GSAR Journal of Economics and Finance
ISSN: 3107-9520 (Online)
Frequency: Monthly
Published By GSAR Publishers
Journal Homepage Link- https://gsarpublishers.com/gsarjef-home/

CONSUMER DETERMINANTS IN BAKERY PRODUCT PURCHASES: EVIDENCE FROM ROYAL OVEN, MWANZA.

By

Budebah, Edith[1], Dr. Laurent Masui[2], Dr. Zinaida Marwa[3]

[1,2,3]Faculty of Business and Economics. St. Augustine University of Tanzania.

Article History

Received: 11/11/2025
Accepted: 26/11/2025
Published: 29/11/2025

Vol – 1 Issue – 3

PP: -01-11

Abstract

Purpose of the Study: *This study aimed to examine the influence of product price, product quality, and product features on consumer decision-making for differentiated bakery products at Royal Oven Bakery in Mwanza City, Tanzania. The research sought to identify the key factors shaping consumer preferences and purchase intentions in a competitive bakery market.*

Methodology: *The study adopted a positivist research philosophy and a quantitative research approach. A cross-sectional research design was employed, targeting a population of 237 daily bakery consumers. A sample of 147 respondents was selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions and analyzed using SPSS Version 26. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analyses were employed to examine the relationships between product attributes and consumer decision-making.*

Findings: *The results indicated that product features had the strongest positive influence on consumer decision-making ($B = 0.351, \beta = 0.475, p < 0.001$), followed by product quality ($B = 0.251, \beta = 0.335, p = 0.002$) and product price ($B = 0.215, \beta = 0.203, p = 0.007$). Correlation analyses revealed strong interrelationships among product price, quality, and features, highlighting the combined effect of these marketing elements on consumer purchase behavior. Consumers prioritize sensory attributes, innovative features, and value perception when selecting bakery products.*

Originality: *This study contributes to the literature by focusing on the Tanzanian bakery sector, an underexplored context, and provides empirical evidence on the combined effect of product price, quality, and features on consumer decision-making for differentiated bakery products.*

Practical Implications: *The findings offer actionable insights for bakery operators like Royal Oven Bakery, emphasizing the importance of maintaining high product quality, innovating product features, and adopting competitive pricing strategies to enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and market competitiveness.*

Social Implications: *By understanding consumer preferences and promoting quality bakery products, the study supports healthier, satisfying, and culturally appropriate food choices while contributing to the development of local businesses and employment in Mwanza City.*

Keywords: *Consumer decision-making, product quality, product features, product price, bakery products, Tanzania, Royal Oven Bakery*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Product differentiation plays a critical role in shaping consumer decision-making by offering unique attributes that enable firms to stand out in competitive markets and build sustainable advantages (Kotler et al., 2015). Global evidence shows that consumer preferences for differentiated bakery products vary significantly across cultural, economic, and behavioral contexts. In Brazil, consumers are largely price-sensitive and show limited willingness to pay for premium bakery items (Souki, Reis & Moura, 2016), while in Japan, strong brand consciousness and high quality expectations strongly influence purchasing behavior (Brazilian Administration Review, 2014). In Germany, health-focused and quality-oriented consumers are willing to pay more for natural and fresh bread options (Zielke & Dobbelstein, 2018). A cross-continental review further reveals that in Nigeria, pricing, quality, and freshness are central determinants of satisfaction and loyalty (Abdullahi et al., 2024; Okike, 2011). In Australia, quality consciousness, brand loyalty, and

*Corresponding Author: **Budebah, Edith..**

habitual buying significantly shape bakery choices (Nayeem & Casidy, 2015). Broader Canadian consumer trends also emphasize health consciousness, convenience, and variety in bakery purchases. Similarly, in India, freshness, quality, price, and growing health awareness strongly influence preferences for pastries and bread (Dubey & Dubey, 2019). Findings from South Africa indicate that sensory appeal is a primary motivator, although sugar concerns influence some consumer groups (de Kock et al., 2020). In Tunisia, artisanal bakeries rely on quality and tradition, but innovation in flavors and forms has become essential to meet evolving expectations (Othmani & Ben Fredj, 2022).

In East Africa, bakery purchasing decisions also reflect diverse influences. In Kenya, price sensitivity, product quality, brand familiarity, and cultural elements significantly shape consumer choices (Wambugu & Musyoka, 2022; Wambugu & Maina, 2022). In Uganda, purchasing decisions are driven by price, marketing strategies, and availability of substitutes (Pather, 2014). In Tanzania, bakery choices are shaped by health consciousness, convenience, familiarity, and rapid lifestyle changes (Bukachi et al., 2023). Tanzanian bakery-related studies show further determinants of consumer decision-making. Jeje (2023) highlights the role of innovation strategies such as product improvements and customer-focused innovation, while Lomayani (2021) shows that packaging attributes—including labeling, material, and color—significantly influence purchase behavior alongside cultural factors such as lifestyle and norms. Mbiku (2016) emphasizes both extrinsic factors (price, packaging, store image) and intrinsic factors (perceived value, product knowledge), moderated by income and familiarity. Royal Oven Bakery in Mwanza reflects many of these broader consumer preferences through its emphasis on innovation, quality packaging, diverse product offerings, and strong branding. Although specific empirical studies on Royal Oven are limited, its strategies align with established Tanzanian determinants such as product freshness, price sensitivity, brand familiarity, and increasingly health-conscious consumer values (Jeje, 2023; Lomayani, 2021; Mbiku, 2016).

