

## ENTREPRENEURIAL BRANDING INITIATIVES AND MARKETING SUCCESS OF LUXURY HOTELS IN SOUTH/SOUTH OF NIGERIA

**Adebayo, Joshua Olaitan, Ph.D (In view)**

Email: [olaitanade2012@gmail.com](mailto:olaitanade2012@gmail.com) or [olaitanade\\_14@yahoo.com](mailto:olaitanade_14@yahoo.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the relationships between entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success of luxury hotels in South/South of Nigeria. The study adopted and employed the survey design due to its descriptive nature and embraced the correlational research to determine the extent of the relationship between entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success. The study chose the questionnaire method as a source of data collection in a non-contrived setting. The study population was 22 luxury hotels registered with Nigeria Hotels Association. Six (6) management staff was randomly selected from each of the 22 hotels to arrive at the total number of 132 respondents. Six copies of questionnaire were hand delivered to the Branch Managers, Marketing Managers, Brand Managers, Customer Relation Managers, Sales Managers and Supervisor of the 22 hotels covered in the study and this summed up to 132 reproduced distributed questionnaires. Of the 132 copies of questionnaire that were distributed to the respondents, 115 copies were returned, yielding a response rate of 95.8 percent. The remaining 5 copies produced and distributed were not returned and were unaccounted for. Data was analyzed through the use of Regression analysis, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) and partial correlation statistical techniques. This was executed primarily with the aid of computer using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 23.0. The study found that though, with different levels of statistical interactions and directions of` relationship, positioning branding is most critical in its relationship with marketing success. This is followed by identity branding which revealed a moderate, significant and positive relationship with marketing success. The study therefore, concludes that there is a positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success and recommends` amongst others that management of hotels should emphasis more on brand awareness, perception and personality to attract improved marketing success.*

**Keywords: Entrepreneurial, Branding initiatives, Corporate image, Marketing success, luxury Hotel.**

### INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector as entrepreneurial business is characterized by massive and fierce competition and as such hotels must understand the branding initiatives need to distinguish their service offerings from those of competitors and to do so, branding is one of the strategic initiatives to use. These days, branding is not only considered as a procedure or method of developing ideas such as names, symbols, signs, and/or designs, through which hotels can enable customers in recognizing their services (Keller, Aperia & Georgson, 2008), but also as a continuance commitment aimed at ensuring a positive and effective hotel image and growth (Kapferer, 2008). Robust brands are made of considerate market separation, and product differentiation, which are intended to inform the hotel's corporate vision to the target customer base, while trying to ensure continuity among customers (Kapferer, 2008). Therefore, hotel entrepreneurs more than consider brands only as "marketing engines" illustrated in emblems, and signs, but also as valued resources along with hotels' personnel, and capital, for instance (Petromilli & Berman, 2003). Brands have become a major player in modern society. In fact they are everywhere. They penetrate all spheres of our life: economic, social, cultural, sporting, even religion. Because of this pervasiveness they have come under growing criticism (Klein, 1999).

Brand as a concept cleaves to manifold connotations. The brand is a name, sign, symbol, or design, or an amalgamation of them, projected for the goods and services of one trader or group of traders

to make a distinction from other traders competitively (Keller 2005). Brands are increasingly considered to be the most important capital in numerous businesses. In course of delivering value to customers it is increasingly important for firms to brand their products, especially if they want to beat the cut-throat competition available in today's market. Environmental and competitive forces are key factors that necessitate continuous branding strategies. Competitive activities in the market shorten product lifecycle and reduces product market share because of strategy wear out.

