Evaluation of Students’ Consumption of Beer in Higher Institutions of Learning in Nigeria: Propelling Factors for Choice

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Abstract: The several brands of beer in Nigeria, with brand extensions, provide the opportunity for consumers to have more options to choose their brands from, and the brewing companies contend with how to make their products the preferred choice among consuming public. Although empirical studies in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria report that some factors influence the choice of beer brand in different places, there is, however, a paucity of information on the propelling factors for choice of beer brand. It is against this backdrop that this study appraised the choice of beer brand in the Nigerian higher institutions. A total number of 166 undergraduate and postgraduate students studying at the Enugu Campus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, participated in this study. The study adopted survey design, questionnaire was used and consent was obtained from all the participants before carrying out the study. Questions posed to them were whether social group, price and emotion significantly determine their choice of brand of beer. The result indicated that social group has the greatest percentage of significance propelling factor of 78.9% (agreed and strongly agreed); then emotion, 74.1% (agreed and strongly agreed) and the price of beer 53% (agreed and strongly agreed) which is also significant. Students’ social group, emotion and price of beer showed statistical significance when compared in relation to choice of beer. Therefore, students always align with the type of products (beer inclusive) consumed by their social group that has moderate price and emotional appeals when making choice.

Keywords: Beer Brand, choice, students, peer group, pricing, emotion.

INTRODUCTION

Beer ranks as the most consumed beverage (Zimuda, 2011). According to World Health Organization report (2011) regarding alcoholic consumption, 19.6% of male students and 12.9% of female students take alcoholic drink once or more in a month. In the Carpathian Euro region over 80% of the college students consume alcohol. (Maria Zadarko-Domara et al., 2018). Research reveals that all over the world, students drink much alcohol (Andrade et al., 2012). Paek and Hove (2012) contend that close location of alcohol outlets, sales promotions, advertising and sponsorship of social events in the University are among the reasons for the heavy consumption.

Some of the many beer brands in Nigeria include Star Lager beer, Star Raddler, “33” Export beer, Life Continental Lager beer, Hero Premium beer, Guinness Stout, Legend Extra Stout, etc. Consumers, therefore, have a range of brand varieties to choose from (Leger & Scholz, 2004). Brewery industries thus strive with the challenge of making their brands the consumers’ preferred choice in the face of contending alternatives (Abugu, Ozo & Olugbenga, 2018). Forecasting and establishing how consumers make a choice have been a major concern to researchers and business managers. Brand preference inquiry refers to gaining insight into consumer behaviours when making choice among product types (Bentz & Merunka, 2000). Ballantyne et al. (2006) assert that product types are used to conceptualize customers’ personalities, there by attaching certain fundamental judgments to consumers.

Several factors influence the consumer’s purchasing decision. Such influencing indicators have been linked previously to studies as possible determinants of conditional changes based on brand preference and associated outcomes. Study has shown that beer is one of the most popular alcoholic drinks across the world, in terms of volume and serving consumed. Nigeria is well known for its beer consumption and has been declared leader in the top 10 biggest beer drinking countries in Africa (Kazeem, 2016) This possibly accounts for the ubiquity of functional beer brewing plants across the country.

The competitive landscape in Nigeria’s beer market is shaped by the following players: Nigeria Breweries Plc., Guinness Nigeria Plc., Consolidated Breweries Limited, Jos International Breweries Limited, Golden Breweries and Premium Breweries. According to Vetiva report of 2011, Nigeria Breweries Plc is the market leader and has a grip of sixty percent (60%) market share in the sales of lager beer. The company’s leading
products are Star beer, Gulder, Heineken beer and Extra Smooth. Experiments and surveys have been used in a number of studies as major marketing indicators to establish determinants of beer brand selection (Erdem & Swait, 2004; Orth, 2005). Although studies have reported that displays significantly affect brand preference, this assertion, however, does not possess the whole facts, as other factors are known to equally influence brand preference (Chib et al. 2004; Alvarez & Casielles, 2005). Empirical evidence has shown a direct relationship between product attributes and consumer preference for the brand (Romaniu, 2003). The credibility of a brand is, therefore, significant in establishing the choice of the consumer (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Previous experience with brand also influences preference and product acceptance by the consumers (Chakraborty & Suresh, 2018).

