

Brand Heritage and Perception of University of Nigeria, Nsukka

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Abstract: Brand heritage is one of the most important features of any brand. A brand's heritage influences consumer perception, interaction and consumer behaviour. A brand's heritage determines the kind of benefits, praise and patronage received from its external and its internal publics. In light of the foregoing, this study examined the Brand Heritage and Students' Perception of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The study adopted the survey method and used questionnaire and interview as the instruments of data collection. This study also used the Credible Brand Model as its theoretical anchor. The study focused on students of UNN as its population, using 393 respondents for its sample size and employed the use of the multi-stage sampling technique. The findings of the study revealed the brand heritage of University of Nigeria, Nsukka has been effective to a great deal. Similarly, the factors responsible for the influence of students' choice of UNN are her academic track records, UNN as a federal university and her motto to restore the dignity of man and the dominant factor is academic track record of the university. The findings also reveal that the ratings of UNN by her students are relatively high and the university has not failed in projecting herself as a credible brand. The study recommends that UNN should continue to bring up activities and programmes that could add to its already favourable brand heritage and also consider its infrastructure, which is already a dent on its brand heritage and has a potential to destroy its already favourable brand heritage.

Keywords: Brand Heritage, Consumer perception, Credible Brand

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Brand heritage is very essential in every organization and every institution. On the pivot of brand heritage long term brand reputation can be built which has to do with the distinctive characteristics of any organization. A brand's heritage is basically what it is known for overtime. This can be determined through taking a close look at the brand's mission, vision, activities, corporate identity and also its interactions with its publics and public perception

Universities are not exempted from having a brand heritage because first of all, a university is a brand with an identity and characteristics Universities try to create a brand and maintain the status quo of the already created brand heritage. The brand heritage of universities determine how much students will have an interest in getting a degree, the university's relationship with the government, potential investors and the perception of other universities This is why universities employ public relations officers to maintain the heritage of their brand.

In 2015, former president Goodluck Jonathan has said he feels bad over Nigerian Universities' poor showing in world rankings. The former president made the comment while speaking at the "Presidential Debate" organised by the "Nigeria Elections Debate Group" (NEDG) on the 1st of March 2015. This translates to the assumptions that in Nigeria, brand heritage isn't taken too seriously because so many universities are currently suffering threats to the stability of their brands and are doing nothing to relieve the situations, as far as the nation's citizens are concerned. However, overseas, universities are very concerned with their brand heritage because it puts their universities ahead of others and also encourages international students to try them

Established by law in 1955, the University of Nigeria holds the distinction of being the first indigenous and autonomous university in Nigeria. Since its inception, the institution has remained steadfast in pursuing its missions and visions. The formal beginning of the university's history can be traced back to the enactment of a law to establish a university in the Eastern Region in 1955, as documented in the University of Nigeria Calendar (2007-2009). This legislative milestone was the

culmination of extensive deliberations by various Nigerian leaders, with particular inspiration from Dr. NnamdiAzikiwe, the then Premier of the Eastern Region. The commitment to establish the university was further demonstrated by the Eastern Nigeria Government, which invited advisers from both the United States of America and the United Kingdom to assist in planning the physical and educational aspects of the proposed institution. The University of Nigeria was officially inaugurated on October 7, 1960, marking the climax of the Nigerian independence celebrations in the Eastern Region. The opening ceremonies were graced by Her Royal Highness, Princess Alexandra of Kent, representing Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who also laid the foundation stone of one of the early buildings. On October 17, 1960, lectures commenced with an initial enrollment of 220 students and a faculty comprising 13 members. The opening convocation addresses were delivered by Dr. NnamdiAzikiwe, the Chairman of the Provisional Council and the first President of the Federation of Nigeria, as well as Dr. John A. Hannah, the President of Michigan State University.

The university is known for its distinctiveness and reputation. Taking a close look at the university logo that has a Lion in it, this symbolizes courage, strength and leadership. Indeed, one of University of Nigeria's brand heritages is its name. Another thing to look into is that there is only one university in Nigeria known and called "the University of Nigeria". No other university in the country is so called. This name has over time become the envy of other universities and their graduates to the extent that some of them have suggested that "the University of Nigeria" be renamed as the "University of Nsukka", since Nsukka is the place it is located. This re-naming, they argue, will be in line with other universities such as the University of Ibadan, the University of Lagos, and the University of Port Harcourt, among others. In short, the name: "the University of Nigeria" has a large appeal to both prospective students and staff as well as national and international community.

Another brand heritage of the university is its motto which is "To Restore the Dignity of Man". To restore the dignity of man raises hope for the future, promotes self-confidence, positivity and instills a sense of hard work. All those who would want to be endowed with these excellent attributes seek for admission in the University of Nigeria.

The University of Nigeria (UNN) has a unique aura of prestige attached to every part of it. The name, logo, motto and colours of the University stand out among those of other universities in the country. The University of Nigeria as an institution that is the first of its kind in the country, boasts of a sound educational environment and academic excellence and its motto which is "To Restore the Dignity of man". The perception of prospective students is usually positive and they yearn to be alumnus of the university.