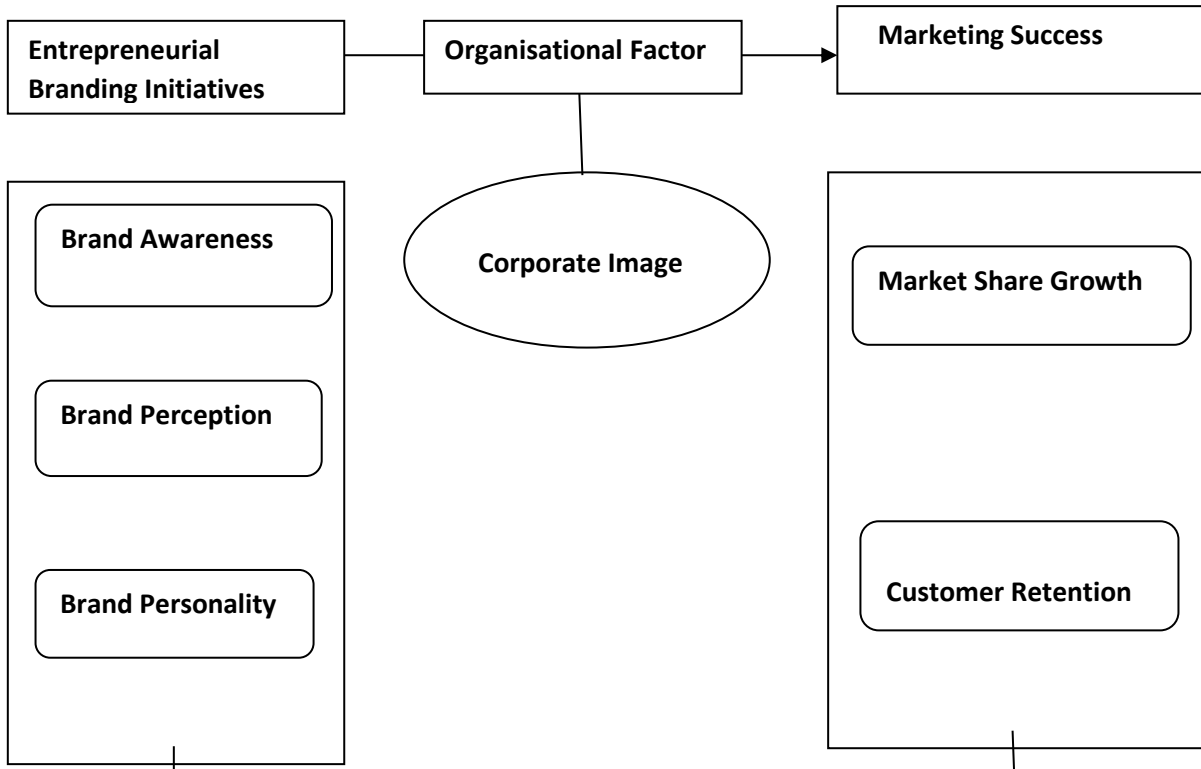
The hospitality sector is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors around the world. The industry comprises of various sub-sectors which include the luxury hotel, one, two or five star hotels. The hotels sector is a sector that most countries around the world try to develop. The sector has been one of the major employers throughout the world. The hotel sector being a vital part of the wider hospitality industry occupies an important place in the economy of country, the sector has been forecasted to generate billion of Naira in revenue in 2016. The hotel sector, being the most visible sector within the hospitality industry, is experiencing a major setback that threatens the attractiveness of the sector to prospective investors. Even though various statistics shows that the industry has been growing at an astronomical rate, taking a closer look at these statistics, one will discover that the major growth in the industry can only be seen in the chain operated hotels and industry cooperate segments. Furthermore, the level of competitions within the hotel sector has increased so much in the recent decades, to the point that it poses a threat not only to new entrants into the industry but also to those companies that have been in the business for many years. It is no longer a secret that many hotels are struggling to keep up with the level of competitions both within and outside the industry. Aggressive branding initiatives have been recorded by the various scholars in their various studies that can help the marketing success of hotels.

Some studies have concentrated on determining the basic precursor variables in the direction of branding initiatives. For instance, Marakarun and Panjakajornsak (2017) examined perceived quality, perceived risk and customer trust affecting customer loyalty of environmentally friendly electronics, Saleem, Ghafar, Ibrahim, Yousuf and Ahmed (2015) investigated product perceived quality and purchase intention with consumer satisfaction. Georgiev, Gueorguieva and Maseviciute (2015), Nwulu, and Asiegbu (2015) and Kenneth, Miebaka & Ezirim (2015) conducted studies in service sectors such as banks, hospitals and hotels taking into consideration consumer patronage and factors that influence consumers decision to patronize a particular brand over another in different locations. In these previous studies, the relationship between branding strategies and marketing performance is not sufficiently addressed, because there is no clear knowledge in these studies, about the relationship between branding initiatives and marketing success. This implies that, though, the concept of brand initiatives has been extensively researched; there exist insufficient studies on the influence of entrepreneurial branding initiatives on marketing success of hotels in South/South of Nigeria.

Moreover, prior research on entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success do not provide adequate knowledge for managers in the Nigerian context on how entrepreneurial branding initiatives relates with a hotel's marketing success. This is because most of such studies are foreign and conducted using other measures of marketing success . For instance, Marakarun and Panjakajornak (2017) and Saleem, Ghafar, Yousuf and Ahmed (2015) used customers trust and loyalty. Thus, these previous studies have left a gap on the linkage between branding initiatives and marketing success. Premised on the acknowledged research gap, this existing study explored the relationship between of entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success of hotels in South/South of Nigeria. Above and beyond, the current study is expected to make academic and practical contributions to the existing branding literature and the practice of branding management in emergent countries such as Nigeria.

### Study Variables and Conceptual Framework

The major variables of this study are entrepreneurial branding initiatives (predictor variable) and marketing success of hotels (criterion variable), and corporate image (moderating variable). The focus of this study is on marketing success of hotels through entrepreneurial branding initiatives. The diagram below shows the diagram of conceptual model of the study with different variables



**Fig. 1** Conceptualization of Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives and Marketing Success of Luxury Hotels

**Source:** Keller, K.L. (2008); Balmer , J . M .T .( 2001a ); Skogland & Sigauw (2004)

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### The conceptual of Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives

Branding initiatives refer to the ways that firms mix and match their brand's name on their products which it presents to the world (Aaker, 2004). Several authors have studied branding initiatives and have identified some initiatives with different taxonomy, listed below: Individual product branding and corporate branding, Branded house and house of brand, including 'endorsed brands' and 'sub brands, Endorsement branding initiative, strong endorsement, token endorser and linked name, No endorsement, weak endorsement, medium endorsement and strong endorsement (Aaker,1991; Armstrong et al., 2007; Kotler, 2008 ).

