

Assessing Nigeria's Nation Brand Image: A Comparative Analysis of Nigerians and Non-Nigerians' Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to determine the images of the Nigeria brand and its sub-brands. The study also sought to investigate if significant difference exists between Nigerians and Non-Nigerians in their perceptions as well as the relative image of the thirteen (13) sub-brands. In addition, the study aimed at identifying the demographic and socio-cultural variables that influence perception of the Nigeria brand. Quantitative and descriptive survey research designs were adopted in this study. The population of interest includes Nigerians and Non-Nigerians who are above the age of 18 years. The independent t-test and analysis of variance, and Student Newman Kuels multiple-range procedure tests were performed at 0.05 level of significance. The results obtained showed that the image of Nigeria mother brand was neither positive nor negative. No significant difference was found between Nigerians and Non-Nigerians in their perceptions. In summary, the outcome of the multiple range test succinctly revealed that Nigeria brand was only rated positively above average mean perception on six (6) sub brands: people, tourism, movies/music, sports, fashion and clothing, food and drinks. Nigeria's three weakest sub-brands were electoral system, safety/security and governance. The study recommends that Nigeria branding experts should build on the nation's strength to enhance the nation's image home and abroad. It was also suggested that government should strategically improve security, reduce corruption especially in government, ensure credible elections and technologically support entrepreneurs in developing global brands.

Keywords: Brands, Branding, Brand image, Nation brands, Nigeria brand

INTRODUCTION

The adaptation of marketing strategies and skills has increased in importance with the emergence of globalization (Anholt, 2022). The world has become a global marketplace where

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nations compete with each other (Hassan, 2023). Increased global competition has caused nations to more frequently apply branding strategies to improve their position at the world stage (Gilmore, 2022). Nations now collaborate with market actors to enhance their competitiveness for economic development. Many states are now employing marketing skills and techniques in exporting natural resources (products, ideas, services), attracting tourists, business investors, skilled labour, and students as well as manage the nation's competitive image and identity in the international global market (Hao, Paul, Trott, Guo, & Wu, 2019). As noted by Maiz-bar et al (2017), nations consciously and unconsciously battle to improve the welfare of their citizens and inhabitants by ways of attracting tourism, commerce, talents, residents and investment.

Izegwire (2021) suggested that national government should periodically review internal stakeholders' perceptions to determine the current national brand image on the mother brand as well as on the different sub-brands. On the premise that a wise nation does not leave the development of its national identity to chance (Waeraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012), this study is apt and timely to unearth the present status of Nigeria brand image. Although the study of Odia (2012) investigated public perceptions of Nigeria brand, among Nigerians and Non-Nigerian; for currency, there is need for a recent study that would shed light on the current state of things in Nigeria. Thus, the main objective of the study was to determine the images of the Nigeria brand and its sub-brands. The study also sought to investigate if significant difference exists between Nigerians and Non-Nigerians in their perceptions as well as the relative image of the thirteen (13) sub-brands. In addition, the study aimed at identifying the demographic and socio-cultural variables that influence perception of the Nigeria brand image.

Brand Concept

Torelli and Rodas (2024) defined a brand as a name preserved through registration of trademark, used to identify a company's products/services. For Armstrong and Kotler (2014), brand names are reassurance given to consumers by vendors, market intermediaries and manufacturers. Brand forms the opinions and attitudes consumers have of the utility they can derive from the consumption of the product. It is strongly believed that brands are not just a mere name or logo. They represent and reflect images painted in the minds of consumers.

Nation Branding

In the opinion of Anholt (2007), branding is the process of building or managing the brand reputation. It entails the process of crafting and communicating brand name and identity. The use of branding technique is not limited to products and corporate organisations but it also extends to nations, regions and continents. Nation branding is the process whereby a town, region, country (place actively seeks to create a unique and competitive identity for itself, with the aim of positioning it internally and internationally as a food destination for trade, tourism and investment (Nworah, 2005:45). Individuals, corporate organizations as well as countries that understand the powerful role of branding make strategic efforts in building compelling brands that are successful.

Determinants of a Nation Brand

Nation brand images are shaped by experiences, discourse, and symbolism in the mind of the public about a nation (Khamis Ang, & Welling, 2016). For Anholt (2007), a nation derives its image or reputation from six areas which he categorized into commercial and non-commercial. The commercial includes exports, foreign direct investment (FDI) and Tourism, while the non-commercial classified as culture, people and governance. The study of Matiza (2017) on the impact of non-financial dimensions of a nation's brand image on FDI inflow to Zimbabwe identified tourism, governance, people, culture and heritage exports, investment and immigration, factor endowments, infrastructure and legal and regulatory frameworks as indices of nation brand image.

Odia and Isibor (2014) on strategic nation branding examined governance, exports, and heritage, tourism and people as the major measures of country brand image. Odia and Agbonifoh (2013) on comparative study of selected country brand images utilized eleven (11) factors as determinants of nation's reputation. The identified image factors include sports, music/movies, product/service quality, investment destination, tourism destinations, technology (internet, mobile phone and line phone facilities) hospitality, safety, education, governance, and energy. Some of these factors are discussed below.

