

B-To-B Brand Relevance in Purchase Decision-Making Process in Business To Business Firms: An Exploratory Study in a Sub-Saharan African Context

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Abstract: *Today, brands are indisputable levers of marketing actions. The research delay of the specific case of business to business (B-to-B) branding is topical and originally brings into question the brand relevance in purchase decision-making in a sub-Saharan African context. A study with a sample of 69 Cameroonian enterprises in B-to-B has identified a number of findings. Firstly, Cameroonian companies in B-to-B use more and more corporate brand strategy, although there are also product brand strategy (one brand for all products or a brand by product if the company's product portfolio is multiple). Secondly, the industrial brands play several roles for customers and suppliers, ranging from the identification of the industrial product (suppliers) to the facilitation of their choice (customers). This result corroborates many works that have been published. Finally, although the brand plays an undeniable role in the B-to-B companies, its relevance in the purchase decision-making is still low in sub-Saharan Africa, for the benefit of the company's reputation, guarantees, pre-sales/after-sales services and price. This second finding also corroborates works that have been done in a South-African context. However, the relevant of B-to-B brand is more important than the geographical origin of the product.*

Keywords: *brand relevance, brand roles, business to business, Cameroon, purchase decision-making*

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has intensified competition because of deregulation of the markets and the emergence of new technologies of information and communication. As a result, the global economy is increasingly based on intangible assets. While some of these assets have a limited duration (patent, know-how, software, etc.) because they can be exploited by other companies after a while, others however, may last as long as possible (brand) with renewal opportunities. For this reason, hardly imitable intangible assets occupy an important place in the strategy of many companies (Fustec and Marois, 2006 [1]), at the expense of physical assets which are easily imitable. Intangible assets also play an increasingly significant role in value creation which makes their preservation more important by firms (OCDE, 2006 [2]). However, no sector is spared because this importance is observed in the consumer sector as well as in the industrial sector.

Brand is the intangible asset which ensures the sustainability of the firm. It has become a central issue for the firms. For quite a while, there is transfer of some brands and a set of mergers/acquisitions of brands to focus on strong brands (Cegarra and Merunka, 2003 [3]). Indeed, a strong Brand helps to reduce perceived risk and uncertainty in buying situations. It can also be associated with higher tangible quality and reduced search and transaction costs. Moreover, the proliferation of retail's brand in several business sectors in Cameroon, the establishment of new foreign producers (Tchakounté, 2014 [4]) or the enthusiasm of foreign direct investment in the field of industrial services at the expense of national firms, strongly show the interest of the industrial brand for business suppliers and customers. More recently, research on specific brand equity such as service or industrial brands are topical (changer, 2003 [5]; Sattler et al. 2003 [6]; Kalafatis, 2012 [7]). In addition, B-to-B brand management strategies will be developed to assert itself in more global markets (Malaval, 1998 [8]; Malaval and Benaroya, 2010 [9]; Dimitriadis and Bidault, 1996 [10]; Backhaus et al. 2011 [11]; Walley et al., 2007 [12]).

Obviously, the emphasis on brands is not recent. It is increasing in scale, especially in areas where it has been the most neglected. In fact, in the B-to-B sector what matters in this article, business to business marketing in general and the specific case of B-to-B brand management in particular are still under-researched (Dimitriadis, 1994 [13]; Dimitriadis and Bidault, 1996 [10]; Malaval and Benaroya, 2010 [9]; LaPlaca and Katrichis, 2009 [14]; Backhaus et al. 2011 [11]; Herbst et al., 2012 [15]) comparing to what have been done in the consumer markets. This delay is more pronounced in Sub-Saharan Africa context where Cameroon is part, because very little research was conducted in the specific case of the industrial brand (Tsapi, 2004 [16]). Despite this, there is an increase interest on B-to-B brand management, because it is recognized as a lever for marketing actions (Dimitriadis and Bidault, 1996 [10]; Nussenbaum, 1993 [17]; Nussenbaum and Jacquot, 2003 [18]; Tsapi, 2004 [16]; Abbo, 2005 [19]; Malaval and Benaroya, 2010 [9]). ***It is in this context that this article aims***

at exploring the Cameroonian market in order to determine the place of the B-to-B brand in purchasing decision-making criteria.

