

PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE NIGERIAN BRANDED EXPORTS

EDITH ONOWE ODIA* & BARNABAS AIGBOJIE AGBONIFOH

Abstract

This study sought to determine the public image of the Nigerian branded exports by Nigerians and non-Nigerians. A stratified random sampling method was adopted in selecting a sample of 930 respondents. Data were analyzed using T-Test, ANOVA and regression statistics. The results obtained depicted negative image for the Nigerian branded exports, with no significant difference between Nigerians and non-Nigerians in their perceptions. To effectively reposition the image of the Nigeria via branded exports, plans should be made by the government and organizations to enhance infrastructure by funding a 'Brand Academy' to train specialist on brand management, design and industrial packaging.

Keywords: *Branding, Branded exports, Country-of-Origin, Image, Made-in-Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Branded exports play an important role in establishing a country's reputation abroad. Branded exports have the special power to accelerate and cause changes in public perceptions of countries. Brands are increasingly vital vectors of national image and reputation. According to Anholt (2007), branded exports is one of the commercial sub-brands of a nation brand that generate funds rather than cost money. To him, products are tangible and they make far more effective ambassadors for national image than promotional campaigns; people keep products but avoid advertisements or propaganda. Commercial brands are increasingly performing the role of transmitting national culture; they have become one of the primary vectors of national image, and are more and more often the means by which people form their views about national identity. Chilean wines are examples of successful quality brands that have changed a nation's economy. Chilean wine producers now export more than 50% of their products to ninety countries in five continents around the world (Dinnie, 2008).

The names of some countries' products/services connote superb quality, reliability, durability, attractive price, excellent service, high technical standard,

* Department of Business Administration, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, *E-mail:* edyy2002ng@yahoo.com, agbonifoh@yahoo.com

refined taste and design. For example, countries such as Germany and Japan are often associated with high technology and durable goods. By contrast, some countries are associated with poor quality goods. Every country should therefore be interested in how its products are perceived.

If Nigeria as a nation is to be branded effectively and if she is to compete favourably in the global market in terms of its products/services, the starting point of its efforts to rebrand should be to ascertain the current image of its products and services. Nigeria and, in fact any country, cannot be branded effectively through mere propaganda and promotional campaigns. It requires, among other things, quality products that will create lasting positive impressions in the minds of customers. Previous re-branding efforts by Nigeria such as the 'Heart of Africa' project of 2004 and the 'Good People, Great Nation' approach of 2009 appeared to have failed because of what Fasure (2009) described as 'Good Salesman with Bad Products'.

A number of related studies have been done in this area. First, some studies have measured the attitudes of Nigerians toward locally made goods (Agbonifoh, 1986; Okechuku & Onyemah, 1999). Second, some others have focused on the level of consumer preference for imported goods/services (Adjeba 1982; Oyegunle, 1982; Agbonifoh, 1985; Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001). Most of these works were done over thirty years ago. Given the fact that change is constant and consumer perceptions and attitudes change overtime, it would be necessary to carry out further research to determine the current image of Nigerian branded exports. In addition to the above quest, the current study seeks to determine if there is a significant difference between Nigerians and non-Nigerians in their perceptions of Made-in Nigeria products.

The perception of made-in-Nigeria products by Nigerians and non-Nigerians is not only significant in terms of the potential effects on the individual firm, but also in terms of its possible implications for the government and the nation's citizens. Poor or negative perceptions of locally-made products generally leads to loss of demand and patronage, low turnovers, plant utilization, profit and growth for domestic industries which in turn results in unemployment problems. According to Agbonifoh (1985), Nigerians' preference for foreign products has adverse implications for the survival of locally made ones; the country's gross domestic product can result in balance of payments problems except actual outflows of local products match inflow of foreign ones. An example of an industry that suffers from the effects of negative attitudes to locally made goods is the Nigerian automobile industry: Nigerians' preference for imported consumer products "resulted in reduction in sales of the domestically assembled Peugeot 504 car from about 100,000 units in 1986 to about 4,500 in 1996, when import restrictions were eased" (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001: 3). Nigerians' attitudes toward made-in-Nigeria goods is, to say the least, not encouraging because citizens possess whetted appetites for foreign goods, which drain the Nigeria's foreign exchange reserves. It also contributes immensely towards the rapid industrial growth of the countries where the goods are imported from while hurting the Nigerian economy in terms of employment.