Culture: Culture has severally been mentioned as one of the critical elements of a nation brand. Some of the elements of a nation brand are people, place, culture, language, history, food, fashion, famous faces (celebrities), global brands and others. (Fan, 2010: 98). Cultural diplomacy, an aspect of public diplomacy, is a strategic tool used by national image makers to promote and transmit the nation's cultural resources abroad (Cull 2008). Many nations have used their cultural endowment to enhance foreign policy goals, combat stereotyping, develop mutual understanding and build national reputation across the border. According to Lee (2022), movies and films are the most powerful medium of cultural diplomacy because of its wide reach and accessibility. Nations can effectively use movies and music to entertain as well as educate, and break stereotypes through exchanges of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture like fashion, food and drinks. Odia (2012) examined Nigeria culture and heritage as a niche branding strategy. In the study the opinions of Nigerians and non Nigerians were compared. Certain elements of culture like music, sports, landscape, literature, media and food were used as proxy for culture in the present study, culture factor was disaggregated into music/movies, sports, education system as standalone dimensions of Nigeria brand image.

Location: Among the various factors listed as influencing successful nation branding is the country's geographical location (Florek & Conejo, 2006; Gertner & Kolter, 2004). Different regions and continents of the world have inherited perceptions and associations. Whether negative or positive, these associations also affect Nigeria at the global stage because of its developing nature and geographical location as an African country.

Governance: Governance was mentioned among the six vectors of nation brand hexagon in the Anholt's (2007) study. Governance relates to issues concerning a nation's electoral process, international policies, judiciary system, investment and tax policies as well as corruption index.

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Nye (2004) argued that a country's political image has implications among the international audience. This is one of the reasons why countries are now in the fore employing public diplomacy strategies in building positives images of their brands.

Exports: Consumers often have stereotypical impressions about products from different countries based on their made in labels (Anholt, 2007). Countries that have distinguished themselves in the global market have built reputations in different areas. For instances, France is reputed in the manufacturing of perfume, Italy in leather and fashion, Japan in electronics, Germany in cars and Switzerland in chocolate. There is no doubt if the associations held about different countries and their products influence their product selection and purchases in the global market (Okechukwu, 1994). Gurhan-canli and Maheswaran (2000) acknowledged that a nation can enjoy brand equity on the sale of other products from the same country because of the favourable and positive image of the country. The study suggests that countries desiring to attract foreign visitors need to pay more attention to economic development, natural resources, political policies, communication, infrastructures and reputable brands.

Electoral systems: In liberal democracies, elections ensure legitimacy and peaceful transitions of power (Katz, 2016). Political stability influences sectors like tourism, investment, and governance, making electoral credibility essential (Kay & Daniell, 2017). In many nations, elections are not just political events but reflections of national identity and global reputation (Huq & Ginsburg, 2017). However, in Africa, the lack of credible elections has historically supported authoritarian regimes (Adejumobi, 2000). In corroboration, Harrison & Boyd, (2018) observed that challenges like fraud, violence, and post-election conflict continue to undermine democratic progress. For electoral brand to be effective, Adebayo (2023) identified transparency, youth involvement, and absence of violence as the hallmarks of the process. La Raja and Schaffner (2015) noted that strategic political branding is critical in shaping national perception.

Infrastructure: The role of infrastructure in economic development cannot be overemphasized. Justman and Tuebal (1998) found that infrastructure adds to a nation's competitiveness in the global market because it helps to build confidence in foreign investors. On the contrary, Gamble (2007) argued that a country with weak infrastructure will find it difficult to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). In support, Oriaku and Oriaku (2007) asserted that African countries suffer loss of FDI because of poor infrastructural development. In their study, infrastructures in national branding was measured in terms of communication, whuile in this study, transportation development was used in the evaluation of infrastructure.

Business Environment and FDI: The importance of business climate and FDI attract in nation brand image formation cannot be denied. Eifert, Alan and Vijaye (2005) define business climate as consisting of policies, infrastructures, geography, institutions and human resources. Anholt (2007) in the development of Nation Brand Hexagon identified business environment and FDI as a determining vector of a country image. Just as it is widely acknowledged that a nation's image is a critical factor in a nation's ability to attract FDI, so also is the amount of FDI a nation can attract a cardinal point in its macroeconomic performance and its image. Cost of materials and operations, human capital development and government incentives were

identified by Xue (2007) as indicators of technology transfer. UNCTAD's (2021) reports indicated a decrease from 6.3 percent to 5.9 percent in total global FDI inflow to Africa between 2019 and 2020. In West Africa, the report showed that Ghana experienced 52 percent decrease from \$70.9bn to \$1.9bn in 2020, while Nigeria experienced a slight increase in inflow from \$2.3bn in 2019 due to Covid-19 pandemic. In West Africa, the report revealed that Ghana experienced 52 percent decrease FDI in 2020 while Nigeria experienced a slight increase in inflow from \$2.36 in 2019 due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Theoretical Framework

Resource-Based Theory

Resource based theory was proposed by Barney (1991) specifically to ascertain an organization's resources that can be effectively and efficiently engaged to gain and sustain an edge over competing brands or companies in an industry (Holden, 2022). The theory claimed that an organization's performance depends on its resource profile and further explained why some organizations outsmart others and distinctively maintain a prime place in competitive space (Glaeser, 2019; Bassols, 2022). The theory assumed that; there may be variations in the resource profile of organizations within an industry, and the resources may not be moveable across organizations as such, the variations could last long (Pike, 2022).

Jones and Charles (2021) used resources-based theory to conduct a study on the influence of tourism in nation building strategies in Sweden. The relevance of this theory to nation branding is that for a nation to achieve a sustainable competitive edge (Roth & Romeo, 2019), they must possess key resources, capabilities, and attributes that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and not substitutable which are in turn effectively deployed in the chosen markets.