Some branding strategies that respond to the market are structured along two axes: 1) the indicator of origin source effect reassurance, and 2) product differentiation, personalization and identification. These initiatives consist of product brand, line brand, range brand, endorsing brand, source brand, umbrella brand, marker's mark, corporate endorsing brand, corporate source brand and corporate master brand, brand/line extension, brand attitude, the branding. Most companies employ mixed strategies but this paper briefly characterizes three initiatives: brand awareness, brand perception and brand personality and adopts them as the dimensions of entrepreneurial branding initiatives. These constructs are, by definition, linked in memory to a brand, and have been researched conceptually and measured empirically.

The concept of entrepreneurial branding initiatives has gained a distinct position in the marketing literature. The study of this phenomenon has been complex and multidisciplinary, as it has been found to be related with other concepts such as corporate image, corporate personality, corporate reputation, and corporate identity (Balmer, 2001; Knox & Bickerton, 2003).

Numerous products or services offered to the market have to be branded, and branding is one of the essential elements in the service and product planning activities of any hotel. Hotel branding is concerned with efforts a hotel makes in selecting, developing, innovating, projecting and establishing its own identity (brand). Hotel branding within the hospitality business environment is now linked to high management significance in the last decades due to the growing realization that branding is one of the most valuable intangible assets that hotels could have. Hotels are now realizing, understanding and are ready to deploy the power of good branding to attract immediate guest acknowledgment of the hotel's services. Hotel branding is a combination of distinct and unique image or image to a specific product which sets it apart from every other hotel service impressed in the minds of guests (Ehikwe 2005).

### **Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness is necessary for developing brand equity (Kotler and Keller, 2016). It refers to the extent to which a consumer can identify a brand. Similarly, (Kotler and Keller, 2016) also argued that brand awareness is related to the strength of brand information that allows marketers to measure consumers' ability to identify brands in various conditions. Further, according to (Aaker, 2015), brand awareness is an asset affecting perceptions, likes, and even consumer behavior. It can bring impacts to purchase decisions about brands which at the end will enhance loyalty (Mathew et al., 2014). According to Mathew et al, 2012. Brand awareness is the extent to which customers are able to recall or recognize a [brand](#) under different conditions. Brand awareness is one of two dimensions from brand knowledge, an associative network memory model. Brand awareness is a key consideration in entrepreneurial marketing. The consumer's ability to recognize or recall a brand is central to purchasing decision-making. Purchasing cannot proceed unless a consumer is first aware of a product category and a brand within that category. Awareness does not necessarily mean that the consumer must be able to recall a specific brand name, but they must be able to recall enough distinguishing features for purchasing to proceed. Creating brand awareness is the main step in advertising a new product or bringing back the older brand in light. Brand awareness consists of two components: brand recall and brand recognition. Several studies have shown that these two components operate in fundamentally different ways as brand recall is associated with memory retrieval, and brand recognition involves object recognition. Both brand recall and brand recognition play an important role in consumers' purchase decision process and in marketing communications. Brand awareness is closely related to concepts such as the evoked set and consideration set which include the specific brands a consumer considers in purchasing decision. Consumers are believed to hold between three and seven brands in their consideration set across a broad range of product categories. Consumers typically purchase one of the top three brands in their consideration set as consumers have shown to buy only familiar, well-established brands. As brands are competing in a highly globalized market, brand awareness is a key indicator of a brand's competitive market performance. Given the importance of brand awareness in consumer purchasing decisions, marketers have developed a number of metrics designed to measure brand awareness and other measures of brand health.

### **Brand Perception**

Brand Perception can easily be defined as a psychological variable which is involved in a Purchase Decision Process which will generally impact Consumer Behavior. Brand perception is owned by consumers, not brands. Regardless of your message, whatever people are thinking and saying about your brand, that is your brand. A strong brand gets the prefrontal cortex on your side. It

also reinforces the importance of considering your customer's complete experience. (Bian, & Moutinho, 2011).

Brand perceptions are hugely impacted by the overall experience of the product itself than just from marketing communication. Marketing communication has a much greater impact when trying to build brand awareness. This in no way means that communication does not change perception, or help in changing the perception of the consumer about the brand, but it cannot be a standalone means of gauging and changing perception and needs to be backed by a real change in the overall experience of the product (Grimes & Doole (1998).