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Although Royal Oven Bakery appears to offer desirable product features, flavors, and affordable prices that attract customers, there is limited empirical evidence explaining the specific factors influencing consumer decision-making within Mwanza's bakery market. Existing studies in Tanzania highlight the roles of product differentiation, packaging, cultural norms, innovation, and value perceptions in shaping consumer choices (Jeje, 2023; Lomayani, 2021; Mbiku, 2016), yet these findings are not localized to Mwanza. Moreover, broader research suggests that pricing, product quality, and marketing strategies influence bakery purchases (Pather, 2014; Bukachi et al., 2023), but there remains a clear gap in understanding how these determinants apply to bakeries such as Royal Oven. This lack of targeted, context-specific research limits the ability of bakery businesses in Mwanza to design effective product offerings, marketing strategies, and customer engagement approaches aligned with evolving consumer preferences (Wambugu & Musyoka, 2022).

2.1 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

2.1.1 Key Idea

The Economic Theory of Consumer Behavior explains how individuals make choices among goods and services given their limited income, with the goal of maximizing satisfaction or utility (Marshall, 1890; Hicks & Allen, 1934; Varian, 2010). Consumers are assumed to compare the marginal utility gained from each product with its price to choose the optimal combination of goods. Although the theory provides a structured model for understanding consumption decisions, real-world behavior especially in differentiated markets such as bakery products often deviates due to cultural preferences, emotions, habits, and brand loyalty.

2.1.2 Assumptions of the Theory

The Economic Theory of Consumer Behavior is grounded in several key assumptions that simplify how individuals make choices. It assumes that consumers behave rationally, always aiming to maximize their utility by selecting the most satisfying combination of goods. They are also presumed to have perfect information about all available products, including their prices, features, and alternatives (Hael et al., 2024). The theory further assumes that consumer preferences are stable and consistent over time, meaning choices follow a logical and transitive order. Additionally, it is based on the principle of diminishing marginal utility, where the satisfaction gained from each additional unit of a product decreases with consumption. Consumers are also considered to operate under budget constraints, allocating their limited income in the most optimal way. Finally, the theory assumes that choices are not influenced by irrelevant alternatives, meaning that the presence of unrelated options should not affect decision-making (Marshall, 1890; Hicks & Allen, 1934).

2.1.3 Strengths of the Theory

The theory offers a clear and systematic framework for predicting consumer choices and analyzing demand (Aguilar et al., 2023). Its focus on utility maximization and diminishing marginal utility allows economic behavior to be modeled quantitatively. Tools such as indifference curves and budget constraints make trade-offs and consumption decisions easy to visualize (Gärtner & Jung, 2021). The theory also provides a strong foundation for advanced economic analyses involving pricing strategies, market behavior, and welfare economics (Bernheim & Taubinsky, 2020).

2.1.4 Limitations of the Theory

The model is constrained by several unrealistic assumptions that often fail to capture actual consumer behavior. It assumes that consumers always act rationally to maximize utility, yet in reality, individuals frequently make choices influenced by impulse, habit, or convenience. The assumption of perfect information is also impractical, as consumers typically have limited knowledge, face misinformation, or rely on incomplete details when making decisions. Preferences are not always stable or consistent, as they may shift due to

*Corresponding Author: **Budebah, Edith..**

trends, cultural influences, social norms, or specific situational factors. Moreover, the theory overlooks key emotional, psychological, and social elements such as brand loyalty, habits, advertising, and cognitive biases ; which significantly shape consumer decisions (Simon, 1955; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1985). The principle of diminishing marginal utility is also not universally applicable across all products or consumption situations. Collectively, these limitations reduce the theory's ability to fully explain the complex and dynamic nature of real-world consumer decision-making.

2.1.5 Applicability to the Study

The theory helps explain how consumers at Royal Oven Bakery may evaluate bread, cakes, and pastries based on price, perceived value, and product attributes (Ochoa et al., 2024). It provides a basis for analyzing how changes in price affect demand and how consumers allocate their limited income among differentiated bakery offerings. However, since consumer decisions in Mwanza are also shaped by cultural preferences, packaging, health consciousness, and innovation, the theory must be applied alongside behavioral and contextual insights (Bludo & Buabeng, 2024). Thus, while useful for understanding basic economic trade-offs, the theory alone cannot fully capture the complex, real-world determinants influencing bakery purchasing decisions.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Product Price and Consumer Decision Making

Product price plays a critical role in shaping consumer decision-making within the bakery industry, particularly for specialty products where affordability and perceived value strongly influence purchasing behavior. Research from various global markets highlights that while low and moderate prices motivate many bakery customers, value perceptions—such as quality, freshness, packaging, and brand reputation—can be equally or more influential. Studies like Delgado (2021) show that consumers in Britain balance cost with environmental impact and quality, demonstrating willingness to pay more when value is evident. Similar findings emerge in Ghana and Kenya, where economic instability has made price a primary determinant of purchases, yet a notable segment of consumers remains open to premium-priced items if they offer superior quality or unique benefits (Miller et al., 2022; Annos et al., 2025).

Technological and theoretical contributions, such as those by Olakanmi et al. (2023) and Li (2021), further reveal how affordability, product innovation, and consumer recognition strategies shape price sensitivity. In China, studies show that medium pricing in fresh food supply chains can enhance supplier–retailer coordination and improve profitability (Zhang et al., 2024). Research in France emphasizes that consumer perceptions of value also involve cognitive and sensory factors beyond price alone (Roque et al., 2018). In Tanzania, recent findings by Zebu (2024) illustrate how bakeries like Royal Oven successfully target diverse income groups by combining fair prices with consistent product quality and freshness, thereby attracting both budget-conscious and quality-driven consumers.

Overall, the literature suggests that price remains a major driver of bakery purchasing decisions, but its influence is strengthened when paired with value-enhancing attributes such as freshness, quality indicators, innovative packaging, and brand trust. However, most existing studies are based on foreign markets and rely heavily on self-reported data, which limits their applicability to Tanzania's context. For bakeries like Royal Oven, the evidence underscores the importance of adopting pricing strategies that balance affordability with value creation, supported by quality improvements, accurate product information, and customer engagement initiatives such as loyalty programs to enhance consumer satisfaction and repeat purchases.