For this reason, two questions will guide our analysis:

- ✓ *What are the roles of brand in business to business firms?*
- ✓ *How important is B-to-B brand in purchasing decision-making process?*

To solve this problem, a tripartite plan will be adopted. Firstly the theoretical foundations, then a presentation of the methodology and results and finally a discussion of the different results obtained.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1. B-to-B brand: definition and its role in the firm strategy

Nowadays, the analysis of the brand is not more the action of only marketers. We also witness the craze of financiers, lawyers and sociologists in its different forms (Changer, 2003 [5]; Kapferer, 2007 [20]). Hence, the brand is defined in many ways by theorists. The definition which is recurrent in the marketing literature is that of the American Marketing Association (1960) [21]: *“brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”*. But the definition of Lendrevie and Levy (2013) [22] holds our attention in this paper. According to these researchers, *“brand is a name and a set of distinctive signs which have power over the market by giving meaning to products and creating value for customers and economic value for the company”*. These definitions do not state a specific sector (Consumer market or Business market) where they are applied. This explains why Laurentin et al., (2014) [23] argued that *“there is no yet an ‘official’ definition of the B-to-B brand. When we talk about ‘B-to-B brand’, we usually explain it as a brand that deals with trade relations between companies, between professionals”*. In their opinion, *“[...] when the stakes of purchasing are important, the brand legitimate buyer's decision. A reputed brand helps him to justify his choice. By taking a recognized brand, he runs less risk of being criticized by his entourage”* and they added that: *“it is also true in B-to-B environment.”* The overall design of the brand and the absence of a specific definition of B-to-B brand are the source of various problems about the ability of the brand to bring value to a B-to-B product. However, B-to-B firms have progressively sophisticated their brand policy. Beside the corporate brand strategy, was developed product brand strategy (Malaval, 1998 [8]).

During the greater part of the twentieth century, brands were regarded as something mainly applicable and useful for companies selling consumer goods (Blombäck and Axelsson, 2007 [24]; Gomes et al., 2016 [25]). Also, branding was considered impractical in B-to-B markets due to the thousands of products involved, which made it difficult for both organizational suppliers and purchasers to clearly acknowledge brand relevance (Bendixen et al., 2004 [26]; Leek and Christodoulides, 2011[27]; Malaval et Bénaroya, 2010[9]). However, several studies have shown that the significance of the brand to the buyer can become a determinant factor in the decision between the different alternatives of industrial purchase (Aaker, 1991 [28]; van Riel et al., 2005[29]), especially when the brand plays a vital role in the creation of value for the companies and customers. B-to-B companies have started to brand their products in order to benefit a sustainable competitive advantages (Kotler and Pfoertsch, 2007[30]; Walley et al., 2007 [12]). Brand managers in B-to-B markets tend to put more emphasis on corporate rather than individual brands and the company name is often the brand, in contrast to what is seen in mass consumption markets (Walley et al. 2007 [12]; Malaval, 1998 [8]; Tsapi, 2004 [16]; Blombäck and Axelsson, 2007[24]; Brown et al, 2007 [31]; Aspara and Tikkanen, 2008 [32]). A corporate brand is more powerful, stronger and has more sustainable values and foundations that allow the firm to have a stronger positioning. One of the key differences between product brands and corporate brands is that the corporate brand values tend to be grounded in the values and affinities of company founders, owners, management and personnel (Gomes et al. 2016 [25]).

B-to-B brands convey meaning, innovation and performance. They have distinctive signs that identify them. They bring value to their users, with whom they establish a special relationship. And of course, B-to-B brands have added value and are intangible capital for firm which own them and also for customers (Laurentin, 2014[23]). For a firm, the brand provides legal protection towards unique features or aspects of the product. Brand loyalty helps organization to retain their existing customers when diversifying from one line of products to other. It provides security of demand and creates barrier for other manufactures to easily tap existing customers. Firms can charge a premium for owning a brand boosting profit on every sale. Product can be copied, but brand cannot. Once a brand is established, it's the invaluable asset for an organization. A well established brand adds towards the overall value of the firm while calculating its net worth. To sum up, the diverse roles of B-to-B brand for industrial suppliers allow acknowledging that:

- ✓ B-to-B brand sets a comfortable positioning,
- ✓ It increases loyalty,
- ✓ It increases awareness,
- ✓ It increases the dissemination of the product.