In view of the foregoing, this study sought to achieve the following objectives. The main objective of the study is to determine the public image of Nigerian branded exports in the eyes of both Nigerians and non-Nigerians. Other objectives of the study are to:

1. Ascertain if there is significant difference in the perceptions of Nigerian branded exports by Nigerians and Non-Nigerians.
2. Identify the demographic and socio-cultural factors that influence perception of made-in-Nigerian products. Variables of interest here are age, sex, education, income, religion, and international exposure.
3. Determine if there are significant differences in the relative images of the following countries: China, Ghana, Italy, Nigeria, South Africa, UK and USA in terms of branded exports and;
4. To examine the implications of the research findings for Nigerian business organizations and the government with a view to repositioning the Nigeria brand internally and externally by means superb quality products.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Branding

Branding is a management tool traditionally used by managers to create meaningful differentiation to achieve competitive advantage in the market place. A brand is a promise of value to consumers; for example, a guarantee of value, of quality, of performance, of service delivery or of after cares (Allan, 2007). Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001) defined country image as the impact that generalizations and perceptions about a country have on a person's evaluation of the country's products and/or brand. Following Riezebos (2003), a nation's brand image is a subjective mental picture shared by a group of people about the country. Brand equity is a "set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that adds or subtract from the value provided by a product or service" (Aakar, 1991:15). Brand-equity helps to build a relationship, a strong bond between the brand and the consumer; trust and emotional connections are established over time (Van Auken, 2002).

Country of Origin (COO) Effects

COO effect refers to the impact that a product or service's origin has on consumer attitude and behaviour towards that product or service (Dinnie, 2008). The image of a country can be enhanced when the product brand's COO is explicit; but if nobody knows where a product comes from, then it can not affect consumers' feelings about that country. Despite the benefits that can accrue to a nation brand from branded exports, the difficulty often lies in getting the owners of powerful commercial brands to employ their COO in their marketing or packaging (Anholt, 2007). A case in point is that of Nokia brand and Finland brand. Nokia being a bigger and stronger

brand than Finland brand, Finland was scared that if the two brands were closely attached to each other, the brand equity would all flow from the stronger to the weaker, and benefit the brand image of Finland as a nation at the expense of Nokia brand image. According to Anholt (2007), this appears to be a common misconception on the part of Nokia and other brands that underestimate the power of their brands. He argues that if consumers are brand loyal, it seems unlikely that they would change their minds about the brand if they eventually discover that the brand originated from a small, poor or exotic country.

The direction of association and perceptions flow between the product and its COO is uncertain for some types of products. For example, does a prestigious brand such as Sony enhance the nation brand image of Japan or does the high credibility of Japan as a source country for high technology products enhance the sale of Sony brand? For Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001), there are two-way interactions between the images of countries and of brands. It suffices to say that there is a symbiotic relationship between a nation brand and product, service and corporate (PSC) brand that highlight or down play their COO . This suggests the need for collaboration between the nation's public and the private sector to improve the economic welfare of the nation and its commercial organizations.

In an attempt to minimize negative COO effects against their place of origin, some international service brands have resorted to the use of acronyms as their brand names. For example, in 1997, British Airways caught in the web of globalization, decided to graduate from mere national carrier to global travel brand by changing its name to BA. To dissociate itself from the explicit reference to its COO and the union flag, it branded its airplanes with images from many different nations. Other such examples are: HSBC in place of Hong- Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation; RBS previously Royal Bank of Scotland; UBS for Union Bank of Switzerland; and BP for British Petroleum (Dinnie, 2008). Anholt(2007), notes that global brands are not brands from nowhere; they are in fact, brands that can be sold everywhere, but somewhere quite definite.

The matching of product category and country image perceptions has been widely researched (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1993; Kim & Chung, 1997; Schaefer, 1997 & Verlegh, Steenkamp & Meulenberg, 2005). Roth and Romeo (1992) assert that product-country match information should be used by managers to assess their consumers' purchase intentions and to assist in managing their product's COO. On the issue of product-country fit, the Reyka brand is a win-win-scenario. The successes enjoyed by Reyka brand could be associated with the positive Iceland COO effect. Symbiotically, the Iceland brand also leverages the Reyka brand equity of high quality (Dinnie, 2008).