Following this theory, countries can focus on the key resources indicating areas of strength to achieve sustainable competitive advantage in the world global marketplace. Countries have various resources at their disposal ranging from their cultural heritage, people, media, governance, sports talents, exports, infrastructures, geography etc. Countries that want to be successful and be ahead of competition must identify the resources at their disposal, understand their current nature and seek to bridge the gap or make up for deficiencies in the resources.

Empirical Review

The study of Odi (2014) sought to determine public image of the Nigerian culture brand and to investigate if there is any significant difference between Nigerians and non-Nigerians in perceptions of the Nigerian culture. The study also aimed at identifying the demographic and socio-cultural variables that determine perceivers' image of culture. A stratified random sampling method was adopted to select a total sample size of 930 comprising 720 Nigerian and 210 non-Nigerian respondents. Twelve key success factors were used in measuring the image of culture brand. T-Test for equality of means, analysis of variance and multiple regression statistical techniques were applied to the data collected at 0.05 level of significance with the aid of SPSS and Excel. The results obtained depicted public image of the Nigerian culture as slightly positive. There was significant distinction between Nigerians and non-Nigerians in

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their perceptions of the culture brand. The image of culture was only related to perceivers' education and not to other variables. In summary, to effectively reposition the image of Nigeria via culture, plans should be made by the government to adopt co-branding strategy by bidding to co-host any important mega sporting event like female football with another country that is reputable.

On the issues of country-of-origin effect and ethnocentrism, it has been widely acknowledged that country of origin has an impact on the consumer product evaluations (Ehigie & Babalola 1995; Karunaratna 2003). Ehigie and Babalola (1995) and Solomon (2004) observed the high preference of Nigerians for imported products, especially products from advanced western countries. A one-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed to determine if there was significant difference in the choice of Nigeria, England and Ghana on their assessed capability to produce high quality insecticide. Results indicated that there was a significant difference $F(2, 28) = 5.74, P < .05$. A multiple comparison test using the least significant difference (LSD) formula was further done. It showed a significant t-value of 2.84 with England emerging as the most favourably perceived country, followed by Nigeria and Ghana in that order. Consumers' attitude towards Western culture, especially from countries that were colonized are ameliorated (Klein et. al., 1998) and they often value Western goods more than locally made goods (Ahmed and d'Astons, 2004). The study of Odia (2012) showed neutral mean index on Nigerians' preference for locally products in comparison to their foreign counterparts.

In another study, Odia and Agbonifoh (2015) on perception of Nigerian branded exports and demographic variables. Multiple regression statistical technique was applied to the data collected at 0.05 level of significance with the aid of SPSS and Excel. The results obtained depicted public image of the Nigerian branded exports as slightly poor. The image of branded exports was only related to perceiver's age and sex variables.

The study of Odia (2015) sought to determine public image of the Nigerian Tourism Brand (NTB) and investigated if there is any significant difference between Nigerians and non-Nigerians in perceptions of the Nigerian tourism. A stratified random sampling method was adopted to select a total sample size of Nigerian and non-Nigerian respondents. Thirteen key success factors were used in measuring the image of tourism brand. Z-Test for equality of means, analysis of variance and multiple regression statistical techniques were applied to the data collected at 0.05 level of significance. The results obtained depicted public image of the Nigerian tourism as moderately positive. There was no significant distinction between Nigerians and non-Nigerians in the perceptions of tourism brand. The image of tourism was related to perceivers' education, ethnicity and level of international exposure. The study recommends training for frontline staff, improvement in customer service level and optimum utilization of local resources as well as overhauling of the security outfit and regular maintenance of transport infrastructures.

Odia and Agbonifoh (2013) conducted a study to determine the relative brand image of seven selected countries in terms of eleven nation brand vectors. The selected countries for the study were China, Ghana, Italy, Nigeria, South Africa, UK, and USA. 930 Nigerians and non Nigerians alike who were between the ages of 18 and 65 years, living in the capital cities of

Abuja Benin, Calabar, Jos Lagos and Port Harcourt were served questionnaire. The result of the Tukey-Kramer procedure and the mean rank order rated Nigeria as the least reputable nation brand. The Nigeria brand was poorly rated in all the brand vectors apart from hospitality and music/movies vectors it ranked on the first and third positions respectively. The study recommends that to enhance the image of Nigeria brand that the government and other stakeholders should develop the energy sector, security, governance, education, technology and tourism.

Some existing studies have shown that consumers from developing countries tend to prefer goods and services from developed countries. Agbonifoh and Elimimian (1999) in their studies found that people from developing countries showed preference and were willing to buy products made in western developed countries. The review of the extant literature revealed the impact of ethnocentrism on consumer brand evaluation and choice. The study of Hamin (2006) exemplified how high ethnocentric consumers in Indonesia expressed preference for Indonesian brands

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative and descriptive cross sectional survey research designs were adopted in this study. The study employed a descriptive survey research design because of its ability to analyse the current state of the Nigeria brand image. Some elements of correlational design were also employed to determine how respondents' demographics influence the image of Nigeria brand. The population of interest includes Nigerians and Non Nigerians who are above the age of 18 years. Based on the suggestions of Benerjee (2016), Izegwire (2021) and Odia (2012) on the important role of external stakeholders in the formation of a nation brand image, the current study sought the perceptions of both the internal and external stakeholders of the image of the Nigeria mother brand and those of its sub-brands. The accurate sampling frame of the entire unit of interest is not known. Since there is no statistical documentation of the total number and location of desired respondents, the population was therefore classified as indefinite.

