalty, as consumers increasingly gravitate towards brands that reflect their values and lifestyle choices. This disengagement can result in declining sales, affecting the financial performance of FMCG in a competitive market. Additionally, failure to roll-out adequate products that resonate with specific market segments can lead to reputational risks, as consumers become more critical of brands that do not align with their taste and preferences. The inability to meet the rising demand for such products for the niche not only threatens the firm's market position but also jeopardizes its long-term viability.

Ultimately, the insufficient application of market segmentation strategies not only hampers product sustainability but also poses considerable risks to FMCG's competitiveness, thus the crux of this study.

1.1. Conceptual Review

a. Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is the strategic process of dividing a broad consumer or business market into distinct sub-groups that share common characteristics (Chandratreya, 2024). This fundamental marketing practice recognizes that consumers do not behave uniformly and that their needs, preferences, and purchasing behaviours can vary widely (Musa, 2024). Market segmentation divides a broad market into smaller, more manageable groups based on shared traits or behaviours. It refers to the process of categorizing consumers into distinct fragments to better understand their preferences and tailor marketing efforts accordingly (Ihemeje, et al, 2023). Market segmentation involves identifying and targeting specific groups of consumers who share similar needs, desires, or characteristics (Jatau et al., 2023). By segmenting the market, businesses aim to identify and target specific groups more effectively, allowing for tailored marketing strategies that resonate with the particular desires and motivations of those segments (Esu, 2016). The importance of market segmentation lies in its ability to enable organizations to allocate their resources more efficiently and to create more focused marketing campaigns that enhance engagement and conversion rates. In essence, market segmentation involves understanding the complexities of consumer behaviour.

The segmentation process often incorporates various criteria, including demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioural factors (Esu, 2016). Each of these criteria offers unique hints into consumer behaviour and preferences. Demographic segmentation focuses on statistical characteristics such as age, gender, income, and education level (Nwabufo et al., 2024). Geographic segmentation considers factors like location and regional preferences, while psychographic segmentation delves into consumers' values, interests, and lifestyles. Behavioural segmentation examines how consumers interact with products, including purchasing habits and brand loyalty (Jatau et al., 2023). By analyzing these criteria, businesses can gain a comprehensive understanding of their target market, allowing them to develop products and marketing strategies that are not only relevant but also compelling. Effective market segmentation can lead to significant competitive advantages (Ihemeje et al., 2023). Companies that understand their target segments can respond more quickly to changes in consumer demand and market conditions. They can tailor their product offerings and marketing strategies to meet the evolving needs of their audience, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

b. Demographic Market Segmentation

Demographic market segmentation is a specific approach within the broader framework of market segmentation that categorizes consumers based on quantifiable statistical characteristics (Benjamin et al., 2021). By analyzing demographic factors such as age, gender, income, education level, family size, and occupation, businesses can identify distinct groups of consumers who share similar characteristics and, likely, similar purchasing behaviours. Age is one of the most fundamental demographic variables used in market segmentation (Veliković & Đorđević, 2014). Different age groups often have varying preferences, needs, and purchasing habits. Income also serves as a key demographic factor, as it influences consumers' purchasing power and their propensity to buy certain types of products. High-income consumers may prioritize premium products, while low-income consumers might seek value-driven options. Education level is another important demographic characteristic, as it can affect consumers' product choices and their responsiveness to marketing messages. Consumers with higher education levels may be more inclined to research products and seek detailed information before making a purchase. Demographic market segmentation is not only about identifying groups but also about understanding the implications of these characteristics on consumer behaviour (Nwabufo et al., 2024).

c. Geographic Market Segmentation

Geographic market segmentation is the practice of dividing a market into distinct groups based on geographic criteria such as region, country, city, climate, or population density (Esu, 2016). This approach recognizes that consumer preferences and behaviours can significantly vary depending on their geographic location. By understanding the geographic context in which consumers live, businesses can tailor their products and marketing strategies to better meet the specific needs and preferences of different segments. Geographic segmentation allows companies to create targeted campaigns that resonate with local audiences, ultimately enhancing their relevance and effectiveness (Veljković & Đorđević, 2014). The geographical dimension of market segmentation encompasses a wide range of factors. For instance, consumers in urban areas may have different preferences compared to those in rural settings. Urban consumers often seek convenience and quick access to products, which may lead to higher demand for ready-to-eat meals and delivery services. In contrast, rural consumers might prioritize bulk purchases or products that can be stored for longer periods. In diverse nations like Nigeria, distinct regions may have unique cultural practices, languages, and tastes that influence consumer preferences.

d. Behavioural Market Segmentation

Behavioural market segmentation is a strategic approach that divides consumers based on their interactions with a product or service (Benjamin et al., 2021). This form of segmentation recognizes that consumers' behaviours, preferences, and usage patterns can significantly influence their purchasing decisions (Esu, 2016). By analyzing these behavioural factors, businesses can develop targeted marketing strategies that effectively address the specific needs and motivations of different consumer segments. The essence of behavioural market segmentation is the understanding that consumers do not engage with products in a uniform manner (Jatau et al., 2023). Different individuals may exhibit varying purchasing habits, usage rates, and levels of brand loyalty. Behavioural segmentation can include factors such as purchasing timing, frequency of purchase, and reasons for buying (Esu, 2016). Another critical aspect of behavioural segmentation is brand loyalty. Loyal customers often exhibit distinctive purchasing patterns, including a higher likelihood of repeat purchases and a willingness to advocate for the brand.