The dilemma faced by companies in the developing nations in the explicit use of COO information in the marketing of their products often stems from the poor negative image of the nation and the low ethnocentric nature of its citizens. This is the case of the Nigeria brand. For example, Aire's (1974) study found that 58.3 per

cent of the respondents opined that Made-in-Nigeria goods were of low quality. Other similar studies corroborating Aire's(1974) findings emphasized Nigerian consumer's preference for foreign shoes (Odiase, 1984) and for textiles (Adjeba 1982, Oyegunle, 1982). According to Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001), a survey indicated that Nigerian consumers expressed preference for foreign, high-technology television products of Dutch, Japanese and South Korean origin over local brands. This was ostensibly because of the perceived technological advancement, reliability and workmanship of the foreign brands. In reaction to the overtly demonstrated preference for imports by Nigerian consumers, some manufacturers in Nigeria have allegedly resorted to the use of foreign 'Made-in-...' labels like 'Made-in-Italy' and 'Made-in-England' (Afejuku, 1983; Agbonifoh, 1986).

Apart from the ingrained belief about the low quality of Nigerian products, the hangover effects of colonial rule is still taking its toll on Nigerians' psyche and exacerbating their western taste and values. Agbonifoh (1986) also argued that most Nigerians prefer foreign goods to locally-made goods, even when the Nigerian products have the same quality or even possess better quality than the foreign goods. The preference in favour of foreign goods is more of old prejudices against made-in-Nigeria goods. Made-in-Nigeria goods tend to be perceived as inferior for many reasons. Agbonifoh (1985) identified the following factors as possible reasons why Nigerians prefer foreign goods: economical factor, historical factors, psychological forces, poor marketing and poor government control.

Determinants of the Image of Branded Exports

It is widely acknowledged that country of origin has an impact on consumer product evaluations (Ehigie & Babalola 1995; Karunaratna 2003). Gurhan-Canli and Maheswara (2000) suggest that the nature of information and the processing goal of the perceiver would determine whether country of origin will be used for product evaluation. Though the study of Gurhan-Canli and Maheswara(2000) found that products from Japan elicit favourable perceptions of high quality, Klein, Ettenson and Morns (1998) discovered that some Chinese consumers may not consume Japanese products because of high animosity developed against Japan during the war. This shows that consumers' emotions have a significant impact on the country of origin evaluation.

Consumers in less developed countries may favour products and brands from developed countries. Ehigie and Babalola (1995) observed that Nigerians possess high preference for imported products, especially products from advanced western countries. Consumers' attitude towards Western culture especially countries that were colonized are ameliorated (Klein *et al.* 1998) and they often value Western goods more than locally made goods (Ahmed & d'Astons, 2004). It is also possible that foreign brands their appeals as locally made goods increase in quality and attractiveness (Zhou & Hui, 2003). In the case of Nigeria, preference for imported goods of the colonial country could be due to the attitudes of colonial masters and early missionaries who indoctrinated them with the belief of low self-worth,

inferiority complex hence whites were then used as reference groups in buying habits. This age-long lingering negative attitude is what Agbonifoh (1985) described as 'colonial mentality'.

Consumer's country of residence has also been noted as one of the key determinants of images of a country and its products/services (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001). The study of Harrison-Walker (1995) on the effects of national stereotypes and advertising information on the selection of a service provider in the ophthalmology sector showed that there existed a same-nationality bias in the selection of service provider. The researcher therefore, enjoined different-nationality service providers to provide adequate information in their advertising to overcome such biases.

Another interesting dimension on the studies of products COO is the influence of the consumers' characteristics. Schooler (1971) found that consumers with a high level of education were more favourably disposed toward foreign products than consumers with lower level of education; female consumers were found to have rated foreign products more highly than their male counterparts; and younger consumers considered imports more highly than older consumers. In a similar study, Dornoff, Tankersley and White (1974) discovered that the higher the level of a person's education, the more disposed they are to foreign products; there was no indication of any correlation between perception of foreign products and consumer's sex. The work of Agbonifoh (1986) on the attitudes of Nigerian consumers toward foreign products suggests that more educated people generally tend to be more skeptical of products irrespective of COO. In addition, Agbonifoh(1986) found a significant positive correlation between age and attitudes of Nigerian consumers toward British products, suggesting that the older people tend to rate British products higher partly because they have been brainwashed by the then colonial masters.