Heritage brands stand for longevity and sustainability, as proof that the core values and performance of the given products are reliable. (Wiedmann, 2011, p.2) The heritage of a university is usually associated with museums, old buildings, traditions, and ceremonies (Bulotaite 2003, p.3). All these form part of the university image

The brand heritage of any university affects the perception of the students of the university as well as the choice of the prospective students. Brand heritage is basically what makes a university what it is. This has to do with what it is known for and what reputation it has.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

During the decades immediately following the establishment of UNN, the institution distinguished itself creditably and appealed to both local and international audiences. The university recorded and continues to record landmark achievements in the Sciences, Medicine, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, and was the first to introduce the General Studies programme among Nigerian and even African universities.

However, in recent times, due to the decline in educational infrastructure in the entire country, the brand heritages of federal universities in the country have been battered. The stories of corruption, money in exchange for grades and decay of educational facilities have plagued universities, including the University of Nigeria, Nsukka

As a result of this, most students now make a decision that involves either choosing another federal university or state university, going to a private university and for children of the upper middle class, a foreign university. The University of Nigeria's brand heritage, as an institution that should "restore

the dignity of man" is now seen to many as a farce. The big question is whether many students are choosing the university to just get a degree, and not necessarily because they have fallen in love with the University's brand heritage and made their decision to go there.

According to Sahara Reporters, in a report written by Jonas (2011), a UNN student alleged that she was asked by a lecturer to pay #4,000 as a prerequisite to pass a course. This report, if it is true negates the philosophy behind the institution's establishment, which is "To Seek Truth, To Teach Truth, and To Preserve Truth" and thereby "To Restore the Dignity of Man". This negative report has the ability to threaten and stifle any positive perceptions students and parents/guardians may have about the university and even change their minds.

Therefore this study aims at thoroughly examining the current perception of students about all the constituents of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage and how their decision to come to the university.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the major aspects of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage.
2. To examine the factors that influence students' choice of UNN.
3. To ascertain students' rating of UNN in comparison with other universities.
4. To determine the extent to which students' expectations from UNN at the time of admission have been met.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What are the major aspects of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage?
2. What are the factors that influence the students' choice of UNN?
3. What are students' ratings of UNN in comparison with other federal universities?
4. To what extent has the students' expectations from UNN at the time of admission been met?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Focus of the Review

2.1.1. Brand Heritage

Brand heritage is one of the strategies marketers can employ to distinguish their brands from competitors, ultimately enabling the creation of a distinctive image for the product (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). According to Aaker (2004), brand heritage serves as a significant driver of value, particularly for corporate brands, as it imparts authenticity and sets them apart. In other words, brand heritage enhances the authenticity, credibility, and trustworthiness of a brand, offering a strategic advantage.

Aaker (2004) posits that heritage enhances the value of a brand, particularly when reinterpreted in a modern context. According to Wiedmann, Hennigs, Schmidt, and Wuestefeld (2011), heritage serves as a crucial tool for brand marketers by contributing "depth, authenticity, and credibility to the perceived value of the brand." (p. 205). Scholars agree that heritage is very essential for any brand to thrive.

Urde, Greyser, and Balmer's (2007) Brand Stewardship Model provides a definitive method for evaluating the extent of brand heritage in selected cases. As outlined by Gidlund, Lilja, Lindhe, Shirbin, and Thieme (2009), the model aims to harness brands for positive value creation and safeguard the brand's equity and symbols from exploitation. Comprising five elements—track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols, and history—the model serves as a crucial tool for Heritage Brand Stewardship, fostering a heritage-oriented mindset within the company (Urde et al., 2007). While brands can achieve success without a heritage, incorporating it into the brand's identity and communication can add significant value.

The first element is Track record. While Urde (2007) emphasizes a consistent track record, longevity alone is insufficient in today's rapidly evolving market. Consumers increasingly value brands that demonstrate agility, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous innovation (Bhattacharya &

Mukherjee, 2022). Patagonia's recent collaboration with Allbirds on a plant-based shoe exemplifies this, showcasing its environmental commitment and staying ahead of the curve in eco-conscious footwear (Patagonia, 2023).

Longevity is important, but brands can cultivate heritage status even within a shorter timeframe by leveraging powerful storytelling and fostering vibrant online communities (Muniz & Jensen, 2003). Glossier, a relatively young beauty brand, has built a dedicated community through its authentic and relatable social media presence, establishing a strong sense of connection and belonging among its target audience

In the digital age, consumers crave brands that stand for something genuine and transparent (Kantar, 2023). Core values must not only be articulated but also actively demonstrated through consistent actions and ethical business practices (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan outlines ambitious environmental and social responsibility goals, demonstrating the company's commitment to its core values beyond mere marketing slogans.

While iconic logos remain powerful symbols, brands can further elevate their heritage by crafting immersive, multi-sensory experiences that resonate with their target audience (Fournier & McAlexander, 2020). Airbnb's "Live There" campaign is a prime example, inviting guests to experience the world like locals and connect with the rich cultural heritage of different destinations.

Acknowledging and celebrating a brand's history is valuable, but clinging to the past can stifle growth (Kapferer, 2006). Heritage-conscious brands adapt their traditions to remain relevant in the present and future, like Levi Strauss & Co., a denim pioneer, which continues to innovate through collaborations with contemporary designers and a focus on sustainable production practices.

Urde's framework offers a valuable starting point, but building enduring brands in the digital age requires a nuanced approach. By embracing agility, authenticity, and multi-sensory experiences, brands can forge meaningful connections with their audience and cultivate a lasting legacy that transcends mere longevity. Remember, a strong brand heritage is not simply about the past; it's about using the past to inform a vibrant and relevant present and future.