Amadi and Ezekiel (2013) conducted a study to determine the factors that influence consumers’ beer brand preference in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State of Nigeria. Their findings pointed to advertisement, peer group influence and situation as having significant impact. According to Chikere and Mayowa (2011), pleasure, to feel high, and to improve sexual behaviour are among the influencing factors. Findings by Gborbani and Mousavi (2014) reveals that consumers personality traits, have significant relationship with the brand loyalty largely as consumers with different personality are likely to show positive effect in the loyalty and identity of the brand.

Trez (2016) identified customer identity as well as brand identity with respect to brand attributes as among major factors for consideration for any market growth of beer. On the relationship between beer choice and brand, Orth et al. (2004) revealed that the benefits a brand offers has significant effect on consumers’ preference.

Social Group and Consumer Behaviour

Amadi and Ezekiel (2013) aver that every beer consumer is identified with one group or the other, and the group the consumer identifies with or wishes to identify with influences his buying behaviour The personality of the consumer also has a significant impact on brand preference (Banerjee, 2016). Certain alcoholic beverages are linked with a mark of recognition of subgroups or class status symbols. Social psychological theorists view consumer action in the context of interaction with others, and maintain that human beings are social animals whose behaviours are much influenced by the elements of their environment as peer group members (Achumba, 2006). Students in colleges and universities who drink beer are prone to the band wagon effect, and as such align their brand choice with the predominant brand taken by their parents, friends and peers (Seaman & Ikegwuonu, 2010; Collins et al., 2003). Kamanga (2015) maintained that students engage in consuming alcohol to match behavior of fellow students. Such social influence emerges from persuasion by certain attitudes and behaviours of fellow group members. Jernigan, (2011) and Anderson et al., (2009a) revealed that alcohol marketing exposes young people to increased early initiation into beer consumption.

Price and Consumer Behaviour

According to Neeley et al. (2010), knowledge of price attached to beer is important in making choice. Hajdu et al. (2007) studied some Hungarian beer consumers, and findings indicated that price significantly affected their brand choice decision. On the contrary, Sweeney and Soutar (2001) claimed that correlating price with choice is rather insignificant. In other studies, Skidmore and Murphy, (2011), Rabinovich et al., (2009) Elder et al., (2010) affirmed that promotional efforts, especially in price reduction of beer brands, have always inspired consumers to choose such brands. In a study conducted by Mohammed et al., (2018) it was established that price significantly affect consumer behavior.

As many varieties of products as a company offers, so are variance in their prices. These price variances attract different perceptions of the product by consumers. Hruschka, (2002) aver that a customer might identify a product sold at lower price as ‘cheap” or inferior while another customer could regard the low price as good bargain. Studies on effect of price on consumer behavior have also been established by (Huck & Wallace, 2015, Al-Salamin & Al-Hassan, 2016). Aggressive marketing by the beer brands therefore becomes an imperative for better income (Schuttz, 2012). Sudipta and Suresh, (2018) however, observed that increase in consumption may be related to increase in disposable income. Low alcoholic prices attract a potent risk for the under-aged who engage in excessive drinking (Daley, Stahre, Chaloupka & Naim, 2012).

Emotion and Consumer Behaviour

Yih and Elison, (2010) maintain that consumers have better enjoyment and improved penchant for
marketers that meet their emotional desires. Pandey et al. (2012) identified function and rational appeal as criteria used by consumers for purchase. Emotional appeal however was identified by their study as an effective way to create a positive attitude for the product by the consumers. Vishal and Akhilesh (2016) established emotions as the principal drivers of purchases. Different product appeals assist in enhancing the effectiveness of advertisements targeted at evoking emotional reactions in the viewer’s mind (Jayswal & Shah, 2012). Such emotional reactions affect purchase decision.