e. Psychographic Market Segmentation

Psychographic market segmentation is a nuanced approach to categorizing consumers based on psychological attributes that influence their purchasing behaviour (Esu, 2016). This method provides marketers with a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive consumer behaviour, allowing them to tailor their marketing strategies to align with the specific attitudes and motivations of distinct segments. One of the key aspects of psychographic segmentation is the focus on lifestyles. This includes how consumers spend their time, what activities they engage in, and their overall way of life. Values also play a crucial role in psychographic segmentation. Consumers' core beliefs and principles significantly influence their preferences and buving habits. Interests are another vital dimension of psychographic segmentation. This encompasses a wide range of hobbies, passions, and activities that consumers engage in outside of their professional lives. Furthermore, Sarli and Tat (2011) inferred that personality traits can also inform psychographic segmentation. Understanding whether consumers are more introverted or extroverted, adventurous or cautious, can provide useful hints on their purchasing behaviours. By classifying consumers according to their lifestyles, values, interests, and personalities, businesses can create more targeted and effective marketing strategies that resonate deeply with specific segments. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of marketing campaigns but also fosters stronger connections between consumers and brands, ultimately driving brand loyalty and long-term success in the marketplace.

f. Product Sustainability

Product sustainability is a multifaceted concept that emphasizes the enduring capacity of a product to remain relevant and effective in a dynamic market domain. Product sustainability refers to the ability of a product to maintain its relevance, quality, and market demand over time, ensuring its continued profitability and success in a competitive environment (Iyadi & Itimi, 2023). In essence, product sustainability involves not only the longevity of a product but also its ability to meet the evolving needs and preferences of consumers while minimizing environmental impact (Fuchs et al., 2022). This means that sustainable products are designed and manufactured with an awareness of their life cycle, from production through usage to disposal (He et al., 2019). In the context of a rapidly changing marketplace, product sustainability necessitates that businesses constantly innovate and adapt their offerings to align with consumer expectations and regulatory requirements (Fuchs et al., 2022). This adaptability is crucial in an era where consumers are increasingly aware of and concerned about environmental issues. Product sustainability entails a commitment to quality and performance over time (Iyadi & Itimi, 2023). A sustainable product is expected to perform reliably throughout its intended lifespan, thereby fostering consumer trust and loyalty. This trust is critical for businesses aiming to cultivate long-term relationships with their customers.

g. Product Competitiveness

Product competitiveness refers to the ability of a product to attract consumers in the marketplace by offering superior value compared to competing products (Sudirjo, 2023). This concept encompasses various factors that contribute to a product's appeal, including quality, pricing, features, branding, and customer service. In a saturated market, where multiple products vie for consumers' attention, understanding and enhancing product competitiveness becomes essential for businesses aiming to achieve and maintain a strong market position (Shpak et al., 2019). Product competitiveness hinges on the perceived value that consumers associate with a product (Sudirjo, 2023). This perception is influenced by how well the product meets consumer needs and expectations compared to alternatives. For instance, a product may be deemed competitive if it offers superior quality, innovative features, or a unique selling proposition that sets it apart from similar offerings. Consumers are often willing to pay a premium for products they perceive as providing better performance or enhanced benefits, making it crucial for companies to continually assess and improve their product attributes.

Pricing strategy is another critical success factor of product competitiveness. A product can be competitive if it is priced appropriately in relation to its perceived value. Competitive pricing strategies may involve offering lower prices than competitors to attract price-sensitive consumers or positioning a product as a premium offering with higher prices that reflect superior quality or unique features. Effective pricing decisions can significantly impact a product's market position and consumer adoption rates. Branding plays a vital role in product competitiveness as well. A strong brand can create an emotional connection with consumers, leading to increased loyalty and repeat purchases. Brands that effectively communicate their values, mission, and unique attributes often have a competitive edge in the marketplace. Product competitiveness encompasses the ability of a product to stand out in the marketplace by offering superior value to consumers (Sudirjo, 2023). By focusing on quality, pricing, branding, customer service, and market dynamics, businesses can enhance their product's appeal and strengthen their market position. As competition intensifies, understanding and improving product competitiveness will be essential for long-term success and growth in the ever-evolving business domain.

1.2. Conceptual Framework

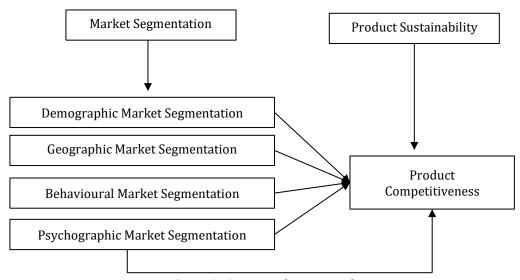


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Source: Researcher's Conceptualisation (2024)

1.3. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP Model) as shown in Figure 2.2, which was first articulated by Philip Kotler in 1969 as part of his seminal work on marketing management (Awware, 2023).



Figure 1. STP Model Source: Awware (2023)

This model emerged from the growing recognition that markets are heterogeneous and that a one-size-fits-all approach to marketing was often ineffective (Awware, 2023). Instead, Kotler proposed a systematic approach that allows businesses to divide their markets into distinct segments, target specific audiences, and position their products accordingly. The STP Model has since become a foundational framework in marketing strategy, guiding companies in their efforts to connect with consumers in a more personalized and effective manner (Al Amin & Islam, 2017).