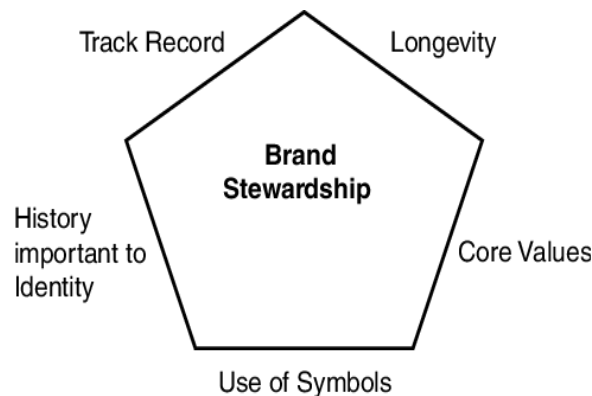


Figure 1. Brand Stewardship Model

Source: Urde, Greyser and Balmer, 2007

Brand heritage, a potent force in the realm of marketing, transcends mere product history. It embodies the accumulated tapestry of a brand's journey – a chronicle woven from threads of longevity, core values, and the resonance of its past in the present. As Balmer, Greyser, and Urde (2006) aptly state, "Brand heritage is the accumulation of assets, associations, and memories that a brand acquires over time" (p. 6). Understanding this rich concept necessitates delving into the perspectives of prominent scholars who have shed light on its intricacies.

At the core of brand heritage lies its inherent irreplicability. Hudson and Balmer (2011) emphasize this advantage, noting that "heritage is a unique asset, accumulated over time, that cannot be easily copied by competitors" (p. 206). This historical depth fosters trust and authenticity, qualities coveted by consumers in an increasingly saturated marketplace. As Kapferer (2008) asserts, "Brands with rich heritage can evoke memories, emotions, and associations that resonate deeply with consumers, creating a sense of trust and loyalty" (p. 125).

While nostalgia is often intertwined with brand heritage, scholars caution against equating the two. Urde (2004) warns against "heritage nostalgia," a tendency to romanticize the past at the expense of present relevance. Instead, a dynamic approach is advocated, where heritage serves as a springboard for innovation and adaptation (Hudson and Balmer, 2011). This ensures that the brand remains rooted in its core values while evolving to meet the needs of a changing market.

Effectively communicating brand heritage necessitates masterful storytelling. Balmer and Greyser (2005) emphasize the power of narrative in weaving together a brand's past, present, and future, creating a compelling tapestry that resonates with consumers. These stories, whether relayed through advertising, packaging, or customer experiences, imbue the brand with personality and emotional connection (Holt, 2010).

Harnessing the power of brand heritage is not without its challenges. Managing a long and complex history requires careful curation. Blackett and Bolland (2013) warn against neglecting negative aspects of the past, advocating for a balanced and transparent approach that acknowledges challenges while emphasizing growth and evolution. Additionally, ensuring cultural relevance is crucial, as heritage elements may need to be adapted to resonate with diverse audiences (Holt, 2010).

Brand heritage, like a well-worn tome, holds within its pages the essence of a brand's identity. Understanding and leveraging this rich resource can provide a significant competitive advantage, fostering trust, loyalty, and emotional connection with consumers. By integrating the wisdom of scholars like Balmer, Hudson, and Holt, brands can navigate the challenges and unlock the immense potential of their heritage, weaving a tapestry of time, trust, and tradition that endures in the ever-evolving landscape of the marketplace.

2.2. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness, a cornerstone of marketing strategy, refers to the extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand. It transcends mere recognition, encompassing associations, emotions, and perceptions that consumers hold towards a brand (Keller, 1993). Understanding this multifaceted concept requires delving into the works of prominent scholars who have shaped its definition and explored its nuances.

Keller (1993), proposed a hierarchical model, differentiating between brand recognition and brand recall. He argued that recognition, the ability to identify a brand after exposure, forms the foundation for recall, the ability to retrieve a brand from memory without prompting.

Aaker (1991), emphasized the importance of brand awareness as the "building block" of brand equity. He argued that high brand awareness creates a "mental shortcut" for consumers, influencing their purchase decisions and fostering brand loyalty.

Kapferer (2009): In "The New Strategic Brand Management," Kapferer broadened the scope of brand awareness beyond recognition and recall, introducing the concept of "brand resonance." He proposed that resonance occurs when consumers connect with a brand on an emotional level, leading to deeper engagement and loyalty.

Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM, 2018): The CIM defines brand awareness as "the extent to which a brand is known by its target audience." This definition acknowledges the importance of targeting specific audiences, as brand awareness is not simply about broad recognition, but about resonating with the right consumers.

Young & Rubicam (Y&R, 2005) Y&R's Brand Activation Model introduced the concept of "brand salience," which measures the frequency and intensity with which a brand comes to mind in relevant contexts. This model emphasized the importance of active engagement in building brand awareness beyond passive recognition.

Keller (2012) highlighted the need for a multi-faceted approach to measuring brand awareness. He proposed that marketers should consider not only recognition and recall, but also brand engagement and sentiment analysis to gain a holistic understanding of consumer perceptions.