Trade in the B-to-B markets have been described as driven by technical and precise specifications and buyers are active and professional because they evaluate carefully the consequences of their actions. This indicates that the emotional impact and impulse purchases are rare in industrial markets (Blombäck and Axelsson, 2007[24]; Brown et al., 2007[31]). However, B-to-B purchase is a decision made by a group of individuals who may be influenced by emotional and cognitive factors (Mudambi, 2002 [33]; Lynch and Chernatony, 2004[34]). Buyers are concerned not only with the economic performance of their organization, but also with their willingness to achieve recognitions and rewards. In addition to the functional benefits, the psychological security of the purchase of a strong brand can also play an important role. In this sense, the B-to-B purchase decisions can be rational and emotional, because they both serve the needs of the company and the individual, even if the first has priority over the last. If the buyers do not have the knowledge and experience of the suppliers, brands can provide a reduced risk and increase confidence in the purchase decision (Leek and Christodoulides, 2011[27]; Mudambi, 2002[33]). In short, for customers, the B-to-B brand helps to identify the source of manufacturer of the product and simultaneously assigns a responsibility towards an organization for the branded product. Experience of customers with products of same brand help them to quickly decide whether they will want to go with their purchase decision or not making their decision easier. Brands bring with them a certain level of quality assurance. Roles of B-to-B brand for industrial customers can be summed up as:

- ✓ A digest of information,
- ✓ A reducer of uncertainty,
- ✓ A consensus decision,
- ✓ A facilitator of performance (Malaval, 1999b [35]; Malaval and Benaroya, 2010[9], 2013 [36]),

These roles show that the industrial brand has real value in B-to-B partnerships. Moreover, these roles form a contract of trust between suppliers and customers, to ensure constant quality and hence the value added to the company (Heilbrunn, 1997[37]). In fact, when the brand is associated with values, its presence can affect the way customers perceive the performance of the products (Kotler et al., 2013[38]). Ultimately, the value of the brand is considered as a vector of competitiveness and growth for companies in the B-to-B context (Nussenbaum, 1993[17]; Dimitriadis, 1994[13]; Dimitriadis and Bidault, 1996[10]).

2.2. The choice of B-to-B products and place of the B-to-B brand in the purchase decision-making

Brands can influence B-to-B purchase decisions (Backhaus et al., 2011[11]; Brown et al., 2011[31]; Gomes, 2006[25]). From the point of view of the producer, a strong brand generates demand, allows companies to practice a premium price (Persson, 2010[39]), increases the power of distribution networks and impact positively perceived quality, satisfaction and loyalty, among other benefits (Low and Blois, 2002[40]; McQuiston, 2004[41]). In a situation of purchase, brands can be beneficial to company's customers. It can enable them to increase the trust in a process where the focus is on risk-reduction (Mudambi, 2002[33]), especially in high-risk buying situations involving significant expenditure and eventual technical problems in B-to-B decisions (Lynch and De Chernatony, 2004[34]; Leek and Christodoulides, 2012[27]). Likewise, industrial buyers benefit the acceptance of their own products by partnering with the leading prestigious suppliers (Mudambi, 2002[33]; Leek and Christodoulides, 2012[27]). Brands can also serve as a mechanism to deal with overloaded information and simplify the selection of products (Zablah et al., 2010[42]; Brown et al., 2011[43]). In addition, according to Low and Blois (2002[40]), brands enhance confidence in decision making and make the B-to-B customers feel more satisfied with their purchases.