The main postulations of the STP Model are built upon three key components: segmentation, targeting, and positioning. Segmentation involves identifying and categorizing potential customers based on shared characteristics, such as demographics, psychographics, geographic location, and behaviour (Ridge, 2023). Targeting follows segmentation, where companies select one or more segments to focus their marketing efforts. Finally, positioning entails creating a unique value proposition for each targeted segment, ensuring that the product is perceived positively and distinctively in the minds of consumers. This strategic approach

enables organizations to meet the diverse needs of their customers while maximizing marketing efficiency (Al Amin & Islam, 2017).

The relevance of the STP Model to the topic of market segmentation and product sustainability in Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) is significant, especially concerning Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria. By utilizing the STP framework, firms can effectively segment the market to identify consumer preferences for sustainable products and practices. This enables the company to target specific segments that prioritize sustainability, thereby positioning its products in a way that aligns with the values and expectations of these consumers (Al Amin & Islam, 2017). Furthermore, by applying this model, Nestlé can enhance its product sustainability strategies, ensuring that they resonate with the needs of various market segments, ultimately leading to improved customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

1.4. Empirical Review

Nwabufo et al. (2024) investigated how market segmentation impacts the sales performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in relation to national development in Kogi State's three senatorial districts (West, Central, and East). The study was guided by two objectives, two research questions, and two hypotheses. A descriptive survey design was employed, and the population consisted of 41,554 registered SMEs and their employees across the three senatorial districts. A sample of 381 SMEs and their employees was selected using a proportional stratified random sampling technique. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire titled "Influence of Market Segmentation on Sales Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises towards National Development" (IMSSPSMSETND). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while hypotheses were tested using ANOVA and independent sample T-test at a 0.05 significance level. The findings indicated no significant difference in the influence of behavioural market segmentation on SME sales performance toward national development. Similarly, no significant difference was found regarding demographic market segmentation's influence on SME sales performance toward national development. The study concluded that market segmentation does impact the sales performance of SMEs, and adopting a comprehensive approach that incorporates both behavioural and demographic segmentation strategies can help SMEs better meet the needs and preferences of their target market.

Musa (2024) conducted a study on market segmentation and customer satisfaction within the Sudanese banking sector. The study explored four key dimensions influencing customer satisfaction: market segmentation criteria, consumer behaviour, banking products offered, and customer perceptions of those products. A quantitative approach was employed, with regression analysis and correlation techniques used to analyze data collected from a sample of 420 bank customers. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between segmentation criteria, consumer behaviour, banking offerings, customer perceptions, and satisfaction. These positive perceptions led to higher acceptance of banking services and improved overall customer satisfaction.

Uy et al. (2024) explored consumer segmentation and market analysis to develop a sustainable marketing strategy for electric vehicles (EVs) in the Philippines. Data from 311 EV owners were collected using purposive and snowball sampling methods, both online and in person. The study employed demographic characteristics such as gender, age, residence type, car ownership, and income to segment consumers using the K-means clustering method, analyzed via Jupyter Notebook v7.1.3. The study identified a strong correlation between car ownership and the ability to purchase EVs, with K-means clustering effectively classifying consumer groups. The analysis revealed core-value customers as males over 55 years old, residing in urban areas, owning a vehicle and car insurance, and earning over PHP 130,000 monthly. High-value customers, seen as frequent EV users, were typically males aged 36–45, living in urban areas, with similar attributes but slightly lower incomes.

Mamthasri and Lalitha (2024) examined the sustainability of Fogg Perfume's longevity and consumer preferences in Chennai over a decade. The study utilized both primary and secondary data, collected through structured questionnaires and targeted sampling methods, to analyze the preferences and perceptions of 200 consistent Fogg perfume users. Statistical analyses such as

factor analysis, cluster analysis, and correlation analysis were employed to explore consumer behaviour, preference drivers, and purchase patterns. The study highlighted the influence of gender, purchase methods, and consumer segmentation on preferences.

Yakubu et al. (2024) investigated the impact of niche marketing strategies on the performance of SMEs in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study's population included 400 registered SMEs, and a sample size of 200 was determined using Yamane's formula. A survey research design was employed, and primary data were collected via a five-point Likert scale questionnaire administered to SMEs. Data analysis used frequency and mean point analysis. The study found that market segmentation strategies had no significant effect on SME performance, with an aggregate mean score of 2.01, which was below the decision rule mean of 2.50. These findings suggest that market segmentation strategies may not be a key factor in driving the performance of SMEs in Nasarawa State.

Ihemeje et al. (2023) examined the effect of market segmentation strategy on the performance of Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises in Kogi State. The study utilized a descriptive research design, targeting SMEs across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, water supply, wholesale/retail trade, accommodation and food services, and education. The total population of SMEs was 1,027, according to the National Bureau of Statistics-Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (2019), with 1,011 small enterprises and 16 medium enterprises. Data were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics, regression, and correlation matrix. The findings indicated a significantly positive relationship between customer satisfaction and market segmentation strategy.