Brand awareness is a complex and dynamic concept that has evolved significantly over time. Understanding the diverse perspectives of scholars like Keller, Aaker, Kapferer, and CIM provides a rich framework for comprehending its various dimensions and its critical role in building strong brands. By effectively measuring and managing brand awareness, marketers can create meaningful connections with their target audiences, laying the foundation for sustainable brand success.

2.3. Influence of Audience Perception on a Brand

The perception of a brand by customers plays a crucial role in its overall success (Wheeler, 2012). Brands possess the ability to shape images and evoke emotions in people's minds when considering a product or company. Through its attributes, a brand pursues two strategic goals: delivering value to consumers while meeting a need and generating economic returns for its owners (Hameide, 2011). The thoughts, feelings, information, knowledge, and experiences that consumers have with a brand collectively form brand attitude (Percy, 2003). Brands hold diverse meanings for different consumers, and these meanings are shaped by their brand attitudes. Brand attitude is the result of specific beliefs regarding the brand's benefits that contribute to the overall brand image (Faircloth, Capella & Alford, 2001).

2.4. Universities and Branding

In the ever-competitive landscape of higher education, universities no longer function solely as bastions of knowledge. They've become brands, meticulously crafting identities to attract the brightest minds and secure their place in the academic hierarchy. This brand-building exercise, as argued by scholars like Parker (2020) and Sporn (2015), goes beyond mere marketing; it's about defining an institution's unique value proposition and communicating it effectively to diverse stakeholders.

It is essential for higher education institutions to present a positive and universally communicable image that incorporates distinct representations for various target audiences (Anctil, 2008). In the context of universities, branding efforts should focus on conveying an identity rather than selling a product or service. This identity serves as a platform for competitive positioning among other brands and contributes to the advancement of the university (Bulotaite, 2003). Emphasis is placed on achieving internal consensus on the identity to ensure external success (Waeraas & Solbakk, 2009). This internal alignment is crucial as staff members may perceive themselves as part of a department rather than viewing the university as a cohesive unit (Jevons, 2006). When marketing a university, consideration should also be given to the surrounding environment, as the decision to pursue higher education can be influenced by parents and peers (Anctil, 2008).

One key aspect of university branding, as highlighted by Davies (2011), is clarifying institutional mission and values. This involves articulating the university's core beliefs, its commitment to specific research areas or teaching styles, and its vision for the future of education. A clearly defined mission, as exemplified by MIT's focus on technology and innovation, serves as a guiding star for internal decision-making and external messaging.

Another crucial element is differentiation. In a sea of seemingly homogenous institutions, universities must carve out a niche, as stressed by Keller (2012). This differentiation can be achieved through unique academic programs, like Stanford's interdisciplinary "Humanities Core," or distinctive campus cultures that foster inclusivity or entrepreneurial spirit, as emphasized by Veitch et al. (2017).

However, branding isn't just about crafting a shiny image; it's about living up to the promise. As cautioned by Brodie et al. (2011), branding without substance can lead to reputational damage and disillusioned students. Strong academic programs, renowned faculty, and a vibrant student experience are the bedrock upon which a brand's authenticity rests.

The digital age has also transformed university branding. As argued by De Waal (2015), social media platforms and online marketing campaigns play a critical role in reaching potential students and conveying the university's story. However, as warned by Smith and Jones (2013), digital branding must be authentic and avoid gimmicks or inauthentic portrayals.

Effective university branding is a complex dance, balancing image with substance, differentiation with shared values, and digital outreach with academic excellence. By carefully crafting their identities and living up to their promises, universities can attract the best students, faculty, and resources, ensuring their success in the competitive arena of higher education.

2.5. Brand Heritage and Audience Perception: An Empirical Study

Understanding brand heritage and its influence on audience perception is a crucial area of inquiry in today's competitive landscape. This essay delves into existing research to illuminate the concept of brand heritage, explore its multifaceted components, and examine its impact on consumer behavior.

Hakala et al. (2011) highlight the rising prominence of brand heritage in trademark research, emphasizing the challenges of international adaptation. Their findings suggest that brand heritage encompasses both historical elements and consistency, serving as a conduit for reinforcing core values, brand identity, and visual symbols. Cultural value, they argue, is perceived through a brand's enduring characteristics and homogeneity.

Warrington and Shim (2000) investigate the intricate relationship between product heritage and customer commitment to the trademark. While their research among university students reveals no direct association between product involvement and brand commitment, it sheds light on their independent structures. Interestingly, factors like product tendency and information resources emerge as influential players in this dynamic.

Hochgräfe et al. (2012) focus on the role of product involvement in shaping brand loyalty among tourists. Examining both the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of involvement alongside demographic factors, they uncover a significant link between brand heritage and loyalty. Notably, they point to a direct connection between involvement dimensions like joy of purchase and symbolic value, highlighting the emotional resonance triggered by strong brand heritage.

Wuestefeld et al. (2011) shift the focus towards the automotive industry, exploring consumer perceptions of heritage brands. Utilizing a path modeling approach, they demonstrate the substantial impact of brand heritage on consumer attitudes and behaviors towards the brand. This finding underscores the power of history and legacy in shaping brand perception and influencing purchase decisions.

Beyond the realm of commerce, Bulotaite (2003) explores the application of university heritage as a branding tool. Her case study of the University of Vilnius in Northern Europe showcases the effectiveness of leveraging institutional history and tradition to build a compelling brand identity and attract prospective students. This emphasizes the broader applicability of brand heritage across various sectors.