Customer evaluates the brand on few embedded elements. If it's a product, Aaker says your customers evaluate on: Performance, Features, Conformity with specifications, Reliability, Durability, Serviceability, Fit and finish. If it's a service, Aaker (1991) says your customers make quality decisions based on: Tangibles, Reliability, Competence, Responsiveness, and Empathy ("Brand Perceptions," 2014).

A brand in its name embed three different meanings including cultural meanings, community meanings and individual meanings which means that for a brand manager to compose its brand message have to take into consideration all these three elements otherwise it may create a false perception in the minds of consumer. But it may also be considered that the marketing communication mix that includes all the tools that are present on a brand managers' discretion in order to convey a strong brand message may be more effective in creating brand awareness than creating and changing brand perceptions. There are other ways to change or create brand perception including competitive strategy, business model, technical support, internal culture etc. (Keller et al., 1998). Consumer values and consumer emotions are revealed by what consumers say. Consumer emotions convey meanings and feelings about brands. Through the creation of meaning and feelings, consumers are able to achieve consonance between brands and their intensions - if not their actions (Rupp & Spencer,2006).

### **Brand Personality**

Brand personality has been one of the most important issues in marketing, because consumers tend to make purchase decisions based on brand images that have already been formed in their minds rather than from original attributes or characteristics of the product itself (Dick et al., 1990). The importance of stored memories of a brand in consumer decision-making has been well-documented (Keller, 1993). Over time, brands form powerful associations in the minds of consumers (Saavedra, 2004) which help consumers recover information archived in their minds to make decisions: once recovered, the information provides a reason to acquire the product (Aaker, 1992).Therefore, distinctive brand personality can help create a set of unique and favorable associations in consumer memory and thus build and enhance brand equity (Keller,1993). As a result, brand personality is considered to be an important factor for a brand's success in terms of preference and choice (Biel, 1993). But the importance of brand personality and its effect on purchase intention have not been widely acknowledged. Some studies found that brand personality dimensions have a significant influence on brand choice, regardless of product type. However, Lim et al. (2003) found that the relative influence of brand personality dimensions compared with that of product attributes is different based on product type. While the relative influence of brand personality is stronger than that of product attributes for low-involvement products, product attributes had a much stronger influence on consumers' brand choices for high-involvement products. In addition, Lee and Oh (2006) found that personality dimensions, such as Excitement/Sophistication, Competence, Sincerity and Ruggedness, were significant predictors of brand preference, satisfaction and loyalty.

### **The Concept of Marketing Success**

The term success according to some scholars is not uniform and the indiscriminate use of the terms has led to significant confusion in the basic concepts involved (Gao, 2010). This is based on

the fact that some authors use productivity and success interchangeably. Others suggest a number of criteria for evaluation (Mentzer, 1991). Establishing and accomplishing marketing goals is a basic function of marketing management as well as other functional elements of the firm. Generally, the only consensus that has been reached in the difficulty of defining success is that success is multi-dimensional in nature (Gao, 2010). As a result, the number and variety of measures that are available has increased. While companies rarely suffer from having too few measures (Kaplan & Norton 1992), it has been suggested that marketing researchers should develop sets of measures that are small enough to be manageable but comprehensive enough to give an accurate evaluation of success (Clark 1999). In the context of this study the requirement used for measuring marketing success are customer experience quality with indices of customer satisfaction, customer patronage and customer retention. In order to promote clarity and precision of usage and to explain how the term 'marketing success' is used throughout this study these concepts was subsume in marketing success.

## **Measures of Marketing Success**

### **Market share Growth**

Market share is defined as the portion of a sector controlled by a particular company or product. It is calculated by comparing the percentage of total sales in the relevant market to a specific company's revenue. From marketing success we obtain a strategic marketing definition of market share from the American Marketing Association website. It defines market share as "the proportion of the total quantity or sales in a market that is held by each of the competitors. The market can be defined as broadly as the industry, or all substitutes, or as narrowly as a specific market segment. The choice of market depends on which level gives the best insight into competitive position". This more competitor-oriented definition reflects its strategic purpose. High-growth markets are generally viewed as relatively more attractive by businesses because of the high margins and growing demand that characterize them (Szymanski et al., 1993). As a result, more and more companies will be willing to try to enter this market due to the possible good profitability. As more companies enter the market, the number of competing firms in the market will increase. In addition, those high-growth markets can also be associated with high marketing costs, very tight cash flow strategy, needing more investment inputs to be able to stay in the game, increasing productivity, and high levels of buyer spending. By taking those increased profit margins and sales along with the reduced costs into account, the firm profitability seems to be increased (Buzzell & Gale, 1987). As mentioned before, market share has been seen as the most influential measure to evaluate the marketing success (Clark, 2001). According to the research conducted by the Profit Impact of Market Strategies (PIMS) project and the Boston Consulting Group, companies which have focused on gaining market share can enjoy the economies of scale and long-term profitability (Clark, 2001). Therefore, market share seems to be the main emphasis for a lot companies and also generally seems to dominate market concentration measures in explaining companies' profitability (Kurtz & Rhoades, 1992). The effects of share market growth include Profitability, and Product/Service Quality