Jatau et al. (2023) examined the effect of market segmentation on the performance of small-scale businesses in Maiduguri Metropolis. The study specifically focused on the effects of geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioural segmentation. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS and Stata. The results showed that geographic segmentation posed the least challenge to business performance, followed by demographic segmentation, while psychographic variables were identified as the major challenge, with behavioural segmentation also affecting performance. The study recommended that small business owners should prioritize psychographic and behavioural segmentation to better target specific market segments and position their products more effectively.

Bakare and Rahim (2023) explored the impact of niche marketing on organizational performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector, with a case study on Nestle Nigeria Plc. in Lagos. The study used a cross-sectional survey design, targeting 125 staff members from the marketing department. The sample was stratified, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze demographic data, while regression correlation was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that niche marketing significantly contributed to achieving Nestle's marketing objectives, fostering sustainable growth, enhancing customer patronage, and improving sales performance. The study concluded that niche marketing is an effective strategy for boosting business performance.

Garba (2023) investigated the impact of market expansion and product diversification on the performance of medium-sized businesses in North Central Nigeria. Primary data were collected from 384 respondents, including managers and proprietors of medium enterprises, and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results indicated that market development had a statistically significant positive effect on business performance, while product diversification had a negative but statistically insignificant impact. The study concluded that market development and product diversification are common strategies for business expansion, but thorough market research should precede product diversification efforts.

Iyadi and Itimi (2023) analyzed the impact of competitive marketing strategies on product sustainability, focusing on fast-moving consumer goods firms, specifically Nigerian Bottling Company and Guinness Nigeria Plc in Benin City, Edo State. The study examined the effects of cost leadership, differentiation, and market focus strategies on product sustainability. Data were collected from 130 staff members using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS version 23. The findings demonstrated a significant relationship between the three strategies and product sustainability. The study concluded that adopting competitive marketing

strategies is essential for enhancing product sustainability in a volatile and dynamic business environment.

Olowe et al. (2023) examined the role of creativity in the segmentation process. The study involved top and intermediate management employees of selected organizations in Nigeria's Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry. A survey questionnaire was developed using pre-tested constructs, and convenience sampling was employed to select participants. A total of 160 senior and middle-level management personnel from selected Nigerian FMCG organizations were sampled, and 138 (92.5%) of the distributed questionnaires were returned and qualified for analysis. SPSS version 26.0 was used for correlation and hypothesis testing. Findings revealed that creativity has a statistically significant and positive impact on the segmentation process, accounting for 75% of the variance.

Kesinro (2023) explored penetration product pricing and consumer value perception in Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) markets among consumers of household items in Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. From a population of 648,720, a sample of 156 consumers of household products was selected. The research utilized a survey design, with data collected using a self-structured questionnaire. Percentages, correlation, and regression were employed for data analysis. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between penetration product pricing and buyer expectations, as well as brand trust and image in FMCGs among consumers of household products.

Sudirjo (2023) investigated marketing strategies to improve product competitiveness in the global market, adopting an exploratory research design based on a systematic review of literature. The study focused on articles and publications from 2010 to 2023, with data collected through listening and recording relevant information. Techniques used in data analysis included data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Findings indicated that while the global market offers companies substantial growth opportunities, fierce competition and complex dynamics necessitate a strong marketing strategy. The ability of companies to customize products in line with global market preferences was identified as a crucial factor for success.

Chinonyerem (2023) studied product differentiation strategies as a competitive tool in the sales of soft drinks in the Ebonyi State Senatorial Zone. The study sought to understand how price differences, taste, sugar content, packaging, and product availability influence competitive strategies in the soft drink industry, particularly focusing on RC products. A survey method and convenience sampling were employed to gather data from 160 respondents, of which 139 questionnaires were returned. Data were validated using Cronbach's alpha and analyzed with SPSS version 20 through Spearman Rank Correlation and descriptive research design. The results indicated that price differentiation, taste, sugar content, packaging, and product availability significantly affect RC product sales in the region.

Ekakitie-Emonena et al. (2023) investigated the effect of market positioning on the financial performance of microfinance banks in Nigeria between 1992 and 2021. The study adopted a longitudinal research design, with market positioning proxies including mono-segment positioning, multi-segment positioning, and adaptive positioning. Financial performance was measured using the aggregate return on assets of microfinance banks. Regression analysis was conducted using E-view software, and pre-estimation tests such as variance inflation factors, Ramsey Reset Test, and heteroskedasticity tests were carried out. The results revealed that mono-segment, multi-segment, and adaptive positioning positively influence financial performance, while defensive positioning has a negative impact. The study recommended that microfinance banks focus more on attracting narrowly defined customer segments.

Cajetan (2022) examined the relationship between market segmentation and perceived sales volume of Toyota and Honda vehicle products in Nigeria. The study's population consisted of ten Toyota Camry and Honda automotive distributors. A total of 100 employees from Toyota Camry distributors and 100 employees from Honda distributors were provided with marketing segmentation surveys. The questionnaire and a review of relevant textbooks, journals, and online searches were the primary data sources. The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses from the participants, while relevant documents were reviewed. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple percentages. The results indicated that market segmentation significantly influences sales levels within organizations. The study

concluded that businesses should transition from mass marketing to market segmentation to enhance sales performance.