Fueled by the rising trend of brands embracing their heritage, Wuestefeld et al. (2012) conducted a comprehensive study titled "The Impact of Brand Heritage on Customer Perceived Value." Using a structural modeling approach with 316 participants, they explored the factors that shape and the consequences of brand heritage, specifically focusing on how consumers perceive the value associated with such brands. The study's findings revealed a striking and consistent influence of brand heritage on various aspects of customer value perception, including economic, functional, emotional, and social aspects. This indicates that brand heritage plays a key role in shaping how consumers ultimately view and value the brand.

Existing research paints a compelling picture of brand heritage as a potent force shaping audience perception. From reinforcing core values and fostering emotional connection to influencing purchasing behavior and building institutional identity, brand heritage transcends mere nostalgia, offering a strategic tool for navigating the ever-evolving marketplace. By understanding its multifaceted nature and dynamic interplay with audience perception, brands can cultivate meaningful connections and build lasting relationships with their consumers. From the literature reviewed so far, there is no study on brand heritage of any institution or organization in Nigeria. This study, therefore, is designed to fill the gap on students' perception of the brand heritage of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

2.6. Theoretical Framework

This study is given a theoretical balance with the Credible Brand Model (CBM)

Branding practices in mass communication are a relatively recent development, and theories elucidating the role of brand equity or value in this context are still evolving. The Credible Brand Model stands out as a significant contribution in this ongoing exploration.

The Credible Brand Model (CBM), developed by Oyediji(2009), is a theoretical framework that explains how audiences perceive the credibility of news media brands. It integrates concepts from communication theory and consumer branding theory to propose that media credibility is influenced by both customer-based brand equity (CBBE) and ideological congruency.

Below, are the key components of the CBM:

Customer-based brand equity (CBBE): This refers to the value that a brand holds for its customers. In the context of news media, CBBE encompasses factors like perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand image. Oyedeji argues that high CBBE leads to higher perceived media credibility.

Ideological congruency: This refers to the alignment between a news media brand's perceived ideological stance and the audience's own ideological beliefs. Audiences are more likely to perceive a news media brand as credible if they believe its ideology aligns with their own.

The CBM posits that these two factors interact to influence media credibility. For example, a news media brand with high CBBE but low ideological congruency with its audience may still be perceived as credible to some extent, but its credibility will be lower than that of a brand with both high CBBE and high ideological congruency.

The CBM has been influential in media credibility research, providing a framework for understanding how audiences evaluate the trustworthiness and reliability of news sources. It has also been used to explain why audiences may be more likely to trust certain news outlets, even when presented with conflicting information.

The Credible Brand Model provides a valuable framework for understanding and enhancing media credibility in today's complex media landscape. Its emphasis on audience perceptions, brand equity, and ideological congruence offers a nuanced perspective on how news media outlets can cultivate trust and loyalty among their audiences.

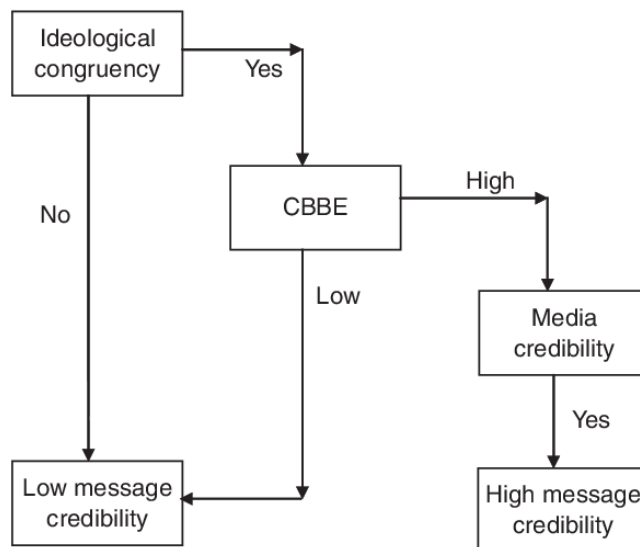


Figure2. Credible Brand Model

Source: Oyedeji, 2010

This theory relates to this study because it shows the relationship between credibility and brand heritage. CBM sends strong signals to potential students and their parents about the quality and credibility of the programmes offered by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. These signals that are sent are referred to as the brand heritage of the university.

Therefore, our study seeks to examine the correlation between the customer-based brand equity of the university and its credibility, employing the theoretical framework provided by the Credible Brand Model.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

Survey is known to be effective and ideal in gathering information on audience opinion. It is an absolute research design that is essential in collecting data on the behavior and attitudes of a population. Based on this, it is believed to be a suitable design for establishing the level of effectiveness of the University of Nigeria's brand heritage on the students' perception of the University.

The Sample Calculator, as developed by the National Statistical Service of Australia, was used to determine the sample size of this study. The population of the study and the confidence interval of the study were keyed into the calculator using 95% confidence level as default. The Australian calculator shows the following:

Confidence Level: 95%

Population Size: 19,941

Proportion Level: 0.5

Confidence Interval: 0.05

Standard Error: 0.02500

Relative Standard Error: 5.0

Sample Size: 393

From the Australian calculator, the sample size is 393. Thus, a total of 393 copies of questionnaires were distributed among respondents.