In South Africa, the study of Burges and Harris (1999) suggests a relationship between social identity and brand preference as well as 'within-country diversity' (ethnicity and religion affinity) influences on brand selection. It has been argued that most cross-cultural studies on COO effects have erroneously assumed that national markets are composed of homogeneous consumers and such studies are more of cross-national rather than cross-cultural (Laroche, Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2003). In a study of ethnic diversities in the importance of a product's country-of-manufacture relative to other attributes in Nigerian consumers, Okechukwu and Onyemah (2000) found that the country-of-manufacture was more important to the Yoruba, than the Hausa respondents, and that prestige was important to the Yoruba respondents in the preference for foreign cars and also to Igbo and Hausa respondents in the choice of foreign TV sets.

The study on American Express to ascertain the possible prejudice against its brand because of the US-centric name during the 2003 war in Iraq; revealed that people mainly associate the brand with global business rather than being American

(Mortimer, 2007). The conclusion from this study is that, service brands are hardly influenced by COO's political or foreign events.

Odia's(2012) conceptual framework summarizes the factors that influence brand image as: brand attributes (product quality, made-in information, and quality of advertising campaign); personal factors (age, sex, education, income, physiological and psychological variables) and environmental, socio-cultural variables such as social class, reference groups, religion, ethnicity, and media and situational variables like time and place of purchase..

Market Positioning Strategy for a Nation's Branded Export

Four marketing strategy scenarios that account for country and brand images as suggested by Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001) are as follows: The first scenario: Strong Country Image – Strong Brand Image. In this case, the made-in country cue should be emphasized as well as the brand. A good example is *Sony* Made-in-Japan. The second scenario: Weak Country Image – Strong Brand Image. Under this situation, emphasis should be placed on the brand name, while de-emphasizing as much as possible the country of manufacture/assembly. Alternatively, the associated country should be emphasized, while decomposing the country image or both. Third scenario: Strong Country Image – Weak Brand Image. The brands in this situation should try to piggy back on a strong country image by emphasizing the made-in cue. The fourth and last scenario: Weak Country Image – Weak Brand Image. The recommended strategy here is to sacrifice short-term profits for long-term market penetration. Weak brands should piggyback on a strong local brand just as *Samsung* gained entry into the US for its microwave ovens by having them distributed by General Electric under the GE label. Yet another strategy is to sell products through reputable retailers in the target market. Additionally, price discounting strategy can also be employed by the manufacturer of the weak brand. Lastly, under this scenario, is the use of strong advertising campaign to enhance country image as well as brand image.

Niss (1996) evaluated COO marketing effects over the PLC, and discovered that the stage of the product in its PLC determines the usage of the COO references, and that managers tend to use more of COO references at the introduction stage than at any other stage because awareness can only possibly be created for the new product through the existing Nation-brand equity COO reference. Nevertheless, Lampert and Jaffe (1986) and Beverland and Lindgreen (2002) are of the view that COO halo effects and the use of COO reference is highly contextual and changes over the phases of the PLC.

Ethnocentrism is an important aspect of COO studies which marketers need to understand to be able to enter into foreign markets successfully. Shimp and Sharma (1987:20) defined ethnocentrism as "the home-country bias portion of COO effect". A research study by Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001) found that consumer demographics such as education, income, and social class had implications on the individual's

ethnocentrism. This area of COO has received implicit research attention; the question of interest is: do consumers generally rate products made in their own countries higher than those made elsewhere? Many researchers as cited in Agbonifoh (1986) responded in affirmation to this assertion. Some studies involving American respondents found that American products were consistently rated higher than others (Nagashima, 1970; Gaedeke, 1973; Chasin & Jaffe, 1979; Narayana, 1981). In another study, Finnish consumers, like the American respondents, demonstrated high ethnocentric behaviour in rating products made in Finland higher than those made in other countries (Darling, 1981). Yet in another related research, Japanese consumers considered products made in Japan to be of higher quality than their counterparts of United State of America origin.