Several empirical and exploratory studies on the issues of suppliers' selection and evaluation have emerged in the literature to show the strategic importance of this problem. The first research in this area is that of Dickson (1966[44]), who identified 23 criteria used by companies in the 1960s to select their suppliers. This study showed that suppliers' selection is a multicriteria decision that often involves the simultaneous consideration of several criteria such as reputation, price, delivery, services, quality, etc. But it is extremely difficult to find out a supplier that excels well in all those criteria. For instance, a provider that offers low prices may not have the best performance from the point of view of delays of delivery or the quality of the product. In a later review of literature, Weber et al. (1991[45]) analyzed 74 articles published between 1966 and 1990 that dealt with this problem and showed that the criteria referred to by Dickson (1966[44]) are still studied in most articles. The degree of relative importance of these criteria may differ according to these two authors. For example, while the quality was considered the most important criterion by Dickson (1966[44]), the price was considered the first criterion of choice by Weber et al. (1991[45]). These authors are unanimous that the importance of delivery delays comes in second place. For these reasons, Aguezzoul and Ladet (2006[46]) said that the relative importance of each of these criteria can change as a result of the change of context.

However, the importance of brands in B-to-B tends to be lower than in other more functional benefits (Bendixen et al., 2004[26]). While B-to-B buyers consider services and other intangibles in their purchasing decisions, brands tend to be secondary compared to the price, technology, logistics and the characteristics of the

product, which are the primary criteria (Kuhn et al., 2008[47]; Zablah et al., 2010[42]). In addition, Bendixen et al. (2004[26]) concluded that at the time of the purchase of electrical equipment in medium voltage, the brand comes in fourth position as a selection criterion, preceded by technology, price and delivery delay. But the B-to-B brand is more important than the availability of spare parts. Kalafatis et al. (2012[7]) argued that, although the tangible and intangible aspects are the two essential criteria, their relative importance differs with the structure and parameters of the market. In the purchase decision-making process in B-to-B, several studies have identified the supplier's reputation as one of the most highly rated attributes. This seems particularly interesting since the reputation lies at the central concerns of the brand strategy (Mudambi and al., 1997[33]). Intangible attributes such as reputation and perceived reliability of the supplier's products were judged more important than a tangible attribute as the price.

III. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

3.1. Characteristics of the sample and the statistical treatment

In this study, we retain an exploratory study based on the univariate analysis of frequencies. Our study population consists of Cameroonian companies who sell and/or purchase products/services (raw materials, components, maintenance products, supplies, business services, etc.) to other companies. Our investigative unit is focused on sale managers (68.12% of the sample) or marketing directors (20.29%) of the concerned companies and to a lesser extent on general directors when it comes to small businesses (11.60%). The high rate of 88.41% of respondents, made up of sales managers and marketing directors, reflects adequately the quality of the expected answers and helps to reduce the risk of error to deviate from the reality of the industrial brand management in Cameroonian B-to-B sector. The sampling method is non-probabilistic based on reasoned choice approach. Data were collected through a face to face method. Of the 110 questionnaires administered, 69 usable questionnaires were retained, representing a response rate of 62.72% that was considered satisfactory.

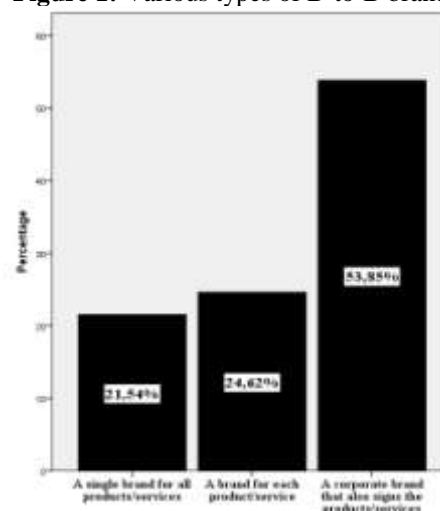
It came out after frequency analysis that five sectors of activity have been identified. Thus, 40.58% of the sample is made up of industrial or mixed distributors (individual and B-to-B), 31.88% of manufacturing companies, 23.19% of business services, 2.90% of buildings and public works and 1.45% of logging companies. With regard to the size of these companies, the results show that the sample is focused on medium-sized companies (from 51 to 499 employees) 54.41% and small firms (11 to 50 employees) 29.41%. The rest of this sample consists of 10.29% of large companies (more than 500 employees) and 5.88% of very small firms (less than 10 employees).

3.2. Research results

3.2.1. Roles of the industrial brand for B-to-B companies

Before talking about the roles of the industrial brand, we were interested in the identification of the various types of brand in Cameroonian B-to-B environment. This analysis is all the same important because the theoretical foundations of this study have shown that the most observed in B-to-B environment is the use of a single brand named corporate brand. Indeed, it is the creation of a single brand representing at the same time the company and its various products. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of the different types of brand observed in Cameroonian context.