3.2. Sampling Technique

A multi stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. At different levels, different sampling techniques were employed in order to ensure that the questionnaires reached the targets effectively.

First, the stratified sampling technique was used. According to method involves dividing into homogenous sub-groups and further taking a simple random sampling. In this study, the population of the university was divided into faculties which resulted to nine (9) faculties.

Second, the simple random sampling was employed to select two departments from each faculty. This technique is often praised for eliminating bias in the process of selecting the researcher's sample (Ohaja, 2003). These selected faculties are big and the researcher might not be able to cover them all in due time. So, the researcher applied simple random technique to select two departments each from the selected faculties. A cup containing papers with the names of the faculties from the university was stuffed with the faculties. These faculties were written in separate papers with numbers such as 1, 2, 3, 4 and so on assigned to them without any visible identifying factor. They were properly folded before turning them into the cup. At the end, the following faculties were picked from the university.

The Bowley Proportional calculation technique was then used to distribute copies of the questionnaire based on the population of each of the two departments in each faculty. The technique maintains that the strata with higher numbers must get the higher number of respondents and vice versa.

Two departments were selected from each of the faculties by simple random technique, using the sample method of selecting the faculties. Thus, for Faculty of Arts the Departments of Foreign Languages and History and International Studies were selected, for Faculty of Engineering the Departments of Agricultural and Bio-Resources Engineering and Civil Engineering were selected; for Faculty of Social sciences the Departments of Political science and Sociology and Anthropology were selected

Ultimately, the study utilized the convenience sampling technique, also referred to as available sampling. This method entails the researcher selecting any available member of the population at a given time until the desired sample size is attained. Also, participation is based on availability and willingness. Considering the fact that all the students may not readily be at their various departments at once and that the subject of the study is one that could be experienced by any one of the samples, the researcher thought it wise to use the accidental sampling method by sharing to those that are readily available in the various faculties.

3.3. Instrument of Data collection

The instrument for data collection in this study is the questionnaire. This instrument was considered appropriate for the purposes of gathering data about the behaviours, views, attitudes and opinions of the respondents. The questionnaire questions and few open ended questions in order to ensure that the respondents are not worn out by excessive questions and to also ensure easy coding of respondents answers. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, the demographic and psychographic variables

3.4. Method of Data Analysis

The data collected in this research was presented and analysed using the quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method entailed using tables, percentages and frequencies in order to ensure accuracy and correctness of data to show the results and findings from the questionnaire. On the other hand, the qualitative method was used for interpretation to discuss on the figures for better understanding of the findings.

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is focused on the presentation, analysis, interpretations and discussion of the research findings. Presentation would be made, using simple frequency, percentage and tables. The findings were presented with utmost accuracy and objectivity. The raw data were interpreted using percentage to enable the researchers draw reasonable conclusion based on the information gathered.

4.1. Description of Sample

A total of 393 copies of questionnaire were distributed. Out of the number, 361 were filled and returned while 32 were not returned.

4.2. Demographic Data of Respondents

The demographic data show that 83% of the respondents are between 16-25 years of age, 14% are between the age of 26-35 years, 2% fall between the age of 36-45 while 1% of the respondents are 46 years and above. The majority of respondents in the study fall between the ages of 16- 25 years. Thus, they are mostly adolescents and young adults.

It also indicates that 49% of the respondents are males while 52% of the respondents are females. In terms of marital status, 90%, of the respondents have never married, 7% are married and 3% are separated. Thus, the majority of the respondents that participated have never been married. The data also shows concerning religion, that Christians make up the large number our respondents. This is because 95% are Christians, 2% are Muslims, whereas 3% are of other religions. Finally, the data reveals on the educational qualification our respondents, 90% have O'Level/SSCE certificates, and 7% have OND/HND certificates while 3% of respondents have already acquired a degree certificate. Therefore, the majority of our respondents have just acquired O'Level/SSCE certificates.

4.3. Analysis of Psychographic Data of Respondents

The following questions below from the questionnaire were used to address the research questions accordingly.

Research Question 1: What are the major aspects of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage? This question was addressed with questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the questionnaire. The results are presented below:

Question1. *Do you think the University of Nigeria, Nsukka has a brand heritage?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	306	85
No	48	13
Not sure	7	2
Total	361	100

Table 4.1: Respondents response on whether they think the University of NigeriaNsukka has a brand heritage

Table 4.1 above indicates that 85% of the respondents believe that University of Nigeria, Nsukka has a brand heritage, 13% think otherwise and 2% are uncertain whether the university has a brand heritage.

In addition to the quantitative data and analysis thus far, the researcher interview a senior officer in the office of the Public Relations Officer of the University for More Information on the major aspects of the University of Nigeria's brand heritage. This was because the researcher made several unsuccessful efforts, at different times to the Public Relations Officer himself. The nformation collected from the senior officer indicated that the most important aspect of the rand heritage of the university is the University's academic track record which includes the lecturers and students that have distinguished themselves in their various professional areas.

The second most important aspect of the University's brand heritage is the history. According to the Senior Officer,

"The University is not only the first indigenous University in Nigeria but the first University, because the University of Ibadan was a University College before the establishment of the University of Nigeria" (Senior Officer, PRO's Office, Male).