1.5. Research Gap

Despite the growing body of empirical literature investigating the influence of market segmentation on firm outcomes across various sectors, a notable gap exists concerning the specific influence of market segmentation on the sustainability of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) in Nigeria. Previous studies have primarily focused on the relationship between market segmentation and overall business performance, as demonstrated by the findings of Nwabufo et al. (2024), Iyadi and Itimi (2023), Fasanmi and Fasanmi (2022), who highlighted the positive impacts of demographic and psychographic segmentation on sales performance and customer satisfaction within SMEs and banking sectors, respectively. Similarly, studie by Musa (2024) has examined market segmentation's role in customer loyalty and productivity in the banking and food manufacturing sectors. However, these studies often fail to address how various segmentation strategies, including demographic, geographic, behavioural, and psychographic segmentation, directly influence the competitiveness of FMCG products like those offered by Nestlé in South-east Nigeria.

Moreover, while existing research, such as that by Jatau et al. (2023) and Mamthasri & Lalitha (2024), provides hints into market segmentation's role in enhancing sales and customer preferences, they do not comprehensively assess the distinct impact of market segmentation on the sustainability of FMCG products. The work of Olowe et al. (2023) also suggests that creativity in the segmentation process significantly affects FMCG strategies, but there is still insufficient exploration of the specific implications for product sustainability in the FMCG sector. This gap indicates a need for further investigation into how various forms of market segmentation can be optimized to enhance the competitiveness of FMCG brands, particularly in emerging markets like Nigeria, where factors such as local demographics, cultural preferences, and economic conditions can significantly impact product sustainability. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of market segmentation on the product sustainability of Nestlé's FMCG offerings, contributing useful hints to both academic literature and practical marketing strategies in the sector.

2. Methods

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey design allows researchers to observe, describe, and document aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs. In this study, the focus is on how various forms of market segmentation-demographic, geographic, behavioural, and psychographic-influence the product sustainability (proxy by product competitiveness) of Nestle products in the market. The target population of this study includes consumers of Nestle products residing in the South-east region of Nigeria. The population is infinite, vast and includes individuals from various demographic groups, such as different age ranges, income levels, education levels, and household sizes. Nestle products, such as Milo, Nescafé, Maggi, and Golden Morn, are widely consumed in this region, offering a rich and diverse consumer base for analysis. Given the lack of a precise record of Nestle consumers in the region, the population is considered infinite for sampling purposes. The study, therefore, adopts a broad and representative sampling approach to capture different consumer preferences and behaviours. The population also reflects a mix of urban, semi-urban, and rural residents who may respond differently to market segmentation strategies, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of market segmentation on Nestle's product sustainability. Therefore, three hundred and twenty three (323) consumers of Nestle products were sampled for the purpose of collecting data for the study. The study employs a random sampling technique to select the sample of respondents.

The study relies primarily on primary data. These data were collected directly from respondents who are consumers of Nestle products in South-east Nigeria. The main instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was carefully developed to

capture all the key variables of the study, including demographic, geographic, behavioural, and psychographic market segmentation. To ensure that the questionnaire accurately measures the influence of market segmentation on the sustainability of Nestle products, the research instrument underwent face and content validity checks. The reliability of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha, a statistical measure of internal consistency. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable for demonstrating that the questionnaire consistently measures the intended variables. In this study, a reliability test was conducted using SPSS Version 25, and the Cronbach's alphas for the scales are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability Test Using Cronbach's Alpha

Scale/Variables	Number of Scale Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Demographic market segmentation	4	0.832
Geographic Market Segmentation	4	0.970
Behavioural Market Segmentation	4	0.811
Psychographic Market Segmentation	4	0.841
Product Competitiveness	4	0.792

Source: Data Processed (2024)

Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency distribution, and percentage were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their responses to the questionnaire items. Inferential statistics were employed to test the study's hypotheses. The relationship between market segmentation variables and product competitiveness was examined using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis, which is suitable for examining influence of a variable on another. Hypotheses were tested at a 5% level of significance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

a. Descriptive Analysis of Data

The data collected on the Likert-scale items were analysed below using frequency and mean point analyses.

Table 2. Analysis of Likert-Scale Items

S/N	Demographic Market Segmentation	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Nestlé products are tailored to meet the	44	106	36	63	32	3.24	Accept
	needs of different age groups in South-east							
	Nigeria.							
2	My purchasing decisions for Nestlé products	62	94	40	43	42	3.32	Accept
	are influenced by my income level.							
3	Nestlé's products cater to the varying	24	102	64	67	24	3.12	Accept
	education levels of consumers in South-east							
	Nigeria.							
4	Nestlé adapts its products to match the life	46	100	32	39	64	3.09	Accept
	stages (e.g., children, adults, elderly) of							
	consumers							
S/N	Geographic Market Segmentation	SA	Α	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
5	The location where I live affects my access to	53	108	40	60	20	3.41	Accept
	Nestle products.							
6	Local cultural preferences impact my choice	125	32	48	20	56	3.53	Accept
	of Nestlé products.							
7	Seasonal changes in my area affect my	54	92	63	48	24	3.37	Accept
	purchasing of Nestlé products.							
8	Nestlé adapts its product offerings to the	48	98	16	101	18	3.20	Accept
8		48	98	16	101	18	3.20	Accept