### **Consumer Retention**

Customer retention refers to customer's stated continuation of a business relationship with the firm (Timothy et al, 2007). Successful customer retention starts with the first contact an organization has with a customer and continues throughout the entire lifetime of a relationship (Atieno, 2001). Hotel ability to attract and retain new customers is not only related to its products or services, but strongly related to the way it serves its existing customers and reputation it creates within and across the market place. In New Zealand, customer retention is an important element of marketing strategy in its increasingly competitive environment (Gale and Wood 2003) and this also applies to Nigeria. Meanwhile Luxury hotels in Rivers State always identifies and improves

upon factors that can limit customer defection. Effects of customer retention include loyalty, commitment and patronage.

### **Corporate Image (Moderating Variable)**

In line with previous researches, corporate image connotes the value of a brand based on consumer attitudes on brand attributes positivity and favourable consequences of brand use (American Marketing Association, 2017). Again, scholars have defined corporate image as "a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" (Aaker, 1991; Chen, Nguyen, Melewar, & Dennis, 2017; Sekhon, Roy, Simon Chadwick, & Devlin, 2016). Corporate image is closely related with brand loyalty and brand extensions. Corporate image is characterized as the consumers' general perceptions, feeling and disposition about a brand, mirrored by the brand associations held in consumers' memory and capable of influencing consumer behaviour (Keller, 1993; Mehra, & Sharma, 2016; Simões&Sebastiani, 2017; Zhang, 2015). The term corporate image is a result from attempts in the marketing literature to define the relationship between customers and brands and has been associated with the importance of seeing the long-term focus in brand management and effort geared towards reducing reputational risk by bridging the gap between expectation and behaviour (Bronn, & Bronn, 2017; Wood, 2000). Gaining competitive advantage through successful brands is something marketers should strive for, thus corporate image is regarded as an important concept within academic research and in business practices (Bachmann, & Inkpen, 2011).

Eisingerich, Auh and Merlo (2014) define corporate image as the added value with which a brand endows a product. The majority of studies refer to the corporate image from two different perspectives - financial and customer based. The financial perspective relates to a value estimation of the brand more precisely for accounting objectives, as asset valuation for balance sheets. From the angle of financial market, scholars have also described corporate image as effort geared towards expropriating the portfolio firms of other stakeholders through capitalisation value derived from brand's name and offer association (Huang, Ritter, & Zhang, 2016; Simon, & Sullivan, 1993).

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed the survey design due to its descriptive nature. The study embraced the correlational research to determine the extent of the association between entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success of luxury hotels. The study chose the questionnaire method as a source of data collection in a non-contrived setting. The study population was 22 registered luxury Hotels with Nigeria Hotel Association, that domicile in six States that made up South/South which are Rivers, Bayesal, Delta, Edo, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. The population is broken down thus: Rivers (4), Bayesal (3), Delta (4), Edo(3), Akwa Ibom(4) and Cross River States(4) with the total number of 22 luxury hotels. Random sampling method was adopted for the study. The 6 management staff each were randomly selected from the 22 luxury hotels, to gain the sample size which was determined by the simple random sampling technique, to arrive at the total number of 132 respondents. Six copies of questionnaire were hand delivered to the Branch Managers, Marketing Managers, Brand Managers. Customer Relation Managers, Sales Managers and Supervisor of the 22 hotels covered in the study and this summed up to 132 reproduced distributed questionnaires. The data analysis consists of descriptive statistics; the descriptive statistics involved ascertaining the demographic data of the respondents which covers summary statistics of their profiles and psychological features. This was analyzed through the use of simple percentage charts and tables. The inferential statistics consists of Regression analysis, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) and partial correlation statistical techniques. The descriptive and inferential statistics were executed primarily with the aid of computer using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 23.

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSIONS

### Data Presentation

**Table 1: Distribution and Collection Pattern of Respondents' Questionnaire**

S/N	Characteristics of Questionnaire	Available Quantity	Percentage(%)
1.	Total number of copies produced and distributed	132	100
2.	Copies returned (received)	115	87.1
3.	Copies not returned (not received)	17	12.9
4.	Copies returned (received)	115	87
5.	Usable copies	100	87
6.	Unusable (Discarded)	15	13
7.	Usable rate	100	87

**Source: Field work, (2022).**

Table 1 shows the analysis of the distribution and collection pattern of respondent's questionnaire concerning branding strategies and marketing performance of luxury hotels in Port-Harcourt. It is divided into three sections. Of the 132 copies of questionnaire that were distributed to the respondents, 115 copies were returned, yielding a response rate of 95.8 percent. The remaining 5 copies produced and distributed were not returned and were unaccounted for. Additionally, of the 115 copies of the questionnaire returned, the usable copies numbered 100 leading to a response rate of 87%. However, 13% (15 copies) was not used due to wrong filling, missing and incomplete information in the demographic profile. In the third part, rate of usage as considered evidence, has shown that 100 returned and usable copies represent 87% of the total copies of the questionnaire produced and distributed. Hence, these 100 copies were used for the analysis.