Products are prone to evoke both positive and negative emotions (Desmet, 2012). These emotions, according to researchers, could lead to brand loyalty, paying a reasonable price, and encouraging others to make a positive decision on the brand. This is linked to being able to predict commitment as well as a conviction to make sacrifices to obtain the brand. Such thing as brand loyalty, willingness to pay a premium, satisfaction associated with the brand were among the major ideals that can manifest with emotional involvement for brands (Thompson et al. 2005). Brand image refers to that consent constructed on a rational and emotional bases in the minds of the consumers (Ekhassi, Nezhad, Far & Rahmene, 2012), and can stick in the minds of the consumers of the brand reflects a compatible image (Akin, 2011).

There have been few works and inconclusive literature on factors propelling university students’ choice of beer brand in Nigeria and other developing countries. Considering the theoretical and empirical evidence reviewed, the researchers sought to evaluate the key factors that propel students of the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, to choose a particular beer brand against the others. The researchers therefore, hypothesize that:

i. No significant relationship between social influence and students’ choice of a beer brand.
ii. Price and choice of beer have no significant relationship.
iii. Individual emotions do not have significant influence on students’ choice of a beer brand.

The above hypotheses were generated based on the objectives of the study.

Social Psychology Theory

The social psychology theory maintained that thought, feeling and behaviours are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others (Allport, 1998). It addresses how group interactions and social environment impact on behaviour and attitudes (Michie, Johnston, Francis, Hardeman, & Eccles, 2008). The theory clarifies that human behaviour is an outcome of the interaction of mental states of people with the immediate social situations (Lewin, 1951). Students, as members of the society, are affected by this theory.

It is important to examine critically two ideas under this general theory that are substantially relevant to the subject matter. These are social identity theory and socio-emotional selective theory. Whereas social identity theory tenets centre on intergroup behaviour pattern that are perceived by individuals basically to have a social identity (Henri Tajfel & John 1970s-1980), socio-emotional selective theory emphasizes that people act very selectively concerning emotion stability, setting meaningful goals and engaging in certain acts to calm their minds. Bhasin (2018) agreeing with the position of social identity theory contended that human beings are social animals and are shaped by their relationship with other people. The focus of the socio-emotional selective theory is that individuals conform to certain behaviours that are expected of them as a member of a particular group.

Advertising campaign plays an important role in this form of behaviours. Supporting this view Yoo and Maclnnis (2005), opined that advertising which applies an emotional or information execution results to attitude formation. In a research conducted by Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), it was established that social identity could be used to explain why consumers become attached to certain producers’ goods and services over others. Students’ behaviour due to grouping, in form of course mates, classmates, roommates, club members etc. are shaped by both the social identity and socio-emotional theories, and by extension direct their purchase and consumption behaviour along those lines.

Income Theory

There is a relationship between the income of the consumers and their consumption behavioural patterns. (Achumba, 2006). The assertion of the theory which focuses on price and sales relationship according to Achumba affects marketing in such, to wit:
lowering the price of an item will increase the sales; lowering the prices of substitute products will decrease sales of the original products etc. Price decreases purchasing power, allowing a consumer to buy a better product or more of the same product for the same price (Achumba, 2006). Price, as perceived here is the major determinant of the choice of brand (Jones & Barrier, 2011). Considering this theory it can be inferred that consumers in same income group exhibit similar reactions to goods and services. Among the theories reviewed in this study, social identity theory was adopted, majorly in consideration of the constructs/objectives of the study. The theory explains conditions under which social identity becomes more important than even one’s identity as an individual. Thus, determines our behavior in terms of what we do like making choice amongst competitive brands of beer because we belong to certain group. Be it our reaction to price of goods, or being emotionally attracted because of the group we identify with, all of which this study covered.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The study was conducted within Enugu North Metropolis where Enugu Campus of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, is situated.

Study Design

The research design was a survey method.

Sample Size

The sample size was 200 undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, who showed interest to participate and were selected using convenience sampling method. However, only 166 copies of the questionnaires were correctly completed, returned and were used for the study.