2.2.2 Product Quality and Consumer Decision Making

Product quality is a central determinant of consumer decision-making in the bakery sector, strongly influencing preferences for specialty products. Studies consistently show that freshness, nutritional value, ingredient quality, and visual appeal shape purchasing intentions more than price alone. In the United States, over 60% of consumers judge bakery quality based on freshness and high-end ingredients, with younger buyers placing greater emphasis on branding, safety assurances, and creative packaging (Linzalone & Lerro, 2021). Visual presentation also plays a crucial role; experimental evidence from the Netherlands and Norway demonstrates that enhancing the attractiveness and display positioning of food items significantly increases consumer selection of healthier options without reducing satisfaction (Starke et al., 2021). These insights suggest that bakeries can influence buying behavior through strategic product presentation both online and in-store. Labeling quality likewise affects how consumers evaluate bakery products. Research from India and the Central African Republic shows that while brand labels attract attention through emotional and trust-building cues, nutritional labels shape more informed decisions by exposing misleading claims and improving transparency (Garwal et al., 2025; Hosam et al., 2019). High-quality information and credible visuals jointly increase consumer trust and willingness to purchase, though some studies note limitations due to narrow sampling and simulated shopping environments. Findings from emerging markets further highlight shifting quality perceptions. In Namibia, rising urbanization and spending power have increased demand for artisanal, premium, and nutritionally enhanced bakery products (Mmereki et al., 2024), while studies in Burundi reveal that consumers prioritize freshness, local sourcing, and food safety, although many remain sensitive to cost and reserve premium items for occasional purchases (Mondo, 2024). Overall, the literature shows that product quality is multifaceted, shaped by sensory factors, brand communication, labeling transparency, and cultural expectations. While these studies offer valuable insights, many are context-specific and rely on controlled experiments rather than real purchasing data, limiting generalizability to

*Corresponding Author: Budebah, Edith..

Tanzania. For bakeries like Royal Oven, the evidence suggests emphasizing freshness, authentic ingredients, strong visual presentation, and clear labeling to strengthen consumer trust and differentiate products in a competitive market.

2.2.3 Product features and Consumers Decision making

Product features, including flavor, aroma, nutritional content, and packaging, are key drivers of consumer satisfaction and loyalty in the bakery industry. Research shows that well-designed product differentiation enhances perceived value and encourages repeat purchases. For example, Calín-Sánchez (2021) highlights that flavor and aroma analyses, using methods like HS-SPME-GC-MS and sensory panels, are reliable indicators of quality and can guide product development to align with consumer preferences. Similarly, Wang et al. (2022) emphasize that optimizing both flavor and texture is critical for product acceptability, as off-flavors can undermine consumer satisfaction despite other product improvements. These findings underscore the importance of systematically integrating sensory and chemical assessments into bakery production to maintain consistent quality and appeal. Consumer studies from Rwanda further reveal that product attributes such as freshness, hygiene, locally sourced ingredients, and practical packaging significantly influence purchasing decisions (Valery, 2020). Urban consumers demonstrate a growing reliance on digital platforms, including online reviews and delivery services, when evaluating bakery products. Together, these insights suggest that bakeries like Royal Oven can enhance competitiveness by focusing on consistent sensory quality, ingredient transparency, food safety, and convenient packaging. Implementing advanced aroma and flavor profiling alongside quality control measures can help meet evolving consumer expectations and strengthen brand loyalty in a competitive market.

2.3 Research gap

There is a lack of in-depth understanding of the specific factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions for specialized bakery products, particularly at Royal Oven Bakery in Mwanza City, Tanzania. Most existing applications of the theory tend to generalize determinants of consumer behavior in the food industry, without focusing on product-specific factors such as taste, branding, pricing, accessibility, and cultural influences relevant to bakery items. This creates a theoretical gap in understanding how these factors interact to influence decisions for differentiated bakery products in the Tanzanian context. Empirically, past studies such as Ahmed and Taha (2023), Li (2021), and Jaeger et al. (2023) largely focus on general food and beverage products, leaving baked goods relatively underexplored. Furthermore, much of the research is conducted in non-African contexts, including Iraq, the U.S., France, and China, limiting its applicability to Tanzanian consumers. Many studies also rely on self-reported data or theoretical models without validation through actual purchase behavior. Addressing this gap can help bakeries like Royal Oven Bakery tailor products and marketing strategies to local consumer preferences while contributing to academic knowledge on consumer decision-making for bakery products in emerging markets.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs and assumptions that guide how a researcher approaches the study, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This study adopted a positivist philosophy, emphasizing observable, measurable phenomena and using structured quantitative tools to obtain objective data (Stephan et al., 2025). Positivism allows the study to generate practical, real-world insights on how product differentiation influences consumer choices at Royal Bakery, ensuring findings are applicable for decision-making.

3.2 Research Approach

A research approach defines the overall strategy for investigating a research problem (Ugwunwangwu & Anikeze, 2024). This study used a quantitative approach, collecting numerical data through structured questionnaires to measure consumer preferences and decision-making factors. Quantitative data provides measurable, reliable evidence of the relationship between product attributes (quality, price, features) and consumer behavior, enabling data-driven recommendations for Royal Bakery.

3.3 Research Design

Research design is the structured plan that guides data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). A cross-sectional design was employed to collect data once from consumers about product quality, packaging, and features. This design efficiently captures the current relationships between variables without requiring longitudinal tracking, providing timely and cost-effective insights into consumer behavior.

3.4 3Population

The population includes all individuals relevant to the study (Ugwunwangwu & Anikeze, 2024).

The study focused on 237 daily consumers of Royal Oven Bakery bread, as reported by management, who are regularly exposed to the bakery's products and marketing strategies. Targeting this urban consumer group ensures the study captures insights from individuals most influenced by product differentiation factors like quality, packaging, and branding (Bryman, 2016).

3.5 Sample Size

Sample size is the subset of the population analyzed to make generalizable conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Using Yamane's formula $n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$with a 5% margin of error, the sample was calculated as 147 respondents from the 237-member population. This ensures a representative sample while remaining manageable for data collection and analysis.