Sample Size Determination

Given the indeterminate nature of the Nigerians and Non Nigerians population size, the Cochran formula for infinite populations was employed to determine the appropriate sample size:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{e^2}$$

where; n_0 is the sample size needed, and Z is the Z -value corresponding to the desired confidence level, and p is the estimated proportion of the population that exhibits the characteristic of interest.

$Z = 1.96$ (for 95% confidence level), $p = 0.5$ (estimated proportion), $e = 0.05$ (5% margin of error). Therefore;

$$n_0 = \frac{1.96^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = \frac{3.84 \times 0.5 \times (0.5)}{0.0025} = \frac{0.96}{0.0025} = 384$$

Sampling Technique

In anticipation of attrition and poor completion of questionnaire, the sample size was increased to a total of 430. A combination of online and offline was used to select the sample units for this study by means of convenience sampling technique. The offline involved personal distribution of copies of questionnaire to respondents both in Edo state and others with the aid of qualified research assistants who are experienced in field surveys. To secure the opinion of respondents from different geographical areas, the online Google form was designed and administered through different platforms. Not minding the non-probabilistic nature of the sampling method, the Google form questionnaire was helpful in reaching respondents within the country and the diaspora. Respondents' distribution by state of origin include: Abia (4), Akwa Ibom (7), Anambra (11), Benue (4), Cross Rivers (2), Delta (67), Ebonyi (1), Edo (215), Ekiti (3), Enugu (8), Imo (20), Kogi (1), Kwara (4), Lagos (4), Ogun (3), Ondo (22), Osun (5), Plateau (1), and Rivers (2). The total is 386 Nigerians from 19 out of 36 states were involved in this study.

Survey Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part focused on the key demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, education, sex, ethnicity, Nationality, geographical zones for Nigerians, State, and religion. The second part focused on the image of the sub-component vectors of the Nigeria nation brand (Dinnie, 2008); Odia, 2012 and Odia & Isibor, 2014). Thirteen sub brands were evaluated in this study to determine the image of the mother brand. The sub brands measured in this study are: business environment, exports, tourism, safety/security, movies/music, sports, education system, media, food and drinks, fashion and clothing, people, electoral system and governance. Details about the components of the sub brands are reported on the data analysis Table 3 at appendix A. It should be noted that culture subcomponent was disaggregated into movies/music, sports, food and drinks, and fashion and clothing. The motivation to use the instrument designed by these authors was born out of the fact that they have been applied and validated in Nigerian context. The validity of the instrument was assured by marketing and branding experts. The nation's image was measured on five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The data collected were analysed by means of the following descriptive statistics: frequency, simple percentage and mean. The influences of the demographic variables were examined using analysis of variance (ANOVA) for age, education, religion, geopolitical and ethnicity while independent t-test was performed for sex and nationality using SPSS at 0.05 level of significance.

Reliability of Instrument

The instrument was considered reliable and internally consistent given that all dimensions of the nation brand measures had over 0.6 questionable reliability coefficients. (See Table 1 for details).

Table 1: Cronbach Reliability Coefficients

Variable	Numbers of items	Reliability Coefficients
Business and Environment	7	.702
Exports	4	.755
Tourism	4	.723
Safety/Security	3	.760
Music/Movies	3	.601
Sports	3	.767
Educational System	3	.719
Media	3	.827
Food and Drinks	3	.681
Fashion and Clothing	3	.766
People	4	.727
Electoral System	3	.765
Governance	3	.780

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percent
Nationality	Nigerian	388	96.3
	Non Nigerian	15	3.7
	Total	414	100
Sex	Male	223	54.4
	Female	187	45.6
	Total	410	100
Age	below 21 years	78	19.2
	21 -30 years	164	40.3
	31-40 years	70	17.2
	41 & above	95	23.3
	Total	407	100
Education	No formal education	5	1.2
	First leaving certificate	35	8.7
	SSCE/GCE/NECO	73	18.2
	OND/NCE	72	17.9
	HND/BSC	160	39.8

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percent
	MSC/PHD	157	14.2
	Total	402	100
Ethnicity	Hausa	2	0.5
	Yoruba	54	13.9
	Igbo	81	20.9
	Others	251	64.7
	Total	388	100
Religion	Christianity	394	96.61
	Islam	5	1.2
	Traditionalist	2	0.5
	Others	7	1.7
	Total	408	100

Details on respondents' demographics are contained in Table 2.

Findings on the Basis of Sub-brands

The mean perceptions of the Nigeria mother brand and its sub-brands are discussed here. (See Table 3 at Appendix A for details).

Business Environment: The results on business environment brand value were only positive on availability of raw material (3.61) and availability of skilled labour (3.35). Under this sub brand, power supply (1.73), honesty in business practices (2.18), transportation system (2.27), and cost of doing business (2.37) were negatively rated. Overall, business environment was rated lowly below average.

Exports: On Nigerian exports brand value, stakeholders' perceptions revealed a moderate value of 3.09. Made in Nigeria products were somewhat considered less durable (2.87), less value for money (2.72), but slightly above average in workmanship and craftsmanship as well as fashionable with a mean of (3.38). When compared to other foreign brands, perceivers were undecided whether they will consistently prefer Nigeria made-ins (2.95).

Tourism: In the area of tourism sub brand, finding indicated that Nigerians are friendly and hospitable (3.73); with a mean of 4.00, it is believed that Nigerian festival serves as strength for attracting tourists. The Nigerian tourism was also rated positive on landscape attractiveness with a mean of 3.67.