Nevertheless, some contradictory research findings on the issue of ethnocentrism exist. For example, White (1979) asserted that industrial products from United States were rated inferior to those made in West Germany and England by American purchasing managers. A similar report was made of United Kingdom consumers who considered products made in West Germany to be better than those manufactured in their country (Bannister & Saunders, 1978). In conclusion, ethnocentrism can be seen to be product-specific.

For governments to benefit from 'buy domestic' campaign, there is need to ascertain the overall level of its population's ethnocentrism. Countries like Indonesia might benefit from such campaigns since, a study of Indonesian consumers' ethnocentrism suggested that its citizens possess a relatively high ethnocentrism level (Hamin & Elliott, 2006). On the basis of this understanding, Dinnie (2008) suggests that a country with low ethnocentrism level can channel its resources into improving the quality of its domestic brands through increased investment in research and development, executive development, and design training rather than frittering its limited resources away on 'buy domestics' campaign.

It should be noted that position on brand perceptual ladder is not fixed. For example, in the 2004 Interbrand/Business Week survey of the world's top 100 global brands, no less than 57 are American owned (Anholt, 2005). In the same survey, Germany maintained a second place with a mere nine-billion dollar global brand followed by France, Japan and the United Kingdom in that order. Surprisingly, in the Anholt's (2005) Nation Brand Index (NBI) quarter 2, Germany was rated higher than America, despite the fact that American brands outnumbered German brands in the global marketplace by more than six to one. This implies that no matter how low a nation's branded export is on the perceptual ladder, the prospect of moving into the fore position in the global 'brandscape' is very high. In the view of Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001), the effect of a nation's image on consumer behavior is product specific since a country may be perceived as a good producer of consumer products, but not necessarily of automobiles. In this case, it will be logical for a nation's export promotion council to determine which of its products can excel in the global market.

METHODS

Selection of Countries

For us to conduct a comparative study, we needed to make a choice or selection of objects to be studied. By purposive sampling, a choice of seven countries was made for this study. The countries selected are China, Ghana, Italy, Nigeria, South Africa (SA) United Kingdom (UK), and United States of America (USA). The main reason for the selection of these countries is that many Nigerians are familiar with the goods and services from the chosen countries. By way of international exposure to internet facilities and other international media, most respondents are capable of ranking the selected countries with reference to the chosen index. Three of the selected countries (Italy, USA and UK) were meant to represent the more technologically advanced cluster; while the other three countries represented the less technologically advanced cluster, with Ghana and South Africa as Nigeria's sister African countries.

Research Design and Sampling Method

A combination of the descriptive and explanatory (correlational) research designs was adopted for this study. A sample of 930 respondents (720 Nigerians and 210 Non-Nigerians) between the ages of 18 years and 65 years was selected for the study. Abuja, Calabar, Edo, Lagos, Jos and Port Harcourt were randomly chosen from the following three geopolitical zones; North-Central, South-West and South-South. A total of 120 respondents were selected from each capital city making a total of 720 Nigerian respondents. The 210 foreigners were selected from the same capital cities by means of convenience sampling.

The data for this research were collected with the aid of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to capture the respondents' demographics and eleven questions measuring the image of Nigerian branded exports on a five-point Likert-type scale. To measure the perception of Made-in-Nigeria products both aggregated and disaggregated product quality were scaled. Disaggregated product quality considered durability, value for money (price) fashionableness, reliability and workmanship. Past experience with made-in-Nigeria products and made-in-Nigeria labels were also included as indicators of branded exports.

$$PNE = (D + V + F + R + W + Q + PrNp + Pexp + Mlab + SW + Alt)/N \quad 1$$

where PNE is the Perceptions of the Nigerian Exports.

D is Product durability,

V is Value for money,

F is Fashionableness,

R is Reliability,

W is Workmanship,

PrNp is Preference for Nigerian products,

Q is Quality of the branded exports,

Pexp is Past experience with Nigerian products,

SW is Self Worth,	Mlab is Satisfaction with Made-in-Nigeria label,
Alt is Alternative to Nigerian products	N is number of components in the sub brand.