3.6 Sampling Procedure

Sampling involves selecting participants from the population.

*Corresponding Author: **Budebah, Edith..**

Convenience sampling was used to select 147 daily bread consumers at Royal Bakery.
This approach allows efficient access to respondents who regularly purchase the bakery's products, ensuring relevance to the study objectives (Bryman, 2016).

3.7 Source of Data

Data sources include primary and secondary sources.
Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires, while secondary data came from literature, reports, and prior research. Combining primary and secondary data provides comprehensive evidence to understand consumer decision-making.

3.8 Data Collection Methods

Data collection is the process of gathering information to answer research questions.

Structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions were administered to 147 consumers, capturing perceptions of product quality, features, and price.
Structured questionnaires allow systematic, comparable responses suitable for quantitative analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves examining collected data to identify patterns and relationships.

SPSS software was used for descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and multiple regression).

This approach identifies the strength, direction, and significance of relationships between independent variables (product price, quality, and features) and the dependent variable (consumer decision-making), enabling evidence-based recommendations.

3.10 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis examines structured numerical data to derive conclusions.

Descriptive statistics summarized trends, while Pearson correlation measured associations and multiple regression quantified the effect of each independent variable. The model used was:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3$$

Where:
Y= Consumer decision-making, X_1= Product Price, X_2= Product Quality, X_3= Product Features, β_0= Constant term

4. 0 FINDINGS

4.1 Correlation analysis Correlations

		PRICE	QUALITY	FEATURES	DECISSION
PRICE	Pearson Correlation	1	.815**	.812**	.678**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	147	147	147	147
QUALITY	Pearson Correlation	.815**	1	.847**	.753**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	147	147	147	147
FEATURES	Pearson Correlation	.812**	.847**	1	.775**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	147	147	147	147
DECISSION	Pearson Correlation	.678**	.753**	.775**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	147	147	147	147

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

The results indicate strong positive relationships between product attributes and consumer decision-making at Royal Oven Bakery. Product price is significantly correlated with purchase behavior ($r = 0.678$, $p < 0.01$), showing that affordability drives repeat purchases and brand loyalty, particularly among middle- and low-income consumers. Product quality demonstrates an even stronger influence ($r = 0.753$, $p < 0.01$), with factors such as freshness, taste, hygiene, and nutritional content shaping consumer preferences and satisfaction. Product features exhibit the strongest correlation ($r = 0.775$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the importance of packaging, flavor variety, and nutritional labeling in enhancing perceived uniqueness and appeal. Additionally, price, quality, and features are highly interrelated (ranging from $r = 0.812$ to $r = 0.847$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that consumers perceive these attributes as interconnected, with quality and innovative features justifying price and reinforcing overall value. Collectively, these findings emphasize that consumer decisions are influenced by the combined effect of pricing, quality, and product differentiation rather than any single factor alone.

4.2 Regression Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.834	.182		10.064	.000
	PRICE	.215	.075	.201	2.867	.007
	QUALITY	.251	.078	.335	3.206	.002

*Corresponding Author: **Budebah, Edith..**

FEATURES	.351	.077	.475	4.577	.000

a. Dependent Variable: DECISSION

The regression results show that product price, quality, and features all positively and significantly influence consumer decision-making at Royal Oven Bakery, though with varying strengths. Product price has a significant but relatively smaller effect ($B = 0.215$, $p = 0.007$), indicating that fair and affordable pricing encourages purchases, particularly among middle- and low-income consumers. Product quality exerts a stronger influence ($B = 0.251$, $p = 0.002$), demonstrating that improvements in freshness, taste, hygiene, and consistency enhance purchase intentions and foster trust and loyalty. The strongest impact comes from product features ($B = 0.351$, $p < 0.001$), showing that distinctive attributes such as flavor variety, packaging, nutritional labeling, and innovative offerings highly motivate consumer decisions. Overall, the findings highlight that while pricing matters, quality and especially product differentiation are key drivers of consumer behavior, emphasizing the importance of continuous innovation and maintaining high standards to increase purchase intention and build brand loyalty.

4.3 Discussion of findings

4.3.1 Effect of product price on consumer decision making

The regression analysis shows that product price, quality, and features significantly influence consumer decision-making at Royal Oven Bakery, consistent with the Economic Theory of Consumer Behavior, which posits that consumers make choices to maximize satisfaction under budget constraints (Marshall, 1890; Varian, 2010). Product price ($B = 0.215$, $p = 0.007$) positively affects purchase behavior, indicating that consumers are more likely to buy bread when prices are perceived as fair and affordable. This aligns with studies in Kenya and Tanzania, where Annos et al. (2025) and Zebu (2024) found that moderately priced bakery products encourage repeat purchases and attract middle- and low-income consumers. Price is the least influential of the three variables, suggesting that while affordability is important, it does not fully determine purchase decisions, reflecting the theory's limitation in explaining non-economic factors such as emotions and social influences (Thaler, 1985; Simon, 1955). Product quality ($B = 0.251$, $p = 0.002$) has a stronger positive effect on consumer decision-making, indicating that freshness, taste, hygiene, and consistency drive purchase intentions. This supports Linzalone & Lerro (2021) and Mmereki et al. (2024), who highlighted that consumers prioritize product quality, particularly freshness and health-oriented attributes, when selecting baked goods. According to the theory, consumers weigh the utility gained from higher-quality products against the price, which explains their willingness to pay slightly more for superior items (Varian, 2010). The strongest predictor is product features ($B = 0.351$, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing that attributes such as flavor variety, packaging design, and nutritional labeling significantly shape consumer choices. These findings are supported by Calín-Sánchez (2021) and Wang et al. (2022), who noted that innovative features and appealing sensory attributes enhance perceived product value and satisfaction. Linking to theory, product features increase perceived utility, motivating consumers to choose items that maximize their satisfaction while reflecting personal preferences. Overall, the results demonstrate that effective pricing, consistent quality, and well-differentiated features collectively drive consumer decision-making, illustrating the interplay of economic rationality and real-world behavioral influences.