Figure 1: Various types of B-to-B brand

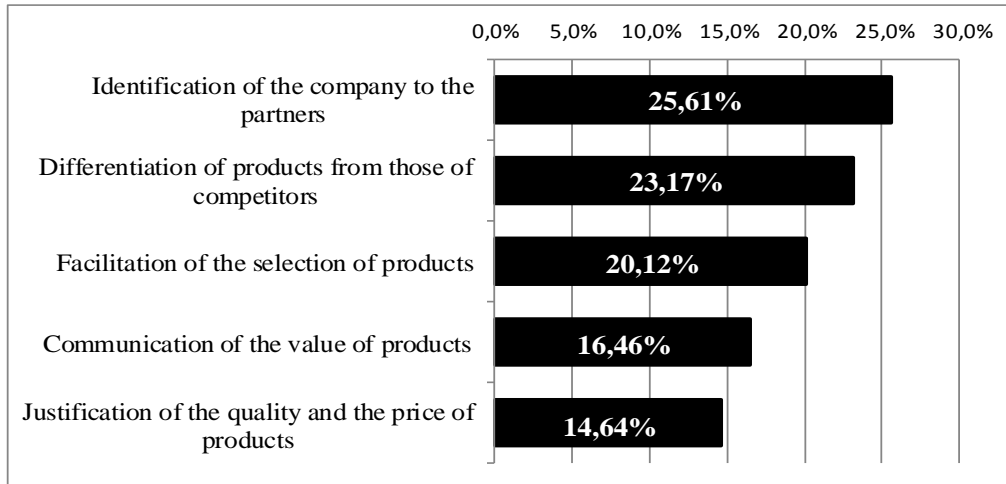


Source: results of surveys.

It appears from these results that the corporate brand strategy is also respected in the Cameroonian B-to-B environment. Indeed, the majority of the companies sign their products under a unique brand which is the corporate brand (53.85%), against 24.62% that hold a brand for each product/service and 21.54% that sign all their products/services under the same product brand.

These types of brand allow finding out the different roles that B-to-B firms attribute to brand. The figure 2 below synthesises the roles of brand in B-to-B.

Figure 2: Roles of B-to-B brand



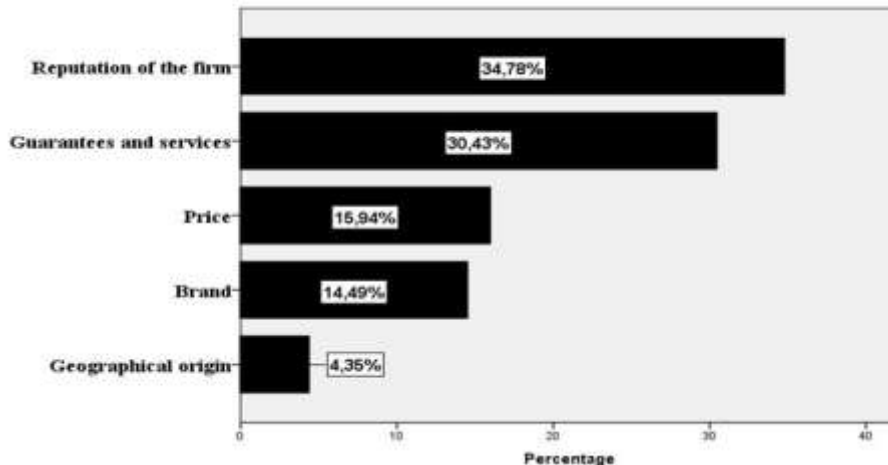
Source: results of surveys

To identify these different roles of B-to-B brand, an analysis of multiple dichotomous questions was made. From these results, five roles of the industrial brand have been identified. The most important role of B-to-B brand is to identify the company to those of partners and is 25.61% cited by respondent. Secondly it appears the role of differentiation of products from those of competitors cited by 23.17%. Then the role of facilitating the selection of products (20.12%) and the role of communicating the value of products (16.46%) come respectively in the third and fourth positions. Finally, cited by 14.64% of respondent, B-to-B brand justifies the quality and the price of products.