Safety and Security: The results on safety and insecurity indicated that Nigerian roads are not safe to travel on (1.79). It was insinuated that the port hole in Nigeria roads could be fueling the nefarious and kidnapping activities. In this study, Nigeria was not considered a safe place for tourism with a mean of 2.32, Nightlife in Nigeria was almost seen as non-existent with a brand value of 1.84. In Nigeria, before the emergence of insurgence, nightlife was once leisure and

business was treasured. Nowadays, individuals and businessmen scamper for safety before 7.00pm except in few places in the big cities.

Movies and Music: Findings under the movies and music sub brand revealed indicated another major area of strength for the Nigeria brand. Though perceivers rated this sub brand high in quality (4.13), further evidence (2.93) revealed that Nigerian movies/music was considered less in value than their foreign counterparts. With a mean of 3.69, more than half of the respondents opined that Nigerian movies/music promote Nigerian culture.

Sports: The performance on sports sub brand (3.82) uncovered another area of strength for the Nigeria nation brand. Nigeria sport athletics were rated skilled with a mean index of 4.01. The raters agreed that Nigeria's international sports performance is fairly good (3.57) and lastly believed that Nigeria sport stars can be used as nation brand ambassadors in the diaspora.

Educational system: The Nigeria brand was rated fairly poor on the educational system. The below median performance on education quality implied that Nigeria educational quality was not of international standard (2.63) and can hardly attract foreign students as immigrants (2.33). Nonetheless, the raters were unsure (3.04) if graduates from Nigeria universities were employable in the global market.

Media: In relation to media, respondents were neutral (3.01) implying that the Nigeria mass media were neither responsible nor irresponsible. This opinion is closely linked to the fact that the media were not considered as strong advocate in representing and promoting Nigeria brand value. The raters' assessment here on this sub brand also revealed that the Nigerian mass media are not of international standard.

Food and Drinks: In the area of food and drinks, the respondent confirmed that Nigerian food and drinks have great taste (4.41), they also strongly feel that foreigners in Nigeria love Nigerian food and drinks (4.13). On the issue of whether Nigeria food and drinks are better than their foreign counterparts, they reasonably agreed that they are better (3.61).

Fashion and Clothing: For fashion and clothing, the raters largely agreed that Nigerian fashion and clothing are rich and attractive (4.17). In the opinion of the raters, Nigerian fashion can compete effectively in the international markets (3.99). Lastly, on this sub brand, the respondents greatly express preference for Nigeria traditional dresses over their foreign counterparts (3.85)

People: The findings on the people component indicated a positive image profile of (3.35). One remarkable factor under people is their friendly nature (3.81). Nigerian people were rated lowly (2.66) below average in this study. However, they were considered good ambassadors in diaspora.

Electoral System: The electoral system (sub brand) was the poorest rated Nigeria sub brand with a mean of 1.90. Both the internal and external stakeholders rated the electoral system poorly. The Nigeria electoral system could not be adjudged free and fair in its electoral procedures (1.76). The worst challenge was in regards of accuracy of the election result

declared. The mean perception of 1.76 is a clear indication that the people, Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike do not have faith in the electoral outcomes.

Governance: The governance sub brand was poorly rated with a mean of 2.12 majorly because of the corrupt tendencies and lack of transparency in the judicial systems (1.92) and disobedient of those in government to laws and order (1.86). On average, raters considered Nigeria's policies as slightly poor, lacking development (2.57). In Nigeria, it is somewhat believed that Nigeria problem is not in the formulation or enactment of laws but in their observance.

The brand value of 3.08 on the Nigeria mother brand can be adjudged or interpreted as neutral implying as neither strong nor weak. In summary, the outcome of the multiple range test succinctly revealed that Nigeria brand was only rated positively above average mean perception on six (6) sub brands. The six sub brands include tourism, movies/music, sports, food and drinks. The three sub brands on which the Nigeria brand scored highest are food and drinks (4.04), followed closely by fashion and clothing with a mean of (4.01) and Movies/music (4.00). While Nigeria's three main areas of weaknesses are: electoral system (1.90), safety/security (1.98) and governance (2.12). The three poorest sub-brands are related to the nation's public diplomacy.

Discussion of Findings

The negative image of Nigeria business environment represents its level of non-conduciveness for investors both for internal and external stakeholders. The poor mean value on the business environment indicated that Nigerian business practices are often fraught with dishonesty. Our finding in this regard appears to be consistent with the postulation of Okereke (2008) and Abdulahi (2008) that the amount of corruption, fraud and ethical practices is related to the level of investment and economic growth. The outcome of this study also corroborate Odia's (2009) assertion that trade malpractices negate Nigeria's image home and abroad. The present situation of the Nigerian business environment image seems not to be different from the findings of Odia (2012) and Odia and Agbonifoh (2013) on the poor brand value of Nigerian business environment.

In this study, made in Nigeria (exports) were moderately rated as neither good nor poor. A detailed analysis showed that respondents feel that made-in-Nigeria products are not durable, less value of money but are fashionable. Their outcomes are in line with the studies of Agbonifoh (1986) and Odia (2012); Odia and Agbonifoh (2015). The results obtained here showed that respondents would only buy made in Nigeria if their foreign counterparts are not available. The finding is in support Odia's (2017) findings. The reasons for the perceived preference for foreign brands in relation to home-made products might be related to product durability and less value for money.