4.3.2 Influence of Product quality on consumer decision making

The descriptive statistics indicate that product quality is a key determinant of consumer choices at Royal Oven Bakery. Consumers prioritize attributes such as freshness, texture, and taste over price. Specifically, 49.7% of respondents strongly agree that freshness guides their purchase decisions, with a mean of 4.35 (SD = 0.809). Satisfaction with product texture is even higher, with 63.9% strongly agreeing and a mean of 4.51 (SD = 0.797), highlighting the importance of physical characteristics such as softness and consistency. Taste emerges as the most influential factor, with 69.4% strongly agreeing that it drives their bakery selection, yielding a mean of 4.57 (SD = 0.776). These findings align with previous studies, which emphasize that perceived quality—including sensory and experiential attributes—significantly affects consumer loyalty and purchase intentions in the bakery and FMCG sectors (Zeithaml, 1988; Nyaribo & Nyamwange, 2020). Maintaining high standards in freshness, taste, and texture is therefore essential for sustaining customer satisfaction, repeat purchases, and competitive advantage.

The correlation analysis shows a strong positive relationship between product quality and consumer decision-making ($r = 0.753$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher quality in terms of freshness, taste, hygiene, and consistency increases consumers' likelihood of choosing Royal Oven Bakery products. This supports Zeithaml's (1988) theory that perceived quality enhances purchase intentions. Similarly, Nyaribo and Nyamwange (2020) reported that Tanzanian bakery customers prioritize freshness and texture when selecting brands. Regression results further confirm that product quality significantly influences consumer decisions ($B = 0.251$, $\beta = 0.335$, $p = 0.002$), with a stronger effect than price. Consistent with the Economic Theory of Consumer Behavior, higher-quality products enhance perceived utility, leading consumers to prefer them even if priced slightly higher (Varian, 2014). By ensuring superior freshness, taste, and texture across all bread varieties, Royal Oven Bakery can reduce uncertainty, foster customer trust, and promote repeat purchases, demonstrating that quality is a critical non-monetary determinant of consumer behavior.

4.3.3 Effects of product features on consumer decision Making

The descriptive statistics reveal that product features play a critical role in shaping consumer decisions at Royal Oven Bakery. Consumers are influenced by branding, packaging, product design, labeling, and product volume, which collectively enhance perceived value and product attractiveness. Specifically, 40.1% of respondents strongly agree that brand identity drives their loyalty, with a mean of 4.24 (SD = 0.799), highlighting the importance of branding in fostering repeat purchases. Product design and labeling also stand out, with 63.3% strongly agreeing that these features differentiate Royal Oven products from competitors (mean = 4.49, SD = 0.822), while 67.3% strongly agree that product volume motivates purchase decisions (mean = 4.54, SD = 0.796). These findings suggest that well-executed product differentiation enhances consumers' perception of quality, uniqueness, and utility, which drives purchase intention. This is consistent with previous studies emphasizing that product features and differentiation strategies significantly influence consumer preferences in the bakery and FMCG sector (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Omondi, 2022). By continually innovating packaging, branding, and product presentation, Royal Oven Bakery can strengthen customer loyalty and attract new consumers.

Correlation analysis indicates a very strong positive relationship between product features and consumer decision-making ($r = 0.775$, $p < 0.01$), showing that consumers are highly responsive to distinctive attributes such as flavor variety, packaging design, nutritional labeling, and branding style. Regression results confirm that product features exert the strongest influence among the three variables ($B = 0.351$, $\beta = 0.475$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that consumers derive substantial additional utility from functional and experiential attributes beyond price and basic quality. From the perspective of the Economic Theory of Consumer Behavior, individuals allocate limited resources to maximize satisfaction based on both tangible and experiential characteristics of goods (Varian, 2014). This aligns with Kotler and Armstrong (2018), who argue that product differentiation and feature enhancement strongly shape consumer choice and brand preference. Managerially, these findings imply that continuous innovation in packaging, labeling, product design, and value-added features not only increases consumer satisfaction but also reinforces brand loyalty, highlighting the increasing importance of distinctive, well-branded, and convenient products in driving rational purchase decisions.

5.1 Summary

The findings indicate that product features are a key determinant of consumer decision-making at Royal Oven Bakery, with branding, packaging, labeling, flavor variety, and product volume significantly enhancing perceived value and purchase intention. Descriptive statistics show high consumer agreement that these features influence loyalty and differentiation from competitors, while correlation ($r = 0.775$) and regression analysis ($B = 0.351$, $\beta = 0.475$, $p < 0.001$) confirm a strong positive impact on purchase behavior. These results align with the Economic Theory of Consumer Behavior, which suggests consumers allocate resources to maximize satisfaction from both functional and experiential attributes (Varian, 2014), and are supported by prior studies highlighting the role of product differentiation in shaping preferences and brand loyalty (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Omondi, 2022). Overall, continuous innovation in product features and presentation emerges as essential for enhancing consumer satisfaction, perceived utility, and long-term brand loyalty.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reveals that product features are a major determinant of consumer decision-making at Royal Oven Bakery, exerting a stronger influence than both price and product quality in guiding purchase behavior. Distinctive attributes such as branding, packaging, labeling, flavor variety, and product volume enhance perceived value, differentiate the bakery from competitors, and foster long-term customer loyalty. These findings align with the Economic Theory of Consumer Behavior, which suggests that consumers aim to maximize utility not only through price and quality but also through functional and experiential product characteristics (Varian, 2014). From a managerial perspective, this highlights the importance for Royal Oven Bakery to continuously innovate, refine, and promote product features, ensuring that offerings remain appealing, unique, and responsive to evolving consumer preferences. By prioritizing feature differentiation alongside quality and competitive pricing, the bakery can strengthen brand equity, attract new customers, and sustain a competitive advantage in the dynamic bakery market.