In the ranking question, respondents were requested to rank country brands on product/ service brand vector using 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7 in a non-repeated order, 7 for the most reputable country brand and 1 for the least reputable country brand. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques such as: percentages, means, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Tukey-Kramer multiple range procedure, independent T-test and multiple regression analysis were applied to the data. For reliability of the research instrument, the Split-Half, odd and even numbers approach with a reliability coefficient (r_o^e) was used. The coefficient of equivalence for the entire scale was computed by means of Spearman Brown Prophecy formula $r_{xx1} = 2r_o^e/1+r_o^e$ for $r_o^e = 0.591$, we obtained $r_{xx1} = 0.74$.

The demographic characteristics of respondents showed that of the 930 questionnaires distributed, 610 (66 per cent) were retrieved for both Nigerians and Non Nigerians respondents; 497 (53 per cent) were found usable. The following demographic profile emerged from the sample: respondents' average age and income are 35 years and N85,413.30 per month respectively. Two-third, that is 329 (66.6 per cent) of the respondents are male. On educational qualification, about half (47.6 per cent) of the respondents are B.Sc holders, followed by M.Sc/Ph.D (26.8 per cent), OND (14.8 per cent), SSCE (8.0 per cent) and lastly, FSLC (2.7 per cent). On the level of exposure, 277 (56.5 per cent) agreed that they had never traveled abroad out of the shores of Nigeria. 120 (24.5 per cent) affirmed that they rarely travel abroad, while 54 (11 per cent) often travel abroad and yet another 23 (4.7 per cent) said they travel abroad very often. Only 16(3.3) per cent travel abroad always. Data on religion showed that 362 (73.1 per cent) of the respondents were Christians, while 21.2 per cent were Moslems, only one traditionalist was involved and the remaining 5.5 per cent belong to other religion outside the first three religion groups mentioned above. All statistical tests were performed with the aid of SPSS and Excel at the 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Results

In this section, the analysis of data was done starting with the determination of the image of the Nigerian branded exports using averages. A low average score represents a weak level of satisfaction with made-in-Nigeria products. Next, a comparison between Nigerians and non-Nigerians in their perception of branded exports was performed. The analysis of variance was conducted to estimate if significant differences exist among the seven countries in terms of product/service. Lastly, the impact of a set of presumably influential factors on the perception of branded exports was measured using multiple regression statistics.

Image of the Nigerian Branded Exports

Table 1
Perception of Nigerian Branded Exports

<i>Exports Indices</i>	<i>SD (1)</i>		<i>D (2)</i>		<i>N (3)</i>		<i>A (4)</i>		<i>SA (5)</i>		<i>Index</i>
	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	
Made in Nigeria products are:											
1 Durable	73	14.7	193	38.8	127	25.6	94	18.9	10	2	2.55
2 Value for money (Fairness of Prices of locally made products)	55	11.1	144	29	150	30.2	139	28	9	1.8	2.8
3 Fashionable	21	4.2	94	18.9	108	21.7	233	46.9	41	8.2	3.36
4 Reliable	53	10.7	197	39.6	144	29	88	17.7	15	3	2.63
5 Of good workmanship/ craftsmanship	25	5	106	21.3	167	33.6	157	31.6	42	8.5	3.17
6 Of standard quality	74	14.9	191	38.4	128	25.8	94	18.9	10	2	2.55
7 I prefer Made-in-Nigeria products to their foreign counterparts)	136	27.4	183	36.8	92	18.5	61	12.3	25	5	2.31
8 My past experience with Made in Nigeria products was satisfactory	89	17.9	203	40.8	118	23.7	76	15.3	11	2.2	2.43
9 Made in Nigeria labels represent satisfaction	80	16.1	191	38.4	141	28.4	70	14.1	15	3	2.49
10 The quality of Made-in- Nigeria products is high enough for my personality	51	10.3	107	21.5	128	25.8	161	32.4	50	10.1	3.1
11 I buy Made in Nigeria products even when there are alternatives	73	14.7	136	27.4	93	18.7	140	28.2	55	11.1	2.94
TOTAL	730	13.4	1745	31.9	1396	25.5	1313	24	283	5.2	2.76

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neither Agree nor Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Disagree

Source: Authors' field work

Of the five disaggregated components of product/service quality, fashionableness was ranked top with a mean score of 3.36 followed closely by workmanship with an average score of 3.17. The average score of 2.55 computed for the aggregated quality lies within the same region as the disaggregated quality score of 2.9. Interpreting the two near-average indices, the quality of made-in-Nigeria products can be seen as slightly poor or fair.