### Reliability Test

Almost immediately as the duplicate disseminated questionnaires were determined, the reliability scale was afterwards examined all the way through the working out of the variables coefficient alpha (Cronbach alpha). It was establish that all scales go beyond the least quantity permissible of 0.7.

**Table 2 Reliability Measure of Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives and Marketing Success (n=100).**

Scale	Dimensions	Items	Reliability
BA	Brand Awareness	3	0.715
BP	Brand Perception	3	0.722
BP	Brand personality	3	0.732
MSG	Market Share Growth	3	0.727
CR	Customer Retention	3	0.731
IT	Corporate image	3	0.721

**Source: SPSS Output, 2022.**

Table 2 summarizes entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success. The reliability test of each dimensions and measures were also incorporated and these were used to investigate entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success. This relationship was operationalized by using Brand Awareness (.715) with 3 fine point evaluation; Brand Perception (.722) with a 3 fine points evaluation; Brand Personality (.732) with a 3-item particular; Market Share Growth (.727) with 3 point; Customer Retention (0.731) with a 3 point and Corporate image (.721) with 3fine points evaluation.

## Data Analysis and Results

### Analysis of Research Questions

The descriptive relationships of the variables are presented in this section. Research questions one and two are pooled in Table 3 while, research question three was presented in Table 4. The real meaning of these groupings is the interface of the variables.

**Components of Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives and Marketing Success**

Descriptive findings of the interface between entrepreneurial branding initiatives dimensions (Brand Awareness, Brand perception and Brand Personality) and marketing success measures (Market Share Growth and Customer Retention) are expressed through the test of mean difference. The mean differences between dimensions and measures are high and remarkable, leaving a sketch that branding initiatives relate with marketing success.

**Table 3: Components of Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives and Marketing Success**

	<b>BA</b>	<b>BP</b>	<b>BP</b>	<b>MSG</b>	<b>CR</b>
Mean	17.02	15.50	15.50	44.16	44.66
Std Error of Mean	2.760	3.577	3.577	11.655	11.755
		5.695	5.695	3.647	3.647
Std Deviation	4.671	12.939	12.939	138.539	138.939
Variance	7.730	-1.472	-1.472	.851	.851
Skewness	-2244	.121	.121	.121	.121
Std. Error of Skewness	.121	-	-		
	.	-	-		
<b>Sum</b>	<b>8673</b>	<b>8003</b>	<b>8003</b>	<b>22450</b>	<b>22470</b>

**Source: SPSS Output, 2022.**

**Note:**  
 BA = Brand Awareness  
 BP = Brand Perception  
 BP = Brand Personality  
 MSG = Market Share Growth  
 CR = Customers Retention

Brand Awareness become discernible as scoring higher on all aspects of demarcations based on the mean value of 17.02 analogous to Brand perception which have mean of 15.50. Table 3 indicates that the mean score of brand perception (15.50) and brand awareness (17.02) have consistent dispersion. Their standard deviations are also reasonably significant with brand personality (5.695), and brand awareness (4.671). Market share growth put forward a higher variation with 12.939 than customer retention with 7.530. From the sum and mean as portrayed in Table 8, it is satisfactory to explain stress on marketing success is as a result of lofty contemplation of the relationship between the components of entrepreneurial branding initiative and marketing success as a possible way out that can produce quite a lot of benefits for hotels with profound diagnostic outcomes.

**Table 4: Influence of Corporate image on the relationship between Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives and Marketing Success (n=100)**

	<b>CI</b>	<b>EBI</b>	<b>MS</b>
Mean	15.25	14.30	3765
Std. Deviation	3.453	2.083	11.565
Variance	11.704	15.154	136.734
Skewness	-1.352	-1005	-831
Standard Error of Skewness	.113	.113	.113
<b>Sum</b>	<b>57.63</b>	<b>3112</b>	<b>21470</b>

**Source: SPSS Output, 2022.**

**Note:** CI = Corporate image  
 EBI = Entrepreneurial Branding Initiative  
 MS = Marketing Success

The descriptive statistical technique was used to explore the alliance between Corporate image, Entrepreneurial Branding Initiative and Marketing Success. The suggestive findings of the association between Corporate image, Entrepreneurial Branding Initiative and Marketing Success are described in Table 4. The connection was investigated by testing the significance in the midst of the mean difference between Corporate image, Entrepreneurial Branding Initiative and Marketing Success. The results in Table 4 show that the mean difference among Entrepreneurial Branding Initiative and Marketing Success are high and notable: thus presenting a positive effect of Corporate image, Entrepreneurial Branding Initiative and Marketing Success.