5.3 Area for further studies

Since digital marketing is growing too fast than expected, its impact on consumer decisions in the bakery sector represents a growing area that warrants investigation, given the increasing reliance on online channels for purchasing food products. Exploring these areas would provide deeper insights and offer actionable recommendations for bakery managers, marketers, and policymakers to enhance consumer engagement and market competitiveness by using online channels to influence consumer decision making.

References

1. Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2018). Principles of marketing (17th ed.). Pearson Education.
2. Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). Marketing management (15th ed.). Pearson.
3. Nyaribo, S., & Nyamwange, D. (2020). Influence of product quality on consumer loyalty in the bakery industry. International Journal of Marketing Studies, 12(4), 23–35.
4. Omondi, J. (2022). Product differentiation and consumer preference in fast-moving consumer goods. African Journal of Marketing Research, 10(1), 56–69.
5. Varian, H. R. (2014). Intermediate microeconomics: A modern approach (9th ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.
6. Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: A means-end model and synthesis of evidence. Journal of Marketing, 52(3), 2–22.

*Corresponding Author: **Budebah, Edith..**

7. Aguilar, A., et al. (2023). Modern Applications of Consumer Theory in Business Strategy. Journal of Economic Perspectives, 37(2), 45-62.
8. Ahmed, A. R. Q., &Taha, A. H. A. (2023).*Assessing the Impacts of Consumer Awareness on Consumer Purchase Intention with Moderating Role of Product Label:* Evidence from Consumers of Iraqi Manufacturing Firms. *AgBioForum, 25*(1), 193-202.
9. Ali, S. M. S. (2025). Cognitive biases in digital decision making: How consumers navigate information overload (Consumer Behavior). *Advances in Consumer Research*, *2*, 168-177.
10. Bludo, G. Y., & Buabeng-Andoh, F. (2024). Leveraging Social Media Engagement Data for Predicting Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Systematic Literature Review. INPROFORUM 2024, 60.
11. Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods (5th ed.).* Oxford University Press.
12. Calín-Sánchez, Á.,&Carbonell-Barrachina, Á. A. (2021). *Flavor and aroma analysis as a tool for quality control of foods. Foods*, *10*(2), 224.
13. Chen, T. T., Wang, S. J., & Huang, H. C. (2020). "Buy, buy most Americans buy": country of reference (COR) effects and consumer purchasing decisions. *International Marketing Review*, *37*(3), 533-558.
14. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.).* Sage Publications.
15. Creswell, J. W. (2014*). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.).* Sage Publications.
16. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. (2023*). Research design* (pp. 155-179). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
17. deBruyn, J., Msangi, S., Mukasa, L., & Gordon, J. (2024). *How can food environments support greater fruit and vegetable consumption in Tanzania*? A multi-stakeholder workshop to share findings and co-develop recommendations for interventions in Arusha Region.
18. Delgado, J. P. (2021). *The Internationalization Case Of Fib (Doctoral Dissertation,* Nova School Of Business And Economics). Porter, M. E. (1985). *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*. Free Press.
19. Dimoso, N., Kassim, N., &Makule, E. (2024). *Cashew apple in Tanzania: status of utilization, challenges, and opportunities for sustainable development.* F1000Research, 11, 1354.
20. Dule, E. J., Kinimi, E., Mushi, J. R., Lyimo, C. M., &Bakari, G. G. (2025).*Consumer*
21. Faisal, M., & Hamdan, A. (2021). Effect of pricing in digital markets on customer retention. In *Applications of artificial intelligence in business, education and healthcare* (pp. 423-441). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
22. Fulgione, G. (2022). *Aptamil´ s Decline in the Growing Up Milk Category in the Uk: Selecting an Optimal Pricing Strategy to Increase Customer Retention* (Master's thesis, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (Portugal).
23. Gärtner, K., & Jung, R. (2021). Visualizing Choice: The Enduring Power of Indifference Curves in Economic Pedagogy. Economics of Education Review, 84, 102145.
24. Gómez-Talal, I., Talón-Ballestero, P., Leoni, V., & González-Serrano, L. (2025). The impact of dynamic pricing on restaurant customers' perceptions and price sentiment. *Tourism Review*, *80*(5), 1101-1123.
25. Hael, M., et al. (2024). Foundational Models in Microeconomics: A Contemporary Review. Annual Review of Economics, 16, 1-25.
26. Hael, M., Hazaea, S. A., Zhang, H., & Mareeh, H. (2024). *Mapping the literature trends of consumer behavior and sustainability:* insights from a bibliometric analysis approach. Environment, development and sustainability, 1-31.
27. Hein, M. *Factors Influencing Customer Buying Decision Towards Insurance Products (Myo Hein, 2025)* (Doctoral dissertation, MERAL Portal).
28. Hicks, J. R., & Allen, R. G. D. (1934). A reconsideration of the theory of value. Economica,1(1), 52–76.
29. Ishtiaq, M. (2019). Book Review Creswell, JW (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. English Language Teaching, 12(5), 40.
30. Jaeger, S. R., Antúnez, L., & Ares, G. (2023). *An exploration of what freshness in fruit means to consumers*. Food Research International, *165*, 112491.
31. Jeremiah, B. T. (2023). *Effect of Product Branding Strategies on the Performance of Bakery Business Units of Supermarkets in Kisii Town, Kenya*.
32. Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. Econometrica,47(2), 263–291.
33. Karmazina, T. (2025). The influence of sustainable packaging in beauty industry on customer behavior.
34. King, N., Brooks, J., & Horrocks, C. (2018). Interviews in qualitative research.
35. Kleih, A. K., Lehberger, M., &Sparke, K. (2023). *Preference for branded fresh produce and consumers' need for uniqueness: A mixed-methods investigation of consumer choice and thought process. Appetite*, *180*, 106321.
36. Konar, N., Gunes, R., Palabiyik, I., &Toker, O. S. (2022). *Health Conscious Consumers and Sugar Confectionery: Present Aspects and Projections.* Trends in Food Science & Technology, 123, 57-68.