S/N	Behavioural Market Segmentation	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
9	My purchasing frequency of Nestlé products is based on promotions and discounts.	56	108	51	26	40	3.41	Accept
10	I tend to choose Nestlé products based on my previous experiences with them.	44	110	35	60	32	3.26	Accept
11	The packaging and presentation of Nestlé products influence my buying decision.	50	155	20	16	40	3.57	Accept
12	I purchase Nestlé products based on specific occasions or events such as holidays and gatherings.	20	153	34	42	32	3.31	Accept
S/N	Psychographic Market Segmentation	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
13	My personal values influence my choice of	54	227	0	0	0	4.19	Accept
	Nestlé products.							•
14	I prefer Nestlé products that align with my lifestyle choices.	245	4	10	4	18	4.62	Accept
15	My hobbies and interests impact my purchasing of Nestlé products.	20	106	31	124	0	3.08	Accept
16	I am more likely to buy Nestlé products that reflect my personality.	49	111	45	72	4	3.46	Accept
S/N	Product Competitiveness	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Decision
17	Nestle products are more competitive due to their perceived high quality	124	27	51	21	58	3.49	Accept
18	The availability of Nestle products in various retail channels enhances their	59	75	72	51	24	3.33	Accept
19	competitiveness. The affordability of Nestle products gives them a competitive edge in South-East Nigeria.	32	112	21	103	13	3.17	Accept
20	The reputation of Nestle as a trusted brand increases its product competitiveness.	37	103	61	38	42	3.20	Accept

Source: Data Processed (2024)

Table 2 provides a detailed analysis of how respondents perceive various aspects of market segmentation and product competitiveness for Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria. The table captures responses on a 5-point Likert scale, measuring the influence of demographic, geographic, behavioural, and psychographic market segmentation on the competitiveness and sustainability of Nestlé's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG).

In terms of demographic market segmentation, several key hints are revealed. For instance, when asked whether Nestlé tailors its products to different age groups in the region, 44 respondents strongly agreed, and 106 agreed, leading to a mean score of 3.24. This suggests that, while there is a general perception that Nestlé caters to different age groups, a significant portion of respondents is neutral or disagrees, indicating room for improvement. Additionally, purchasing decisions based on income levels scored slightly higher with a mean of 3.32, implying that income segmentation is moderately effective in influencing product choice. Respondents also felt that Nestlé products cater to different education levels, with a mean of 3.12, and that the company adapts its offerings to match various life stages (e.g., children and adults), though this latter item had a lower mean of 3.09. The overall decision for all demographic-related questions was to accept that demographic segmentation impacts product competitiveness, though the relatively modest means suggest that this could be strengthened.

The responses related to geographic market segmentation provide more robust results. For example, the mean score of 3.41 for the question about how location affects access to Nestlé products indicates that access is a concern, with respondents agreeing that their geographic location influences their ability to purchase. Similarly, cultural preferences play a significant role in Nestlé product selection, with a high mean of 3.53, showing that local tastes are crucial. Seasonal changes also influence purchasing habits, reflected in a mean of 3.37. However, when asked whether Nestlé tailors its products to both urban and rural needs, the mean drops to 3.20, suggesting that while there is some adaptation, it is not universally recognized or appreciated by

consumers across different locations. Despite this, geographic segmentation remains relevant in driving competitiveness.

The analysis of behavioural market segmentation shows that purchasing behaviours are influenced by factors such as promotions, prior experiences, and packaging. Promotions and discounts had a mean score of 3.41, indicating that these tactics are effective in encouraging frequent purchases. Likewise, previous experiences with Nestlé products strongly influence purchasing decisions, with a mean of 3.26, and packaging was shown to have an even stronger impact, as evidenced by a mean of 3.57. Specific occasions such as holidays also drive purchases, though the mean of 3.31 suggests that this effect may be slightly more situational. Overall, the behavioural segmentation aspect shows strong alignment with consumer behaviour, reinforcing Nestlé's competitiveness.

The responses related to psychographic market segmentation reveal the strongest perceptions among respondents. The influence of personal values on Nestlé product choice is highly significant, as evidenced by a mean of 4.19, with no respondents expressing disagreement. Even more striking is the influence of lifestyle choices, with an exceptional mean of 4.62, suggesting that Nestlé products resonate well with consumers' identities and values in the region. Although hobbies and interests showed a relatively lower mean of 3.08, indicating some neutrality or disagreement about their role in purchasing, personality alignment with Nestlé products scored a mean of 3.46. Psychographic factors, especially those related to values and lifestyles, clearly play a major role in shaping consumer decisions, giving Nestlé a competitive advantage in this regard.

Finally, the table assesses the competitiveness of Nestlé products based on quality, availability, affordability, and brand reputation. The perceived high quality of Nestlé products scored a mean of 3.49, with most respondents agreeing that this is a competitive advantage. The availability of Nestlé products across various retail channels scored 3.33, showing that widespread distribution plays a role in sustaining competitiveness, though it is not overwhelming. Affordability, however, showed a lower mean of 3.17, indicating that while it contributes to competitiveness, it may not be a dominant factor. Lastly, the brand reputation of Nestlé scored 3.20, reinforcing the notion that trust and familiarity with the brand enhance its market position, although this impact is somewhat moderate.

Thus, table 2 demonstrates that different aspects of market segmentation-especially psychographics-are influential in driving the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria. While there is a generally positive reception towards how Nestlé applies segmentation strategies, certain areas, such as affordability and tailoring products to both rural and urban markets, could be enhanced to further sustain and grow Nestlé's product competitiveness in the region.

b. Test of Hypotheses

H0₁: Demographic market segmentation does not significantly influence the competitiveness of Nestle product in South-east Nigeria.