3.2.2. B-to-B brand in the purchase decision-making process

To identify the importance of the B-to-B brand in the purchase decision-making process, the respondents were asked to choose amongst the proposed criteria, those that they regularly use to select their trade partners or products. Then, they were asked to classify the choosing criteria by the order of relative importance in the purchase decision-making. Note that this list is not exhaustive, but the most relevant criteria according to Weber (1991[45]) or Dickson (1966[44]) were selected. The synthesis of the results is shown in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Relative Importance Of Purchase Decision-Making Criteria



Source: results of our surveys.

This figure shows the relative importance of each criterion in the purchase decision-making in Cameroonian B-to-B environment. Thus, the reputation of the company, with 34.78% appears to be the most important criterion in purchase decision. This is followed by the guarantees and services with 30.43%. However, guarantees and services seem to be of lesser importance than reputation but more important than price with 15.94% and brand with 14.49%. Finally, Cameroonian companies rely very little on the geographical origin of the product/service with 4.35%.

3.3. Discussion

The industrial brand is truly topical in the B-to-B companies. The debate on the existence of a value in the brand must be reconsidered because of 94.2% of firms that have agreed having a B-to-B brand, 98.4% acknowledged that the brand has a value. Several types of brands have been identified in Cameroonian B-to-B environment. Among these we distinguish the case of companies that sign each product under a brand, the case of those that sign all the products under the same brand which is different from the corporate and the case of a corporate brand that signs at the same time all the products of the company (Walley et al. 2007[12]; Malaval, 1998[8]; Tsapi, 2004[16]). The last case has the largest proportion and shows that the rule of the unique brand (brand corporate) is also observed in Cameroonian B-to-B and allows corroborating the works of Blombäck and Axelsson (2007[24]) and those of Aspara and Tikkanen (2008[32]). The advantage to develop such a strategy in a company is to capitalize on the reputation or on a strong image of the company to increase the value of B-to-B products for customers. However, if the company's product did not prove at the level of perceived quality or if the product has not yet acquired the unanimity of the customer, then it is preferable to sign it under a brand product. This strategy will allow the company to avoid a dilution of its reputation. But if the firm product portfolio is not too large, it is better to use a corporate brand strategy in order to improve in value.

In the B-to-B purchasing process, the role of the brand may start from the stage of potential supplier's research to their selection, or even to control of their performances (Malaval, 1998[8]). The role of the brand can be considered here as double. On the one hand, it is to inform about the existence of the provider (corporate brand) and the proposed products (brand - product); and on the other hand, it is to influence the purchase decision thanks to the reputation of the provider. The reputation of the company is first and foremost its ability to positively identify the company to the partners. It is the first role that Cameroonian B-to-B companies attributed to the industrial brand. While differentiating products from those of competitors, the brand also communicates their value in order to facilitate and justify their quality and their price. So, at the stage of recognition of the needs, the brand of the supplier allows him to be prescribed and place him as a potential supplier (Malaval, 1998[8], Malaval and Benaroya, 2010[9]). For this reason, Malaval (1999a [48]) considered the industrial brand as a digest of information between buyers and suppliers. These results corroborates the study of Tsapi (2004 [16]) carried out in the sector of B-to-B distributors in Cameroon and those of Malaval (1998[8], 1999b [35]).

The criteria used by buyers to compare products/services (delivery delay, price, brand, origin, etc.) on one hand and suppliers (reputation) on the other hand have been studied. Many scientific works contributed to their classification into rational criteria (price, delivery delay, quality, proximity, guarantees, services, etc.) and not rational (reputation, past experience, brand, etc.) (Malaval, 1998[8]). Our results have confirmed these works by identifying five criteria usually put forward by B-to-B companies in Cameroon. By focusing on the importance of these criteria in purchase decision-making, the observation is that the supplier's reputation is the most important criterion. Indeed, this result joined many studies that have been done and have shown that the reputation of the firm has a unifying power that firms use to occupy a good position in the more competitive markets (Mudambi et al. 1997[33]; Malaval, 1998[8]). In fact, behind a firm that has constructed a reputed image, occurs quality products or services (Chumpitaz and Swaen, 2004[49]). Like other works, the place occupied by the brand in the purchase decision is actually secondary to other buying criteria such as guarantees and services that occupy the second place and the price which comes third in the Cameroonian B-to-B environment. This study reveals that the industrial brand comes fourth and corroborates the work of Bendixen et al. (2004[26]), unlike the one of Alexander et al. (2009[50]) who revealed that the industrial brand is very important followed by sustainability and the price of product. Finally, the geographical origin of the industrial product, which comes in last position, has little relevance in the purchase decision-making of the Cameroonian B-to-B organizations. This stems from the fact that Cameroonian companies supply themselves today in Europe as well as Asia and even more in Asia, contrary to what was observed a few decades ago.