### Test of the Hypotheses

#### Relationship between Brand Awareness and Market Share Growth

**Table 5: Correlation Analysis showing the direction and strength of the relationship between Identity Brand Awareness and Market Share Growth (n=100)**

#### Correlations

Variables	Statistics	Brand Awareness	Market Share Growth
<b>Market Share Growth</b>	Pearson's correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.439*** .000
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	N Pearson's correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	100 .439*** .000	100 1.000 100
	N	100	100

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

Table 5 shows that the Pearson's  $r = 0.439^{**}$ . This indicates that a moderate relationship exists between Brand Awareness and Market Share Growth. The sign of the correlation coefficient is positive, indicating that when Market Share Growth augments, market share growth also augments. Therefore the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that Market Share Growth significantly relates with Market Share Growth.

The significant/probability value ( $pv$ ) =  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore the researcher concludes that a significant positive and moderate relationship exist between brand awareness and market share growth, implying that when a company is perceived as applying brand awareness in its company, this endeavor will in turn lead to market share growth in the organization.

**Table 6: Relationship between Brand Awareness and Market customer Retention**

#### Correlations

Variables	Statistics	Brand Awareness	Customer Retention
<b>Customer Retention</b>	Pearson's correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.479*** .001
<b>Brand Awareness</b>	N Pearson's correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	100 .469*** .001	100 1.000 100
	N	100	100

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

The information in table 6 reveals that a moderate relationship exist between brand awareness and customer retention ( $r = 0.479^{**}$ ). This is in agreement with the earlier decision rule that if the

correlation value is within 0.40-059. The relationship is moderate. The correlation value is also positively signed indicating that a positive relation exists between brand awareness and customer retention. The relationship is also significant (significant/probability value (pv) = 0.001.

**Table 7: Relationship between Brand Perception and Market Share Growth Correlations**

Variables	Statistics	Brand Perception	Market Share Growth
<b>Market Share Growth</b>	Pearson's correlation	1.000	.479***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
<b>Brand Perception</b>	N	100	100
	Pearson's correlation	.479***	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	100	100

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

The information in table 7 reveals that a moderate relationship exist between brand perception and market share growth (r= 0.479\*\*). This is in agreement with the earlier decision rule that if the correlation value is within 0.40-059. The relationship is moderate. The correlation value is also positively signed indicating that a positive relation exists between brand perception and market share growth. The relationship is also significant (significant/probability value (pv) = 0.001.

**Table 8: Relationship between Brand perception and customer retention (n=100) Correlations**

Variables	Statistics	Brand Perception	Customer Retention
<b>Customer Retention</b>	Pearson's correlation	1.000	.429***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
<b>Brand Perception</b>	N	100	100
	Pearson's correlation	.429***	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

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

Table 8 shows that the Pearson's r = 0.429\*\*. This indicates that a moderate relationship exists between Brand perception and customer retention. The sign of the correlation coefficient is positive, indicating that when customer retention augments, market share growth also augments. Therefore the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that customer retention significantly relates with customer retention.

The significant/probability value (pv) = 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore the researcher concludes that a significant positive and moderate relationship exist between brand perception and customer retention, implying that when a company is perceived as applying brand perception in its company, this endeavor will in turn lead to customer retention in the organization.

**Table 9: Relationship between Brand Personality and Market Share Growth Correlations**

Variables	Statistics	Brand Personality	Market Share Growth
<b>Market Share Growth</b>	Pearson's correlation	1.000	.489***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	100	100
<b>Brand Personality</b>	Pearson's correlation	.489***	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	100	100

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

The information in table 9 reveals that a moderate relationship exist between brand personality and market share growth ( $r = 0.489^{**}$ ). This is in agreement with the earlier decision rule that if the correlation value is within 0.40-059. The relationship is moderate. The correlation value is also positively signed indicating that a positive relation exists between brand personality and market share growth. The relationship is also significant (significant/probability value (pv) = 0.001).

**Table 10: Relationship between Brand Personality and Customer Retention Correlations**

Variables	Statistics	Brand Personality	Customer Retention
<b>Customer Retention</b>	Pearson's correlation	1.000	.459***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	100	100
<b>Brand Personality</b>	Pearson's correlation	.459***	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	100	100

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

The information in table 10 reveals that a moderate relationship exist between brand personality and customer retention ( $r = 0.459^{**}$ ). This is in agreement with the earlier decision rule that if the correlation value is within 0.40-059. The relationship is moderate. The correlation value is also positively signed indicating that a positive relation exists between brand personality and customer retention. The relationship is also significant (significant/probability value (pv) = 0.001).

**Moderating role of Corporate image on the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives and Marketing Success.**

This section presents the analysis of the moderating variable: **Corporate image**. In this section, the partial correlation coefficient is used to show how the moderating variable moderate or influence the relationship between attributes of entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success.