The weak mean score of 2.31 on preference for made-in-Nigeria products is an indication that foreign products are preferred to local ones. The brand value of 2.49

associated with made-in-Nigeria label as evident in Table 1 shows a weak reputation which can have negative influence on consumer's choice for Nigerian product. Invariably, it may also lead to their avoidance of made-in-Nigeria labels.

Past experiences with made-in-Nigeria products also indicated dissatisfaction with a mean score of 2.43. In conclusion, the below-average score of 2.76 for exports sub-brand indicates a fairly poor image which places Nigeria at a disadvantaged competitive position in the global market.

Worthy of note is the 39.3 per cent of the respondents who affirmed that they would select made-in-Nigeria product first irrespective of other alternatives or competing brands; 42.1 per cent of the respondents expressed their preference for foreign products. The remaining 18.7 per cent said they would select any first.

A Comparative Analysis of the Perceptions of the Nigerian Branded Exports by Nigerians and Non-Nigerians

This segment presents the mean perception indices of Nigerians and non-Nigerians on the image of the Nigerian branded exports.

Table 2
T-Test for Equality of Mean Perceptions of Culture on the Basis of Nationality

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>		<i>t-value</i>	<i>d.f</i>	<i>Sig</i> <i>2 tailed</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Nigeria	379	2.76	0.596	Equal variance assumed	1.008	495	0.314	Not Significant
Non-Nigeria	118	2.69	0.533	Equal variance not assumed	1.075	218.29	0.283	Not Significant

Source: Authors' field work

From the results presented in Table 2 it appears that Nigerians have tendency to rate the Nigerian branded exports more favourably than their foreign counterparts. The t-test result showed no significant difference between Nigerians and Non-Nigerians in the perception of the Nigerian branded exports.

Comparison of Perceptions of Product/Service Made in Seven Different Countries

Further test was conducted to decipher if significant differences exist among the seven countries. The outcome of this test can be found in Table 3 & 4.

Table 3
Comparison of the Images of Seven Different Countries Using ANOVA

<i>Index</i>	<i>Country</i>							<i>F Value</i>
	<i>China</i>	<i>Ghana</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Nigeria</i>	<i>S. Africa</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>USA</i>	
Product/Service Ordinary Ranking	4.15 4TH	2.15 7TH	4.60 3RD	2.17 6TH	3.24 5 TH	5.65 2ND	6.15 1 ST	564.06

Source: Authors' field work

Table 4
Perception of Branded Exports: Multiple Range Tests Based on Turkey-Kramer Procedure

	<i>Most Reputable Image</i>					<i>Least Reputable Image</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>Group 1</i>	<i>Group 2</i>	<i>Group 3</i>	<i>Group 4</i>	<i>Group 5</i>	<i>Group 6</i>
Product/Service	US	UK	Italy	China	S. Africa	Nigeria Ghana

Source: Authors' field work

The result of the analysis in respect of product/service from the seven different countries again revealed that the three African countries: South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana were most poorly and negatively rated with the following mean scores of 3.24, 2.17 and 2.15 respectively. US as usual, came first with an average score of 6.15, followed by UK, the runner up with 5.65, Italy with 4.60 and China with 4.15 (See Table 3).

The F-value of 564.06 strongly indicates that differences exist among the various mean scores of the countries compared in the test. Based on this evidence, we concluded that public perceptions of products/services from the seven countries are statistically significantly different at 0.05 level of significance.

The details of the pair-wise comparison test can be seen in Table 4. The emerging pattern of grouping from Tukey Kramer procedure ranked US, UK and Italy in the first, second and third position respectively. But, Nigeria though better perceived than Ghana was paired with Ghana in the sixth and last group.