Information/Consent

The consent of the respondents was sought, and only the students who showed interest to participate were issued with the questionnaire at beer parlors, restaurants, cafes, students’ relaxation centres, lecture halls (with the permission and assistance of lecturers). The venue and period of submission of the completed questionnaires were agreed.

Study Instrument

The study instrument was structured questionnaire. The response to questions directed to the respondents were on five-point Likert scale, attracting 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 points aligned respectively to “strongly agree”, “agree”, “fairly agree”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. The completed and returned questionnaires were collated, coded and analysed sequentially according to research objectives. Pearson product moment correlation and chi-square (X²) statistical tools were used for the testing of the hypotheses formulated. The researchers considered these statistical tools appropriate to test the hypotheses formulated for the study because of the adequacy in achieving the objectives of the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data obtained for the study are presented and analysed hereunder.

Table 1 Distribution of the Students Based on Gender

| Sex  | No of students | Percentage (%) |
|------|----------------|----------------|
| Male | 88             | 53             |
| Female | 78          | 47             |
| Total | 166           | 100            |

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 1 above is the distribution of the participants according to gender, showing that 88(53%) are males while 78 (47%) are females.

Table 2 below indicates that 4(2.4%) students strongly disagreed that social class significantly influences their choice of beer; 23(13.9%) disagreed; 8(4.8%) fairly agreed; 51(30.7%) agreed whereas 80 (48.2%) strongly agreed that social class significantly determines their choice of beer.

Responses as contained in Table 3 indicate that 14(8.4%) of the respondent students strongly disagreed that price significantly influence their choice of beer; 35 (21.1%) disagreed; 29(17.5%) fairly agreed; 27(16.3%) agreed while 61(36.7%) strongly agreed that price reduction significantly affects the choice of the beer they purchase and consume.

From Table 4 below the responding students aired their views on whether emotion significantly determines their choice of beer. As seen 9(5.42%) strongly disagreed, 22(13.25%) disagreed, 12(7.23%) fairly
agreed, 52(31.33%) agreed while greatest number, 71(42.77%) strongly agreed that emotion significantly influences their choice of beer.

### Test of Hypotheses

Pearson Correlation statistical tool as a method for testing hypotheses was used for hypotheses I and II, while chi-square statistical tool was used for hypothesis III. The correlation analysis was applied to establish if the values that were obtained differed significantly from those which would be expected under a certain set of theoretical assumptions. Testing of the three hypotheses formulated for the study was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

#### Hypothesis I

There would be no significant relationship between social influence and students’ choice of a brand of beer. The hypothesis was tested with the use of Pearson Correlation statistical tool.

From Table 5 below, a calculated value of 0.29 was as a result of the relationship between social influence and students’ preference for a brand of beer. The said value of 0.29 was significant because it was greater than the critical value of 0.21 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between social influence and students’ choice of beer.
than 0.20. This led to acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between social influence and students’ choice of a brand of beer.

**Hypothesis II**

Price and choice of beer have no significant relationship. Pearson correlation statistical tool was used to test the hypothesis. Table 6 below presents details on the aforementioned postulation.

Table 6 indicated that a calculated r-value of 0.61 resulted as the relationship of the price influence and consumption of beer. The value of 0.61 is significant since it is greater than the critical value of 0.20, giving 98 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Null hypothesis is rejected; hence, there is significant relationship between price influence and choice of consumption of beer.

**Hypothesis III**

The aforementioned hypothesis stated that individual emotions do not have significant influence on students’ choice of beer brand. The hypothesis was tested with the use of chi-square statistical methods.

The hypothesis was tested using Chi-square ($X^2$). Comparing the P-value with $\alpha$ value if the P-value is less than the level of significance 0.05, accept if otherwise don’t. The analysis indicates that p-value 0.002 < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted. This clarifies that individual emotions has a significant influence on students’ choice of beer.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between social influence and students choice of brand of beer.