The brand value of Nigeria on safety/security is critical and somewhat worrisome. This is because issues of security and safety affect the nation's survival and competitiveness. Safety and security factor affects the nation's ability to attract tourists, investors and immigrants. The soaring rate of insecurity has eaten into the fabrics of leisure and business' fortune. This state of things could be referred to as economic waste, and nightlife which supports shift duties and

effective capacity utilization is hindered. The state of insecurity reported here in this study tends to confirm Lame's (2009) claims that in 2008, 353 people in Nigeria were kidnapped with two death cases. The survey of Clayton Consultant (2009) once describes Nigeria as the world's top 8, kidnapping hotspots. The present study's findings on safety and security seem not to have been significantly different from the findings of Odia (2012).

In the area of tourism sub brand, finding indicated that Nigeria's brand has strength. In fact, tourism sub-brand in this study was ranked as the second top brand. This finding is akin to Odia (2012) and Odia and Agbonifoh's (2017) findings. The unanimous rating of a Nigeria movie/music sub brand by Nigerians (4.00) and non-Nigerians (4.00) underscores the potential of this sub brand as a cultural export and soft power asset. Brown's (2020) views on the role of contemporary musicians such as Wizkid, Davido and Tiwa Savage in shaping Nigeria's international image as a hub of creativity, resilience, and cultural richness seems to be upheld in the present study. The results obtained in this regard are akin to that of Erukaye and Odia's (2024) findings that Nigeria sport stars can be used in repositioning of Nigeria brand.

The hospitality brand value obtained here under people sub dimension is similar to the one obtained by Odia (2012), this finding also supports Izegwire (2021) study that Nigerians are friendly and hospitable with a mean of 3.81. Coincidentally, just as observed under business environment and governance sub brands, Nigeria people were not regarded as transparent and honest. The idea of corruption appears to have eaten deeply into the soul and fabrics of Nigerian people. The brand value of Nigerians in diaspora was slightly positive (3.42) as good ambassadors, the Nigeria people form a formidable force, viral communication tools for projecting the Nigeria brand to the outside world. The neutral perceptions on the level of patriotism of Nigerians clearly showed that Nigerians are neither patriotic nor unpatriotic. This characteristic feature of Nigerians is worrisome as this factor may be the reason for high preference for foreign made products over locally made products. This finding compares with those of Agbonifoh (1986) and Odia (2012). Additionally, the result in support of Nigeria's high desire for foreign goods and services affirms Yusuff's (2009) observation that Nigerians have abandoned their nature-given cultural resources in preference for foreign products and Jaffe and Nebenzal's (2001) study on Nigerian's preference for preference for foreign, high technology products. Similarly, Jaffe and Nebenzal's (2001) study on Nigerian's preference for foreign high technology products also emphasized Nigerians lack of ethnocentrism.

The poor score on governance sub brand image appears to be reminiscent of Department for International Development, DFID's (2006) survey report where Nigeria had the worst score of 1.13 on the rule of law index. A possible explanation for this seemingly poor image on this sub brand may not be unrelated to the high level of corruption and lack of transparency of those in government which Odia (2012) and Izegwire (2021) found in their studies. This outcome in this study, somewhat confirms the reports of the transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) in which Nigeria ranked the most corrupt' three times (1996 and 1997), third most corrupt two times (2004, 2005) and fifth most corrupt in 2006 (Aluko, 2006). The finding obtained on the effectiveness of Nigeria in electoral system shows the level of faith in government policies and governance as well as on policy implementation and observance of

law. If the system that brought leaders to power is fraught with inefficiencies, then the quality of leadership performance in the nation is doubtful.

The overall result on media sub brand evaluation was neutral, neither of poor reputation nor good reputation. The neutral mean index on media calls for special attention given that the media is a major tool of communicating the nation's endowments and achievements.

Table 4: Independent t-test on Comparative Analysis of Nigerian and non-Nigerians' Perception of Sub Brand and Mother Brand

	Nigeria Brand Image Parameters	Nigerians	Non Nigerians	t-value	p value
1	Business Environment	2.59	2.87	-1.412	.159
2	Exports - Made in Nigeria products	3.10	3.07	.145	.885
3	Tourism	3.90	3.80	.435	.664
4	Safety/Security	1.98	2.07	-.367	.714
5	Movies/music	4.00	4.00	-	-
6	Sports	3.83	3.73	.412	.681
7	Educational System	2.62	3.53	-3.376	.001
8	Media	2.91	3.13	-.841	.401
9	Food and Drinks	4.06	3.67	1.858	.064
10	Fashion and Clothing	4.03	4.07	-.189	.850
11	People	3.35	3.47	-.544	.587
12	Electoral System	1.88	2.07	-.723	.470
13	Governance	2.09	2.67	-2.254	.025
	Nigeria Mother Brand Value	3.07	3.20	-0.920	0.358

The results of the t-test conducted at 0.05 level of significance revealed significant difference between Nigerians and non Nigerians in the areas of educational system and governance sub-brands (see Table 4 for t and p values). Other results of the t-test analysis indicated that weak t-score values that are not significant for business environment, exports, tourism, safety/security, sports, media, food and drinks, fashion and clothing, people and electoral sub brands. Further evidence from the t-test showed that the non Nigerian respondents rated educational system and governance higher than Nigerians. The comparative analysis of the perception of the mother brand revealed that Nigerians' evaluation (3.07) was not significantly different from their

counterparts (3.20). Nevertheless, the face value of the means revealed that the mother brand was slightly rated better than internal stakeholders (See Table 4 for details).