*Corresponding Author: **Budebah, Edith..**

37. Koporcic, N., Nietola, M., & Nicholson, J. D. (2020). IMP: it's time to get emotional! Understanding the role of negative emotions in dynamic decision-making processes. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, *35*(12), 2151-2163.
38. Koskinen, J., Kanniainen, T., Harkonen, J., & Haapasalo, H. (2025). Dynamic Pricing Model Factors: Configure-to-Order Product and Business-to-Business Sales Perspective.
39. Kubiczek, J., Hadasik, B., Krawczyńska, D., Przedworska, K., Madarász, E. Z., & Ryczko, A. (2024). Perspective of created value in consumer choice: Comparison of economic and ecologicaldimensions. *SageOpen*, *14*(1),215824402 41238516.
40. Lasisi-Balogun, O. S. (2020). *Effect of competitive strategy on the performance of bakeries in Ilorin Metropolis*. Master's Thesis, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.
41. Li, K. J. (2024). Product and service innovation with customerrecognition. *Decision Sciences*, *55*(1), 17-32.
42. Linzalone, R., & Lerro, A. (2021). *Managing positional innovation in small food enterprises. The bakery industry*. Measuring Business Excellence, 25(4), 509-526.
43. Lohan, A., Ganguly, A., & Kumar, C. (2020). "What's foreign is better": A fuzzy AHP analysis to evaluate factors that influence foreign product choice among Indian consumers. *International Journal of the Analytic Hierarchy Process*, *12*(3).
44. Ma, K. X., Mather, D. W., Ott, D. L., Fang, E., Bremer, P., & Mirosa, M. (2022). Fresh food online shopping repurchase intention: the role of post-purchase customer experience and corporate image. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *50*(2), 206-228.
45. Malešević, M., &Stančić, M. (2021*). Influence of packaging design parameters on customers' decision-making process*. Journal of Graphic Engineering and Design, 12(4), 33–38.
46. Marshall, A. (1890). Prrinciples of economics.Macmillan.
47. Mihas, P. (2019). *Qualitative data analysis.* In Oxford research encyclopedia of education.
48. Miller, J. P., & Van Buiten, C. (Eds.). (2022). *Superfoods: Cultural and Scientific Perspectives*. Springer Nature.
49. Mmereki, D., David Jr, V. E., & Wreh Brownell, A. H. (2024). *The management and prevention of food losses and waste in low-and middle-income countries*: A mini-review in the Africa region. Waste Management & Research, 42(4), 287-307.
50. Mohammad, M. (2024). *Analysis of Factors Influencing Consumer Attitudes and Online Purchasing in the Hungarian Dairy Functional Food Market* (Doctoral dissertation, Magyar Agrár-és Élettudományi Egyetem).
51. *MONDO, J. M. (2024). Southern Africa Development CommunityIndigenous Food Development Programme–Scoping Study on Indigenous Foods in DR Congo.Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices towards meat adulteration in Kilosa, Tanzania*. East African Journal of Science, Technology and Innovation, 6(2).
52. Natarajan, D. K. (2025). Dynamic Pricing Strategies Using Machine Learning in E-Commerce. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *2*(4).
53. Nicolosi, A., Laganà, V. R., & Di Gregorio, D. (2023). *Habits, Health and Environment in the Purchase of Bakery Products:* Consumption Preferences and Sustainable Inclinations before and during COVID-19. *Foods*, 12(8), 1661.
54. Niemeier, C., & Pospisil, R. (2025). Exploring Psychological Drivers in Dynamic Pricing and Consumer Decision Making. *Golden Ratio of Marketing and Applied Psychology of Business*, *5*(1), 95-109.
55. Nilda, C., Erfiza, N. M., &Yasqi, M. F. (2020). *Consumers purchasing decisions on local and national retail bakery products based on price*. IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, 425(1), 012023.
56. Nyokabi, G. Z. (2018). *Influence of Product Differentiation Strategies on the Market Share of Selected Bakeries in Meru County, Kenya*
57. Ochoa, F. J. M., Salinas, G. H., Martínez, J. C. R., & Leyva, M. A. R. (2024). *Evolution and Trends in the Circular Economy:* A Meta-Analysis from 2018 to 2024. Renewable energy, biomass & sustainability, 6(1), 57-70.
58. Olakanmi, S. J., Jayas, D. S., &Paliwal, J. (2023). *Applications of imaging systems for the assessment of quality characteristics of bread and other baked goods:* A review. Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety, 22(5), 5097–5137.
59. Patel, H. (2023). *Impact of Consumer Behavior Towards Bakery Products*
60. Pebriani, A., Amelia, R., Ayuni, T. W., Linda, T., & Rivai, A. (2025). Examining the Appeal of Quality Service: A Study on the Impact of Product Quality on Purchase Decisions at Hani Salon. *Journal of Business Integration Competitive*, *1*(2), 31-41.
61. Phung, V. H., Pham, H. H., & Tran, B. M. (2025). The Effect of Pricing Strategies on Client Retention Rates for Small to Medium-Sized Auditing Firms. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, *15*(1), 31.
62. Porter, M. E. (1980). *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*. Free Press.
63. Rahayu, I., Gusnita, W., &Lofandri, W. (2024*). The Role of Smart Packaging in Improving The Quality*

*Corresponding Author: **Budebah, Edith..**

and Safety of Bakery Products. Journal of Bakery Innovation, *1*(1), 1-10.