Question2. *Do you know some aspects of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	280	78
No	59	16
Not sure	22	6
Total	361	100

Table 4.2: Respondents response on whether they know some aspects of University of Nigeria Nsukka's brand heritage

Table 4.2 above reveals that 78% of the respondents know aspects of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage, 16% do not know any aspects of UNN's brand heritage while 6% of the respondents are uncertain whether they know the aspects of the university's brand heritage.

Question3. *What are the aspects of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academic track record	97	27
History	89	25
UNN's logo	11	3
UNN's motto	91	25
Core values	50	14
Infrastructure	13	4
Others	10	2
Total	361	100

Table 4.3: Respondents response on the aspects of UNN's brand heritage

Table 4.3 above indicates that 27% of the identified academic track record' as an aspect of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage, 25% identified the history of the university as an aspect of her brand heritage, 3% identified UNN's logo as an aspect of her brand heritage, 25% point out that the aspect of UNN is found in her motto "to restore the dignity of man", 14% identify "core values" as an aspect of the university's heritage, 4% point out that the infrastructure of the university is an aspect of her brand heritage, 2% identified other things outside these as aspect(s) of UNN's brand heritage. This means that majority of the respondents (27%) identified academic track records of the University's past students as the most popular. followed closely by history and motto (25% each).

Question4. *What aspects of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage do you admire the most?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academic track record	77	21
History	91	25
UNN's logo	18	6
UNN's motto	101	28
Core values	47	13
Infrastructure	19	5
Others	8	2
Total	361	100

Table 4.4: Respondents response on the aspects of UNN's brand heritage they admire the most

Table 4.4 above indicates that 28% of the respondents point out that the aspect of UNN is they admire most is found in her motto: "to restore the dignity of man", 25% identify the history of the university as an aspect of her brand heritage they admire the most and 21% of the respondents identified 'educational track record as an aspect of University of Nigeria, Nsukka's brand heritage they admire the most.

Research Question 2: What are the factors that influence students' choice of University of Nigeria, Nsukka? This question was addressed with questions 6 of the questionnaire. The results are presented below.

Question6. *What factors influenced your choice of University of Nigeria, Nsukka?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low school fees	33	9
Availability of hostel accommodation	20	6
Academic track record	192	53
UNN as a federal university	43	12
UNN's logo	15	4
UNN's location	8	2
UNN's motto	48	13
Others	2	1
Total	361	100

Table 4.5: Respondents response on the factors that influenced their choice of UNN

Responses to the table above indicate that 53% of the respondents identified UNN's academic track record as a factor that influenced their choice of the University, 13% identified UNN's motto: "To restore the dignity of man" was a leading factor to their choice of the institution and Nsukka, 12% choose UNN as a federal university as a factor that influenced their choice of

Research Question 3: What are students' ratings of UNN in comparison with other federal universities? This question was addressed with questions 7 and 11 of the questionnaire. The results are presented below.

Question7. *How do you rate UNN in comparison to other federal universities in Nigeria?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	36	10
High	229	63
Moderate	65	18
Low	25	7
Very low	6	2
Total	361	100

Table 4.6: Respondents response on UNN's rating in comparison to other federal universities

Table 4.6 above as regards to University of Nigeria, Nsukka's rating in comparison with other federal universities show that 10% of the respondents rate the university very high, 63% rate the institution high, 18% rated UNN moderately, 7% rate the institution low 2% give UNN a very low rating compared to other federal universities. This means that:

High: 10%+63% = 73%.

Moderate: 18%

Low: 9%

Question eleven: It is better being a student of UNN instead of any other federal university in the country.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	34	9
Agree	244	68
Not sure	63	17
Disagree	13	4
Strongly disagree	7	2
Total	361	100

Table 4.7: Respondents response on whether being a student of UNN is better than any other federal university in the country

Table 4.7 above indicates that 9% of the respondents strongly agree that it is better being a UNN student than any other federal university in the country, 68% agree that being a UNN student is better, 17% could not say whether it was better being a UNN student other than a student of any other federal

university. On the other hand 4% disagree that being a UNN student is better while 2% strongly disagree that being a student of UNN is better than being a student of any other federal university.

Research Question 4: To what extent has the students' expectations from UNN at the time of admission been met? This question was addressed with questions 8, 10, 12 and 13 of the questionnaire. The results are presented below.

Question8. *Have your expectations from UNN at the time of admission been met?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	250	69
No	36	10
Not sure	75	21
Total	361	100

Table 4.8: Respondents response on whether their expectations from UNN at the time of admission has been met

The table above shows that 250 respondents representing 69% agree that their expectations from the University of Nigeria Nsukka have been met since they gained admission into the university, the expectations of 36 respondents representing 10% has not been met by the university while 147 respondents representing 41% are not sure if the institution has met their expectations.

Question10. *What were your expectation(s) of UNN at the time of admission?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To have my 'dignity' restored	35	10
To know what it means to be in the first indigenous university	17	5
To be a 'Lion' or 'Lioness'	22	6
To make a difference among students from other universities	279	77
Others	8	2
Total	361	100

Table 4.9: Respondents response on the expectations of UNN at the time of admission

Responses to the table above indicate that 35 respondents representing 10% had expectations of their 'dignity' being restored before they gained admission into the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 17 respondents representing 5% wanted to know what it meant to be in the first indigenous university in the country, 22 respondents representing 6% wanted to become a 'Lion' or 'Lioness', 279 respondents representing 77% wanted to make a difference among students from other universities before they gained admission into UNN and finally, 8 respondents representing 2% had other expectations.