Table 5: Analysis of Variance on the Relative Image of Nigeria sub-brands

Factor	N	Relative Image of Nigeria sub-brands by Student-Newman-Keuls Subset for alpha = 0.05								
		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7	Group 8	Group 9
Nigeria Brand Image	414	Electoral system (1.90); Safety/Security (1.98)	Governance (2.12)	Business Environment (2.60); Educational System (2.65)	Media (2.92)	Exports (3.09)	People (3.35)	Sports (3.82); Tourism (3.88)	Tourism (3.88); Movies/Music (4.00); Fashion & Clothing (4.01)	Movies/Music (4.00); Fashion & Clothing (4.01); Food & Drinks (4.04);

F-value (365.944) and P-value (0.000)

The results of the F test analysis of variance showed that there is statistically significant difference in the relative images of the thirteen sub brands with F (365.944) and P (0.000). Further analysis to identify the extent of variation in the brand values generated 9 different sub groups in increasing order of magnitude from electoral system (1.90) and safety/security (1.98) in group 1, governance (2.12) in group 2, business environment (2.60) and education system (2.65) in group 3, media (2.92) in group 4, exports (3.05) in group 5, people (3.35) in group 6, sports (3.82) and tourism (3.88) in 7, Tourism (3.88); Movies/Music (4.00); Fashion & Clothing (4.01) in group 8 and lastly, Movies/Music (4.00); Fashion & Clothing (4.01); Food & Drinks (4.04) (See Table 5 for details),

Table 6 T-Test for Equality of Perceptions of Nigeria Mother brand on the Basis of Sex

Sex	Male	Female	t-value	Sig	Decision
	3.06	3.10	-0.740	0.460	Not Significant

Results relating to influence of sex on Nigeria brand value produced a t-value of -.74 and a p-value of .460 indicating that Nigeria brand image is not influenced by perceiver’s sex (See Table 6 for details).

Table 7 ANOVA on Equality of Mean for Nigeria Brand Perceptions on the Basis of Age

Age	Below 21 years	21-30 years	31-40 years	41 years & above	F-value	Sig	Decision
	3.09	3.06	3.09	3.09	0.109	0.955	Not Significant

For the one-way analysis of variance performed to verify if perception of Nigeria mother brand is dependent on perceivers age, education, ethnicity and religion; results of the analysis indicated absence of relationships between variables tested. The corresponding F-values and P-values are; age F(.109), P(0.955) (See Table 7 for details); education F(1.748) P(.123) (See Table 8 for details); Ethnicity F(.330), P (.803) (See Table 9 for details) and religion F(.159), P(.924) (See Table 10 for details).

Table 8: ANOVA on Nigeria Brand Perceptions and Respondents' Education

Education	No formal education	First schooling certificate	SSCE/GCE/NE CO/NABTEB	OND/NCE	HND/BSC	MSC/PHD	F-Value	Sig
	3.40	3.00	3.11	2.97	3.08	3.19	1.748	0.123

Table 9: Influence of Ethnicity on Nigeria Brand Perceptions

Ethnicity	Hausa	Yoruba	Igbo	Minority	F-Value	Sig	Decision
	3.00	3.02	3.05	3.09	0.330	0.803	Not Significant

Table 10: (ANOVA) Test Results for Equality of Mean Perceptions on the Basis of Religion

Religion	Christianity	Islam	Traditionalism	Others	F-Value	Sig	Decision
	3.08	3.20	3.00	3.00	0.159	0.924	Not Significant

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the image of the Nigeria mother brand and its sub-brands amongst Nigerians and Non-Nigerians. A comparative analysis of the relative image of the thirteen (13) sub-brands was conducted to ascertain the areas of strength and weaknesses for Nigeria brand.

The study also investigated the influence of demographic and socio-cultural variables on the perception of the Nigeria brand image.

The results obtained showed that the image of Nigeria brand was neither positive nor negative. No significant difference was found between Nigerians and Non-Nigerians in their perceptions. In summary, the outcome of the multiple range test succinctly revealed that Nigeria brand was only rated positively above average mean perception on six (6) sub brands. The three sub brands on which the Nigeria brand scored highest were food and drinks, fashion and clothing and movies/music. The Nigeria's three weakest sub-brands were electoral system, safety/security and governance. Lastly, the study found no significant relationship between perceivers' demographics and Nigeria brand image.

The findings in this research have shown that Nigeria brand is yet to be effective in two of the three components of a successful nation branding (Fan, 2008). Culturally, results have shown that Nigeria brand is good except in political and economic. Attempt has been made in this study to examine the health status of the Nigeria brand in these three major areas. For expansion of knowledge, it is suggested that future researchers investigate the relationship between these three major areas of nation branding and national development and wellbeing.

The strength and weakness analyses in this study reveal that Nigeria is culturally blessed and weak politically and economically. As an area of niche, the Nigerian government and branding agencies can initiate strategies to develop its cultural and creative industry for its diplomatic exchange in the global market. Training on cultural technology should be jointly organised by the public and private institutions. Operators in the hospitality industry should be empowered to continue in delivering the unbeatable service quality in food and drinks.

While targeting the external communities, efforts should also be made to market Nigerian fashion and traditional dresses internally to the local audience. School administrators should be encouraged to design the school uniforms from local fabrics as well as workers in Nigeria to dress in traditional attires at least on Fridays.

Through positive literature content, Nigerian authors can impact the world with Nigerian values and heritage. Right from the elementary education stage, the nation's literature serves as a powerful tool for perpetuating national values and culture. The same goes for the actors in creative industry, films and music content creators should be mindful of the image they paint of the Nigeria brand in the mind of the international audience.

Just as done in Vietnam nation branding project, the Nigerian government and its agencies should craft national identities and values to be communicated to both the internal and external stake holders. Harmful taste and desires of the citizens that is consumers and manufacturers can be controlled through various means and platforms like the literature, media, government policies, movies/music and exports.