In establishing a relationship between social influence and students’ choice of brand of beer, r-value of 0.29 was achieved and considered significant. This is in agreement with Reznik et al., (2018) who argued that intensive alcoholic consumption is more among students who live on campus and Collins et al. (2007) who argued that consumers are normally led to adopt brands that their friends and peer group consume. Also, Labajo (2011) reported that alcohol had been associated with the form of bonding, socialising and relaxation of people. Students of higher institutions of learning derive extra joy in social grouping and consumption of the same brand based on peer

### Table 5: Correlation between Social Group Influence and Students’ Choice of Alcoholic Beverages

| Variable                  | N   | Mean (X) | Standard Deviation (Sd) | Degree of freedom (df) | Calculated value (r-cal) | Critical Value (r-crit) | Sig. |
|---------------------------|-----|----------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Social influence          | 166 | 17.96    | 2.54                    | 98                     | 0.19                     | 0.20                   | 0.01 |
| Choice of alcoholic beverage | 166 | 17.17    | 2.47                    |                        |                          |                        |      |

Significant at 0.05.

### Table 6: Correlation Relationship between Price Influence and Choice of Beer

| Variable                  | No  | Mean (X) | Standard Deviation (Sd) | Degree of Freedom (df) | Calculated value (r-cal) | Critical Value (r-crit) | Sig. |
|---------------------------|-----|----------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------|
| Price influence            | 166 | 25.98    | 3.11                    | 98                     | 0.61                     | 0.20                   | 0.00 |
| Consumption of alcoholic beverage | 166 | 19.12    | 2.47                    |                        |                          |                        | Rejected |

Significant at 0.05.

### Table 7: Influence of Individual Emotion on Students’ Choice of Brand of Beer

| Test Statistics | Effect of individual emotion on youths’ choice of alcoholic beverages |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chi-square      | 43.423                                                        |
| df              | 3                                                             |
| asump. Sig      | 0.002                                                         |

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 33.243.
influence. This also extends to their mode of dressing, hairstyle or gait. The underlying fact in group socialisation, therefore, addresses a painted picture of uniformity of selection and use of items and other related activities as being a norm within such a social group. This study shows that social/peer group has the greatest percentage propelling factor of 78.9% in choosing beer brand, which impacts propels the student to choose beer brand to justify its significance.

Another finding was that emotion has a significant influence in students' choice of beer.

Emotion also provides students with the driving force to what they consume. Lee and Yi (2008) aligned with this postulation. In that context, a good number of breweries use promotional tools to portray drinking alcoholic beverages with positive images of attractive, heroic, athletic or even successful characters (Valbuena, 2002). In the tested hypothesis to determine the influence of emotion on students’ choice of brand of beer, it revealed that p-value 0.002 <0.05 resulting to the fact that individual emotion has significant influence on students’ choice of brand of beer. This shares the new of Wu, Hsu and Lee, (2015) that consumers’ emotions as well as involvement positively determine their references and that of purchasing intentions.

Kim (2008) gave credence to this when he opined that emotion influences the consumption behaviour of college students more than the beer itself. This intensifies the fact as the percentage propelling factor of emotion is significant with 74.1%. Further evidence can be drawn from Vishal & Akhilesh (2016), who submitted that certain varieties of products with negligible functional value are still being purchased due to their ability to arouse emotions.

The study further established that there is a significant relationship between price and choice of beer.

The calculated re-value of 0.61 which was considered significant confirmed the relationship of the price influence and consumption of beer. Students tend to increase their loyalty and alcohol consumption volume when there is price reduction. In the view of Simone (2003) low price encourages choice for the products involved especially when the price is lower relative to that of the alternative choice. Price reduction as sales promotion strategy is used to attract students to alcoholic beverage outlets (Wechsier and Nelson, 2008).

Hruschka, (2002) posits that consumers might perceive a lower priced product to be considered “cheap” or inferior, but to another consumer, the low price can be seen as good value. In view of this fact, our findings show that price is a significant propelling factor with 53% support. Agreeing with these findings, Donaldson & Rutter (2011) and Groves (2010), maintained that data on alcohol pricing are important as they may be used as the criteria in assessment of minimum alcohol price policies thought to influence the attraction to alcohol consumption among youth.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS

The findings from the study can provide insight into managers’, brewers’ and producers quest to segment their market. In doing so the criteria should be guided by social group, emotional reactions based on advertisement and income of the consumers. Equally, that aspect of producing varieties of products with different sizes and weight to serve different social groups can be used by the managers/producers as a strategic option and competitive advantage.