The lesson we can learn here is that the relevance of the brand in B-to-B purchase decision-making can vary depending on the type of industrial product (raw material, component or supplies and services) and on the buying situation (Malaval, 1998[8]) (straight rebuy, modified rebuy or new buy). According to the type of product, the brand is more relevant to component, suppliers and services than to raw material. These types of products can easily take a brand that can be visible by the customer or by the end users. As far as the B-to-B buying situation is concerned, a straight rebuy is a situation in which a purchaser buys the same product in the

same quantities from the same supplier. In other words, nothing changes. Postpurchase evaluations are often skipped, unless the buyer notices an unexpected change in the offering, such as a deterioration of its quality or delivery time. In this situation, the relevance of the brand is weak. By contrast, a new-buy (new task) situation occurs when a customer purchases a product for the first time. Generally speaking, all the buying stages occur. This means the buying decision is heavily involved due to both organizations being unfamiliar with each other. They will likely proceed through all 6 steps of the formalized B-to-B process, and involve many people in the buying decision. If the product is complex, many vendors and products will be considered, and many suppliers will be solicited. The relevance of the brand occurs firstly at the second stage that is the search of potential suppliers, because at this stage, the people involved in the buying process seek out information about the products they are looking for and the vendors that can supply them. As the brand is a digest of information (Malaval, 1999b [35]), it would enable the client to select the potential suppliers. Secondly, brand relevance will also arise at the fifth stage that is the stage of evaluation of proposals and selection of supplier(s). During this stage, the potential suppliers are reviewed and the vendor or vendors selected. Suppliers are best evaluated if the members agree on the criteria being evaluated and the importance of each. Different organizations will weight different parts of a proposal differently, depending on their goals and the products they purchase. The price might be very important to some sellers. Other organizations might be more focused on the quality of products and the services a seller provides. Still other factors include the availability of products and the reliability with which vendors can supply them. At this stage, the brand is very important because it reduces the uncertainty between the suppliers and the clients and permits them to take a consensus decision by facilitating the performance of transaction (Malaval, 1998[8]). Finally, a modified rebuy occurs when a company wants to buy the same type of product it has in the past but make some modifications of the criteria. Maybe the buyer wants different quantities, quality, packaging, or delivery, or the product customized slightly differently. However, a modified rebuy doesn't necessarily have to be made with the same seller. The brand relevance is also high in this situation but not more than in a new task situation.

IV. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the corporate brand strategy is predominant in the B-to-B companies because the reputation or image of the company plays a role in the purchase decision-making in a B-to-B context. Indeed, several important roles of the brand have been identified. Although the B-to-B brand is a selling argument for many companies, it is not a priority in the definition of their criteria because it is requested only in fourth position. Nevertheless, the B-to-B brand is more important in purchase decision-making process than the geographical origin of product. In fact, some years ago, the origin of the products was one of the most criterion to evaluate the perceived quality of the product by Cameroonian firms. Products coming from Asia in general and from China in particular were considered less quality product than those coming from Europe or Northern America. But this behavior has changed because Africa firms in general and those of Cameroon in particular have recognized the competitiveness of Asian products in the global market in particular with regard to quality. They more supply in Asia than in Europe. As limits, the main we can evoke is not to take into account all the buying criteria of industrial products. For instance, some important criteria have not been mentioned by respondents such as delivery times, experience with the vendor, payment terms, etc. Future research will allow for understanding the reason why these important criteria have not been mentioned.

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