Table 3. Relationship between demographic market segmentation and product competitiveness

		Product	
		Competitiveness	
Demographic Market Segmentation	Pearson Correlation	.414**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	281	
2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	N		

Source: Data Processed (2024)

The first hypothesis ($H0_1$) aims to test whether demographic market segmentation significantly influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria. Table 3 presents the result of the Pearson correlation analysis. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.414, indicating a moderate positive relationship between demographic market segmentation and product competitiveness. This suggests that as Nestlé aligns its products with demographic factors (such as age, income, and education), their competitiveness in the market increases to a

certain extent. The P-value is 0.000, which is below the typical significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the relationship between demographic market segmentation and product competitiveness is statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of the alternate hypothesis. Therefore, demographic market segmentation significantly and positively influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria (r = 0.414; p-value = 0.000).

H0₂: Geographic market segmentation does not significantly influence the competitiveness of Nestle product in South-east Nigeria.

Table 4. Relationship between geographic market segmentation and product competitiveness

1 0 0 1	<u> </u>	•	Product
		Co	mpetitiveness
Geographic Market Segmentation	Pearson Correlation		.214**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N		281

Source: Data Processed (2024)

The second hypothesis $(H0_2)$ tests whether geographic market segmentation has a significant influence on the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria. Table 4 provides the result of this test, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.214, indicating a weak positive relationship between geographic market segmentation and product competitiveness. This weak correlation suggests that while there is some influence of geographic factors (such as rural or urban locations) on the competitiveness of Nestlé products, the strength of this relationship is not as strong as it is for demographic segmentation. The P-value is again 0.000, which is statistically significant. Thus, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, and it can be concluded that geographic market segmentation significantly and positively influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria (r = 0.214; p-value = 0.000).

H0₃: Behavioural market segmentation has no significant influence on the competitiveness of Nestle product in South-east Nigeria.

Table 5. Relationship between behavioural market segmentation and product competitiveness

		Product Competitiveness
Behavioural Market Segmentation	Pearson Correlation	.351**
-	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	281

Source: Data Processed (2024)

The third hypothesis ($H0_3$) investigates whether behavioural market segmentation has a significant impact on the competitiveness of Nestlé products in the region. Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation coefficient as 0.351, indicating a moderate positive relationship. This suggests that consumer behaviours, such as purchasing frequency, responsiveness to promotions, and past experiences with Nestlé products, moderately affect the competitiveness of these products. With a P-value of 0.000 that is less than 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of the alternate hypothesis. Therefore, behavioural market segmentation significantly and positively influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria (r = 0.351; p-value = 0.000).

H0₄: Psychographics market segmentation does not significantly influence the competitiveness of Nestle product in South-east Nigeria.

Table 6. Relationship between psychographics market segmentation and product competitiveness

		Product
		Competitiveness
Psychographic Market Segmentation	Pearson Correlation	.503**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	281

Source: Data Processed (2024)

The final hypothesis ($H0_4$) examines whether psychographic market segmentation significantly influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria. Table 6 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient at 0.503, which represents a strong positive relationship between psychographic segmentation and product competitiveness. This means that factors such as personal values, lifestyle choices, and individual personalities have a substantial impact on how competitive Nestlé products are in the region. With the P-value at 0.000 which is less than 0.05, this relationship is statistically significant, allowing for the acceptance of the alternate hypothesis. Hence, psychographic market segmentation significantly and positively influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria (r = 0.503; p-value = 0.000).

3.2. Discussion of Findings

The first finding, which relates to demographic market segmentation, reveals a moderate positive relationship (correlation coefficient of 0.414) between demographic factors and product competitiveness. This result can be explained by the diversity of the population in South-East Nigeria, where factors such as age, income, and education levels significantly influence consumer preferences and purchasing power. Nestlé's ability to tailor its products to meet the needs of different demographic groups helps the company remain competitive. For example, products designed for children, adults, and elderly consumers, as well as price points that accommodate different income levels, allow the company to cater to a broad market. The statistical significance of this finding suggests that demographic segmentation is a vital strategy for Nestlé in this region, as it enables the company to align its product offerings with the diverse needs of the population. The findings that demographic market segmentation significantly influences the competitiveness of Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria align with the studies of Adamu (2020) and Okpara (2019), both of which found a positive impact of demographic segmentation on performance and profitability in different industries. Similarly, Musa (2024) reported that demographic segmentation enhances consumer satisfaction in the banking sector, reflecting the importance of tailoring products to different demographic groups. However, the study by Nwabufo et al. (2024) contrasts this finding, as it found no significant influence of demographic segmentation on SME performance, suggesting that its effect may vary across sectors.