Regarding the limitations, the study covered only students of the said University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus excluding the staff which are also part of the University population, basically due to limited resources. Moreover only one university was studied. In addition, the social group, price and emotions which formed the constructs of the study cannot be the only propelling factors for choice. Enlarging the study to cover more universities and population and other propelling factors can be useful in revealing more factors that propel making choice amongst available products.

CONCLUSION

The Study evaluated the students’ consumption of beer in higher institution of learning with the aim of establishing the propelling factors for choice of beer by the affected students. Constructs used in the study are social group influence, price of beer and emotional appeals. After the analysis of the data generated and test of the hypotheses for the study, it was established that social group, price and emotion significantly propel students to prefer a particular beer brand against the others. Thus the researchers infer that students always align with the type of products (beer inclusive) consumed by their social group as a sign of belonging to the ‘in thing’. They are equally attracted to the
brands that appeal to them emotionally, as well as those with prices they consider affordable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Producers and managers should strictly segment their market on the basis of social group influence, price and emotional appeals and other factors that may be discovered subsequently.

2. In designing products, efforts should be made to address additional factors that determine consumers choice.

3. Research using a larger population and cutting across many and different background of respondents is necessary to provide a more robust factors propelling consumers’ choice.

4. Brewers’, producers’ and managers are to use identified propelling factors to an advantage but not to negate engagement in research regularly to be current on the trends regarding the factors that determine consumers’ choice of beer brand and other products.

Re: Evaluation of Students Consumption of Beer in Higher Institution of Learning in Nigeria: Propelling Factors for Choice

Response Sheet on First Reviewers Comments (1)

| S/N | Reviewers Comments | Actions taken by the Researchers |
|-----|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1.  | Rephrasing (abstract) | The abstract was rephrased        |
| 2.  | Words in a sentence having capital letter (Abstract, result pages 2&3) | Affected words as indicated were changed to small letters |
| 3.  | Re-Reference needed <attend to the in red colour> | |
| 4.  | Whenever authors are put in brackets, “s”\] to be used instead of “and” (for instance, check pages 2, 3 and attend to the notes in red colour) | This has been effected |
| 5.  | Use "researcher" or authors in place of "we" (pages 5) | This has been effected |
| 6.  | How did you generate your hypothesis? Or what influenced them | This has been addressed |
| 7.  | Is there any clearly stated recommendation? | Yes |
| 8.  | References should be in a stable format of choice as well as justified | Effected |
| 9.  | Furthermore, there are quite a number of typographical errors you need to correct. Make sure your references are in appropriate stable format of choice | Was exposed to thorough proofreading and correction effected. References are in appropriate and stable format |
| 10. | Can this format be adopted: introduction; Literature review, Methodology, Data presentation and Analysis and Limitations, Conclusions and recommendations | This format was adopted |
| 11. | A lot paragraph and words aligning is needed in almost all the pages | This has been effected |

Response Sheet on Second Reviewers Comments (2)

| S/N | Reviewers Comments | Actions taken by the Researchers |
|-----|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 3.  | The analysis is straight forward, but the authors could have explained upfront, the reason for choosing pearson and chi square as the methods of analysis | The reason has been explained, though the researchers didn’t agree completely that such explanation is necessary. |
| 5.  | The conclusion is too terse. This seriously weaken the paper, so, what is/are the implications of the findings and so on | This has been greatly improved, accommodating the implications of the findings, limitations, conclusions and recommendations |
| 6 | The paper needs serious proofreading |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 7 | The references are old I could count only a few references from 2011. Only two are on 2018 and about 5 or so in from 2011 |

Reasonable number of such old references were substituted with current citations, very few old ones that did not add significant positive impact on the study were deleted. The others that of below 2000 retained, were those considered very relevant to the study and that are no new ideas has been made to improve or dispute them to the best knowledge of the researchers.

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