**Table 11: Partial Correlation Analysis showing the role of corporate image on the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives and Marketing Success (n=100)**

Control Variable	Variable	Statistics	Attributes of Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives Marketing Success	Corporate image
-nonea	Attributes of Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives	Correlation	1.000	.609
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000
		Df	0	198
	Marketing Success	Correlation	.609	1.000
		significant (2-tailed)	.000	.
		df	.198	0
	Corporate image	Correlation	.064	.570
		significance (2-tailed)	.183	.002
		df	.198	198
Corporate image	Attributes of Entrepreneurial Branding Initiatives	Correlation	1.000	.507
		significance (2-tailed)	.	.002
		Df	0	197
	Marketing Success	Correlation	1.000	.507
		significance (2-tailed)	.	.002
		Df	0	197
	Marketing Success	Correlation	.507	1.000
		significance (2-tailed)	.002	.
		df	.197	0

**a. cells contain zero-order (Pearson) Correlations.**

Table 11 shows that a strong and significant relationship exist between corporate image and marketing success ( $r = 0.570$ ,  $P_v 0.002 < 0.05$ ), while a weak and insignificant relationship exist between corporate image and the attributes of entrepreneurial branding initiatives ( $r = 0.064$ ,  $p_v 0.183 > 0.05$ ). Table 7 shows that there is a strong and significant relationship existing between attributes of entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success ( $r = 0.609$ ,  $p_v 0.000 < 0.05$ ). However, when corporate image is held constant/controlled, the relationship between attributes of entrepreneurial branding initiatives and marketing success becomes ( $r = 0.507$ ,  $p_v 0.00 < 0.01$ ) hence, a significant difference exist

**FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**FINDINGS**

The first hypothesis sought to determine the extent of relationship between brand awareness and market share growth by means of the Pearson’s product moment correlation analysis. The dispensation of brand awareness alone is not enough to sustain the required level of customer

experience, but it is a basis for the execution and achievement of overall company's marketing success.

The second hypothesis brought coefficient outcome to the interdependency of brand awareness and customer retention as one the key factors to the success of luxury hotels in the market of hospitality as a strategy for performance. In the third hypothesis, our finding confirms that a moderate, significant and positive relationship exists between brand perception and market share growth. This clearly shows that brand perception and market share growth is very important, and it is a Hotel's objective criterion, since it is very vital in the analysis of the relationship between the variables. The fourth hypothesis reveals that there is a very strong relationship between brand perception and customer retention. This result proves the relevance of this initiative branding that quarranttee the marketing performance of luxury hotels that leads to success at any point of decision making. The fifth hypothesis, which states that the higher the brand personality, the higher the market share growth, is supported empirically. This result is consistent with the results of previous studies conducted by previous researchers stated in the study. This revealed that brand personality was able to improve the image of luxury hotels . Based on the respondents' profile, most of them could be considered as the experienced workers Thus, to increase the brand personality, the luxury hotels management s had to pay attention to their desires by providing suitable facilities. The efforts that must be made by the management of the hotels to increase their market share growth to complement and maintain the existing facilities, thus increase sales revenue. The sixth hypothesis, which states that the higher the brand awareness, the higher the brand loyalty, is supported empirically. This result is in line with the studies by (Alkhaldeh et al., 2017); When the customers understood that the luxury hotels had quality service delivery and descent approach with good facilities, then they would be loyal, recommend, say positive things to others, and make the luxury hostels to be the first choice among other hotels. Managing loyalty through brand personality was important because the competition among luxury hotels also included providing facilities, offering interesting menus and focusing the growth VIP services. Therefore, the management must innovate to make the luxury hotels unique compared to the others. The seventh hypothesis indicates that a strong and significant relationship exists between corporate image and customer experience quality, while a weak and insignificant relationship exists between corporate image and entrepreneurial branding initiatives. When corporate image is held constant, the relationship between branding strategies and marketing success becomes ( $r=0.607$   $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Introduction of corporate image to the services delivery of luxury hotels will reduce the difficulty in the services whereby people or customers could stay somewhere book online, pay online, and transact online without being physically present.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Research evidence revealed that entrepreneurial branding initiatives dimensions (brand awareness, brand perception and brand personality) have significant relationship with marketing success measures (market share growth and customer retention). Hence, it could be assumed that an entrepreneur that strategically package brand awareness, brand perception and personality will more likely exhibit activities associated with marketing success in their luxury hotels. The research revealed that the marketing success of the luxury hotels most especially in south/south region of Nigeria is heavily tilled to the impact of brand awareness, perception and personality, as the two initiatives control customers emotion and instinct toward what they could benefits from what the luxury hotels could offer that will lead to market share growth and customer retention.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, we proffer the following recommendations:

Luxury hotel entrepreneurs should focus predominantly on branding those appeals to their target audience to ensure that their hotels adequately address customer experience to enhance customer patronage and market share growth

From the finding, the brand perception of luxury hotels services enforces increase in market share with intentional motive to inspire the repeat purchase of the services rendered by these hotels, on this ground the hotels entrepreneur should commit more resource on the brand personality to influence more market share growth as against competitors in the industry  
Entrepreneurs of hotels should position strategically, the components of branding to improve customer experience in terms of service delivery. The managers should consider branding as a powerful strategy for achieving customer service experience in their hotel

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