The second finding, concerning geographic market segmentation, shows a weaker positive relationship (correlation coefficient of 0.214) with product competitiveness. This weaker correlation may stem from the fact that geographic factors, while relevant, are not as dominant in influencing consumer behaviour in South-East Nigeria. Though there are differences in consumer access to Nestlé products between rural and urban areas, these differences may be less pronounced due to improvements in distribution networks and urbanization trends in the region. Nestlé's efforts to ensure the availability of its products across both urban and rural areas may reduce the impact of geographic location on product competitiveness. However, the statistically significant result still indicates that geographic segmentation plays a role, albeit a smaller one, in influencing the company's market positioning. Geographic segmentation's positive influence on Nestlé's product competitiveness mirrors the findings of Bakare and Rahim (2023), who observed that niche marketing, often geographically focused, contributed significantly to improving sales performance in the manufacturing sector. Omaliko and Okpala (2022) similarly emphasized the role of geographic diversification in enhancing corporate sustainability in healthcare. However, the findings of Yakubu et al. (2024) suggest that geographic segmentation poses fewer challenges in small-scale business performance, contrasting with the significant effect observed in the Nestlé context. Cajetan (2022) also found that geographic segmentation significantly influences sales volumes in the automotive industry, further supporting the importance of geographic targeting.

The third finding focuses on behavioural market segmentation, which has a moderate positive relationship (correlation coefficient of 0.351) with product competitiveness. This suggests that consumer behaviour, such as purchasing frequency, responsiveness to promotions, and brand loyalty, significantly impacts the competitiveness of Nestlé products. Behavioural segmentation is particularly important for FMCG companies like Nestlé, as consumer buying patterns, influenced by promotions and brand experiences, can drive sales and enhance competitiveness. The fact that consumers are influenced by their previous interactions with Nestlé products, as well as by promotional activities, indicates that behavioural segmentation is an effective strategy for the company. This finding highlights the importance of understanding and leveraging consumer behaviour to maintain and grow market share. Behavioural segmentation's significant influence on competitiveness aligns with the work of Owusu and Agyemang (2021), who found that behavioural segmentation positively impacts customer loyalty in interior design. This is supported by the findings of Bakare and Rahim (2023) and Benjamin et al. (2021), who reported positive effects of segmentation strategies, including behavioural ones, on sales and productivity. In contrast, Nwabufo et al. (2024) found no significant difference in the influence of behavioural segmentation on sales performance, highlighting that its impact might depend on the industry or market environment.

The fourth and most significant finding pertains to psychographic market segmentation, which shows a strong positive relationship (correlation coefficient of 0.503) with product competitiveness. Psychographic segmentation focuses on consumer values, lifestyles, and personality traits, and the strong correlation in this case suggests that these factors are highly influential in shaping consumer preferences for Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria. The prominence of personal values and lifestyle alignment with product offerings is likely due to the growing trend among consumers to purchase products that reflect their identity and values, such as health-conscious or environmentally-friendly choices. Nestlé's ability to tap into these psychographic factors by offering products that resonate with the values and lifestyles of different consumer groups gives it a competitive edge in the market. This finding emphasizes the increasing importance of psychographic segmentation in modern marketing strategies, particularly for FMCG companies that need to build strong emotional connections with consumers. Psychographic segmentation's strong influence on competitiveness is consistent with studies by Fasanmi and Fasanmi (2022) Owusu and Agyemang (2021), both of which found that psychographic factors significantly enhance performance and customer loyalty in the banking and interior design sectors, respectively. Mamthasri and Lalitha (2024) also reported significant influences of psychographic factors, such as gender and purchase preferences, on consumer preferences in the fragrance industry. In contrast, Yakubu et al. (2024) identified psychographic segmentation as a major challenge for small-scale businesses, indicating that while it can be effective, it may also present difficulties in certain market segments.

4. Conclusion

The study set out to examine the influence of market segmentation on product sustainability using Nestlé products in South-East Nigeria. The findings revealed that all segmentation strategies significantly contribute to Nestlé's product competitiveness, with varying degrees of impact. Demographic segmentation, which encompasses factors like age, income, and education level, showed a moderate influence on competitiveness, indicating that Nestlé's ability to cater to diverse demographic groups plays a vital role in its market strength. Geographic segmentation, though still statistically significant, exhibited the weakest correlation with product competitiveness. This suggests that while geographic factors, such as urban-rural divides, affect consumer access to Nestlé products, the company's widespread distribution and availability have mitigated these challenges to a large extent. In contrast, behavioural segmentation demonstrated a stronger influence, showing that consumer behaviour patterns,

including purchasing frequency and responsiveness to promotions, are critical for Nestlé's competitiveness in this region. The most significant finding was the strong influence of psychographic segmentation on product competitiveness. This indicates that consumer values, lifestyles, and personality traits are highly important in shaping purchasing decisions for Nestlé products. The company's ability to align its products with consumers' personal values and lifestyles has proven to be a key factor in its sustained competitiveness. In conclusion, a multidimensional approach to market segmentation, with particular emphasis on psychographic factors, is essential for maintaining and enhancing the competitiveness of fast-moving consumer goods like Nestlé in the dynamic market of South-East Nigeria.

Seguel to the conclusion, the study recommended thus:

- a. Marketing team need to continue tailoring their products to different age groups and income levels, ensuring that they cater to the specific needs and preferences of diverse demographic segments in South-East Nigeria.
- b. The distribution managers should focus on improving product availability in rural areas by optimizing their distribution channels to ensure better access to their products, particularly in less accessible locations.
- c. Promotion team need to increase the frequency and visibility of promotional campaigns to further capitalize on consumer behaviour patterns, such as their responsiveness to discounts and special offers, to enhance purchasing frequency.
- d. The product development and branding team should endeavour to align all their products with the values and lifestyles of consumers by offering products that resonate with personal values and healthy lifestyle trends, reinforcing the emotional connection with their brand.

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