The Nigerian branding agents should work in diplomatic relations through embassies and other institutions to generate a formula to penetrate the global markets with Nigerian products and

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heritage. Following the American's footsteps, the Nigerian film industry can become a powerful tool to inspire the dreams and desires of others.

The Nigerian government must of necessity gear up its coordinating role in monitoring agencies like NAFDAC to ensure high standard quality of Made-in-Nigeria exported products. The media and other governmental agencies should work hand in hand to frame the attitudes of Nigerian consumers particularly those in government to develop self-esteem, nationalism and ethnocentric spirit by valuing and expressing preference for home-made goods and services as a way of building local industries.

If the tourism industry must flourish, the government must think out of the box on ways to improve security and safety. The issue of corruption is not only a minus in the implementation of government policies, it largely impacts the overall image of the nation brand hence the need to jointly eliminate its appearances and manifestations to gain credibility and likeability in the international stage. Without dealing with the systemic corrupt practices, achieving credible elections is a mirage.

A coordinated strategic nation branding approach is needed to craft the brand vision, mission and values at the presidential, state and local levels to drive corporate and individual interests and buy-ins. Lastly, there is need to establish and monitor the short and long term goals and strategies for effective nation branding.

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Appendix A

Table 3: Mean Perceptions of Nigeria Sub Brands and Mother Brand

	Nigeria Brand Image Parameters	Mean	Std. Dev
	Business Environment		
1	Nigeria has good power supply	1.73	.902
2	Nigeria has effective transportation system	2.27	1.084
3	In Nigeria, there is honesty in business practices	2.18	1.034
4	Business registration process is simple	2.66	1.096
5	Comparatively, cost of doing business is low	2.37	1.208
6	There is availability of skilled labour	3.35	1.219
7	Raw materials are available	3.61	1.201
	Overall mean	2.60	.743
	Exports - Made in Nigeria products:		
8	Are durable (Of standard quality)	2.87	1.086
9	Give value for money (Fairness of Prices of locally made products)	2.72	1.079
10	Are fashionable, of good workmanship/craftsmanship	3.38	1.056
11	I buy Made in Nigeria products even when there are alternatives	2.95	1.169
	Overall mean	3.09	.875
	Tourism		
12	Nigerians are friendly and hospitable to visitors	3.73	1.098
13	Climate condition in Nigeria is favourable for tourists	3.67	1.102
14	Nigeria's landscape is attractive and breathtaking	3.69	1.087
15	Festivals in Nigeria are a powerful tool for attracting tourists	4.00	1.101
	Overall mean	3.88	.828
	Safety/Security		
16	Nigeria is a safe place for tourism	2.32	1.177
17	The Nigerian roads are safe to travel on	1.79	.918
18	Night life in Nigeria is safe	1.84	.974
	Overall mean	1.98	.903
	Movies/Music		
19	Nigerian music/movies are of good quality	4.13	2.703
20	Nigerian music/movies are better than foreign ones	2.96	1.220
21	Nigerian music/movies are good ambassadors of the nation's culture	3.69	1.135

	Nigeria Brand Image Parameters	Mean	Std. Dev
	Overall mean	4.00	0.000
	Sports		
22	Nigerian sports athletics are skilled	4.01	.953
23	Nigeria international sporting performance is good	3.57	1.020
24	Nigerian sport stars can be used as nation brand ambassadors	3.90	1.076
	Overall mean	3.82	.900
	Educational System		
25	Nigerian education system is of international standard/quality	2.63	1.228
26	Graduates from Nigerian Universities are employable anywhere	3.04	1.316
27	The educational system in Nigeria can easily attract foreign students	2.32	1.185
	Overall mean	2.65	1.034
	Media		
28	The Nigerian mass media are responsible	3.01	1.091
29	The mass media in Nigeria are of international standard	2.79	1.071
30	The Nigerian mass media are good advocates	2.97	1.149
	Overall mean	2.92	.997
	Food and Drinks		
31	The taste of Nigerian food is great	4.41	.870
32	Foreigners in Nigeria usually love Nigerian food and drinks	4.13	.903
33	Nigerian food and drinks are better than their foreign counterparts	3.61	1.123
	Overall mean	4.04	.803
	Fashion and Clothing		
34	Nigeria fashion designs are rich and attractive	4.17	.863
35	I prefer the Nigerian traditional dresses to others	3.85	1.014
36	Nigeria fashion can compete effectively in the international markets	3.99	1.005
	Overall mean	4.01	.829
	People		
37	Nigerian peoples are courteous and friendly	3.81	.992
38	Nigerians in diaspora (abroad) are good ambassadors	3.42	.987
39	Nigerian people are transparent	2.66	1.101
40	Nigerian people are patriotic	3.02	1.190

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	Nigeria Brand Image Parameters	Mean	Std. Dev
	Overall mean	3.35	.832
	Electoral System		
41	Party primaries are conducted in accordance with electoral laws	2.22	1.239
42	Election results are accurately declared in Nigeria	1.71	1.037
43	The Nigerian electoral system can be adjudged free and fair	1.76	1.080
	Overall mean	1.90	.965
	Governance		
44	Nigeria's policies are designed to be developmental	2.57	1.280
45	Judicial system in place in Nigeria is transparent	1.92	1.062
46	Laws are diligently observed by the government	1.86	1.053
	Overall mean	2.12	.992
	Nigeria Mother Brand Value	3.08	.524