Question12. *The University of Nigeria meets the expectations of her students.*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	39	11
Agree	208	57
Not sure	93	26
Disagree	17	5
Strongly disagree	4	1
Total	361	100

Table 4.10: Respondents response on whether University of Nigeria, Nsukka meets the expectations of her students

Responses to the table above indicate that 39 respondents representing 11% strongly agree that the University of Nigeria, Nsukka meets the expectations of her students, 208 respondents representing 57% agree that the university meets the expectations of her students, 93 respondents representing 26% were not sure whether UNN meets the expectation of her students. 17 respondents representing 5% disagree that UNN has met the expectations of her students and 4 respondents representing 1% strongly disagree that UNN has met the expectations of her students.

Question13. *Prospective students' dreams to choose the University of Nigeria Nsukka are worth it*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	21	6
Agree	309	86
Not sure	26	7
Disagree	4	1
Strongly disagree	1	0
Total	361	100

Table 4.11: Respondents response on whether the dreams of prospective students to choose

The table and chart above indicate that 21 respondents representing 6% strongly agree that prospective students' dreams to choose the University of Nigeria, Nsukka meets the expectations of her students, 309 respondents representing 86% agree that prospective students' dreams to choose the university are worth it, 26 respondents representing 7% were not sure whether prospective students' dreams to choose the university are worth it, 4 respondents representing 1% disagree that prospective students' dreams to choose the university are worth it and 1 respondents representing 0% strongly disagree that prospective students' dreams to choose the university are worth it.

Question14. *Do you think the University of Nigeria, Nsukka has failed in projecting herself as a credible brand?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	67	19
No	256	71
Not sure	38	10
Total	361	100

Table 4.12: Respondents response on whether they think UNN has failed in projecting herself as a credible brand

The table above reveals that 67 respondents representing 19% thinks that the University of Nigeria, Nsukka's has failed in projecting herself as a credible brand, 256 respondents representing 71% do not think that the university has failed in projecting herself as a credible brand and 38 respondents representing 10% of the respondents are uncertain whether the university has failed in projecting herself as a credible brand.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study was done in order to examine the current perception of students about all the constituents of the University of Nigeria Nsukka brand heritage and how it has influenced their decision to come to study in the university. The study attempted to: determine the major aspects of the University of Nigeria's brand heritage; ascertain how the University of Nigeria markets her brand heritage; examine the factors that influence students' choice of UNN; ascertain students' rating of UNN in comparison with other universities, and determine the extent to which students' expectations from UNN at the time of admission have been met.

The question of examining the factors that influence students' choice of University of Nigeria, Nsukka was answered. It was discovered there are a couple of factors that influence students' choice of UNN but the dominant factor is the academic track record of the university. Our findings show that the brand heritage of the university, particularly the academic track records and the history are important for branding and marketing the university. This is in line with the study by NijoleBulotaite (2003) whose findings show that the university heritage is an institutional tool for branding and marketing the University of Vilnius in the Baltic states of Northern Europe.

It was equally established that students' rating of University of Nigeria, in comparison with other federal universities in Nigeria, is relatively high. From all the findings, students are favourably disposed towards the university's brand heritage. This agrees with the findings of Wuestefeld, Hennigs, Schmidt, & Wiedmann (2011), which show significant effects of brand heritage on consumer attitudes and behavior.

The question of determining the extent to which students' expectations from UNN at the time of admission have been met shows that the expectations of majority of the students have been met. The confirmation for this notion is obtained in table 4.10 by majority of the respondents (69%) who said their expectations have been met. This shows that, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka has proven to be a credible brand. This is in line with Warrington and Shim's (2000) findings, that product involvement and the brand heritage have exclusive structures, but are affected by variables such as product tendency and information resource.

6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Summary

Given the fact that brand heritage is indispensable in marketing a university, the study was designed to examine factors that influence students' choice of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. It was discovered there are couple of factors that influence students' choice of UNN but the dominant factor that is the academic track record of the university. Our findings show that the brand heritage of the university, particularly the academic track records and the history are important for branding and marketing the university.

The theoretical anchor for this work is built upon the Credible Brand Model which posits that audience or customers assign credibility to a brand. In line with this study, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka has not failed in projecting herself as a credible brand and have received credibility from the students of the institution.

6.2. Conclusion

Brand heritage is one of the most important features of any organization or institution. Brand heritage influences consumer perception, interaction and behaviour. Universities are not excluded from brand heritage because they are brands in themselves with distinctive identities and characteristics. The brand heritage of University of Nigeria, Nsukka cannot be overemphasized. Some of the aspects of UNN's brand heritage from the perception of students of the institution include academic track records, history and the motto which is "to restore the dignity of man". Every institution or organization is concerned about the way the public see them and their products or services. So far, UNN has not failed in projecting herself as a credible brand in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large.

6.3. Recommendations

From this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. The University of Nigeria should ensure that her brand heritage is constantly promoted and upheld.
2. UNN should continue to engage in research and academic activities that will improve the already existing favourable perception of its brand heritage.
3. UNN should upgrade her infrastructure, which appears to have not received adequate attention in the past, as many of the students in the study indicated.
4. The university should also, keep projecting itself as a credible brand.
5. UNN despite being a veteran institution should actively pursue groundbreaking innovations and technological development to add to its brand heritage.

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