64. Rehman, A. U., & Elahi, Y. A. (2024). How semiotic product packaging, brand image, perceived brand quality influence brand loyalty and purchase intention: a stimulus-organism-response perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, *36*(11), 3043-3060.
65. Reva, Y. N., Putri, I. N., Andita, K. P., Zalzabyella, A., & Purwanto, E. (2025). The Impact of Quality and Price on Purchase Decisions Mediated by Customer Satisfaction. *Journal of Business & Applied Management*, *17*(2), 161-184.
66. Roque, J., Auvray, M., &Lafraire, J. (2018). *Understanding freshness perception from the cognitive mechanisms of flavor:* The case of beverages. Frontiers in Psychology, 8, 2360.
67. Rossit, D. G., Vigo, D., Tohmé, F., &Frutos, M. (2019). *Visual attractiveness in routing problems*: A review. Computers & Operations Research, 103, 13-34.
68. Samuelson, P. A. (1947). Foundations of economic analysis. Harvard University Press.
69. San, H., Laorenza, Y., Behzadfar, E., Sonchaeng, U., Wadaugsorn, K., Sodsai, J., Kaewpetch, T., Promhuad, K., Srisa, A., Wongphan, P., &Harnkarnsujarit, N. (2022).*Functional Polymer and Packaging Technology for Bakery Products*.*Polymers*, *14*(18), 3793.
70. Santoso, W. B., Sayekti, W. D., & Lestari, D. A. H. (2023).*Enhancing Product Excellence and Business Growth Approaches for Small and Medium-Sized Pastry and Bakery Enterprises: A Case of Widhy's Cake and Bakery Lampung*. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 7(2), 959.
71. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., &Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students (8th ed.). Pearson.*
72. Sekaran, U., &Bougie, R. (2016). *Research methods for business*: A skill-building approach (7th ed.). Wiley.
73. Shaposhnikov, I., Kosovan, A., Vedernikov, A., Sergeev, S., &Tagiev, N. (2023). *How bakery industry is changing to comply with new consumer trends on sustainability and eco-consciousness. BIO Web of Conferences*, 64, 01015.
74. Simon, H. A. (1955). A behavioral model of rational choice. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics,69(1), 99–118.
75. Šostar, M., & Ristanović, V. (2023). Assessment of influencing factors on consumer behavior using the AHP model. *Sustainability*, *15*(13), 10341.
76. Starke, A. D., Willemsen, M. C., &Trattner, C. (2021). *Nudging healthy choices in food search through visual attractiveness*. Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence, 4, 621743.
77. Stephan, J., Gehrmann, J., Sinha, M., Stullich, A., Gabel, F., & Richter, M. (2025). *A Scoping Review of Prevention Classification in Mental Health:* Examining the Application of Caplan's and Gordon's Prevention Frameworks (2018–2024). Journal of Prevention, 1-28.
78. Stoyanov, D. K. (2025). Price Decisions in Vending Retail Marketing. In *Vending Retail Marketing: Text and International Cases* (pp. 71-96). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
79. Sukier, H. B., Garcia Samper, M., Ramirez Molina, R. I., Sandoval Karam, M., Baez Palencia, D., Polo Ibanez, N., &Santamaria Ruiz, M. J. (2024).*Analysis of Strategic Marketing in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises: Case of the Bakery Industry in Colombia*. Procedia Computer Science, 231, 601-606
80. Sun, K. A., & Moon, J. (2025). Structural Relationship Between Beef Food Quality, Trust, and Revisit Intention: The Moderating Role of Price Fairness Based on Heuristics Effect. *Nutrients*, *17*(13), 2155.
81. Testa, R., Rizzo, G., Schifani, G., Tóth, J., &Migliore, G. (2024).*Critical determinants influencing consumers' decision-making process to buy green cosmetics.*A systematic literature review. Journal of Global Fashion Marketing, 15(3), 357-381.
82. Thaler, R. (1985). Mental accounting and consumer choice. Marketing Science, 4(3), 199–214.
83. Ton, L. A. N., Smith, R. K., & Sevilla, J. (2024). Symbolically simple: How simple packaging design influences willingness to pay for consumable products. *Journal of Marketing*, *88*(2), 121-140.
84. Ugwunwangwu, M. G. C., & Anikeze, N. H. (2024). *Employee Absenteeism and Performance of LGA in Enugu State from 2018-2024*. Caritas International Journal of Public Administration and Business Management, 1(1).
85. Umar, H. J., Sajo, D. Y., &Yahaya, H. A. (2024). *Effect of Differentiation Strategy on the Performance of Bakeries in Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria*.Procedia Computer Science, 231, 601-606.
86. Valery, N. (2020). *The Influence of Shopping Applications on Consumer Buying Behaviours: A comparative Study of Selected Cities in Gujarat and Kigali-Rwanda* (Doctoral dissertation, Parul University).
87. Varian, H. R. (2010). Intermediate microeconomics: A modern approach (8th ed.). W.W. Norton & Company.
88. Wang, Y., Tuccillo, F., Lampi, A. M., Knaapila, A., Pulkkinen, M., Kariluoto, S., & Katina, K. (2022). *Flavor challenges in extruded plant based meat alternatives*: A review. *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety*, *21*(3), 2898-2929.
89. Wijesinghe, C. (2025). Sustainable Food Packaging and Consumer Purchase Intentions: A Systematic

*Corresponding Author: **Budebah, Edith..**

Literature Review from a Theory of Planned Behaviour Perspective.
90. Zhang, D., Meng, S., & Wang, Y. (2025). Impact Analysis of Price Promotion Strategies on Consumer Purchase Patterns in Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Retail. *Academia Nexus Journal*, *4*(1).
91. Zhang, R., Huang, Z., Liu, B., & Wang, J. (2024). Freshness-keeping efforts and value-added service choice in fresh food supply chain. *Computers & Industrial Engineering*, *190*, 110063.
92. Zhang, R., Huang, Z., Liu, B., & Wang, J. (2024*). Freshness-keeping efforts and value-added service choice in fresh food supply chain. Computers & Industrial Engineering*, *190*, 110063.

*Corresponding Author: **Budebah, Edith..**