Table 5
Regression Model on Influences on Nigerian Branded Exports

<i>Overall F</i>	<i>Sig F</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Durbin-W</i>		
0.7	0.65	0.01	1.79		
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>CPD</i>	<i>Partial F</i>
Intercept	2.71	11.45	7.42E-26		
INCOME	1.95E-07	0.38	0.71	0	0.14
Exposure	-0.06	-1.69	0.09	0.01	2.87
SEX	0.02	0.21	0.83	0	0.04
AGE	0	-0.11	0.91	0	0.01
EduQ	0.01	0.33	0.74	0	0.11
Religion	0.06	1.15	0.25	0	1.32

Source: Authors' field work

The multiple regression analysis results in Table 5 exports indicate that none of the independent variables could statistically explain the variation in the image of the Nigerian branded exports. Overall $F(0.70)$ is less than $F_{\alpha}(k, n-k-1) = F_{0.05}(6, 337) = 2.10$ and probability 0.65 greater than 0.05, thus, we conclude that the net regression coefficient are not statistically different from zero and hence no impact whatsoever on the image of exports. Similarly, all the partial F_s were all less than $F = F_{\alpha}(1, n-k-1) = F_{0.05}(1, 337) = 3.84$, hence, none of Coefficient of Partial Determination (CPD)_s for the independent variables significantly contributed to the variation in the image of exports brand.

THE DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Nigerian branded exports was poorly and negatively rated. Findings indicated that more than half (64.2 per cent) of the respondents overtly expressed preference for foreign-made products over the locally-made products. This result appears to be similar to the one obtained by Agbonifoh (1986) who found that foreign made-ins irrespective of their country of origin were preferred by Nigerians to their local counterparts. In a related study, Aire(1974) found that 38.2 per cent of the respondents would select made-in-Nigeria products first before the foreign made-ins. Thirty-eight years later, the present study showed that only 39.3 per cent prefer made-in-Nigeria products to their foreign counterparts. Our result showed low ethnocentrism on the part of Nigerian consumers, if only 39.3 per cent agreed that they would continue to buy made-in Nigeria products in the presence of other competing brands. Further results revealed that only 17.1 per cent acknowledged that made-in-Nigeria labels represent satisfaction. In addition, our findings indicated that respondent's past experiences with made-in-Nigeria products were not satisfactory. The reasons for the observed negative attitudes toward Nigerian products may be related to marketing problems: product quality, pricing, promotion and poor governmental regulations. Worse still, it could be psychological emanating from consumer behaviour. Whatever the reason, the absence of patriotic consumption on the part of the Nigerian consumers, definitely have debilitating effect on the survival of local economy.

The result of the present study appears to confirm Agbonifoh's (1986) finding on the fashionableness of Nigerian products. Albeit the poor image of Nigerian branded exports, a greater percentage of the respondents feel that locally-made products are fashionable. To a great extent, this finding represents consistency and stability in the attitudes of Nigerians towards made-in-Nigeria products. An area that seemed difficult for us to interpret in our research relates to the neutral response on the suitability of the locally-made products for our respondent's personality.

Regarding the comparative analysis of countries in terms of product images, our result tends to support the submission of Jaffe and Nebenzahl(2001) that significant differences exist in the relative images of countries. A survey conducted in 1999 for the British Council in 13 countries show that the UK's image is less

positive than that of the US and Japan (Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2001). Our results on country comparison which positioned Nigeria in the 6th group appears to corroborate Aire's (1974) finding that Nigeria did not rank as first, second and third for all the eight products considered except for alcoholic drinks for which Nigeria ranked third.

Our result which shows that Nigerian products are better perceived than that of the Ghanaian products tends to support Shenge's (2010) survey that was conducted to determine if there was significant difference in the choice of Nigeria, England and Ghana on their assessed capability to produce high quality insecticide. Findings from this survey indicated a significant difference among the three countries. There after the multiple comparison test showed a significant t-value of 2.84 with England emerging as the most favourably perceived country, followed by Nigeria and Ghana in that order.

Our result appears to support Ahmed and d'Astous (2004) evidence that highly industrialized nations such as Japan, USA, UK or Germany are highly evaluated in terms of product quality than newly industrialized nations such as China, Korea or Indonesia. In our findings, the US, UK, and Italy were rate ahead of China in terms of branded exports.

Lastly, our analysis showed that none of the independent variable was helpful in determining the image of the Nigerian branded exports.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT

As suggested by findings of this research, a number of problems seem to bedevil the Nigerian entrepreneurs and manufacturers and their efforts to be competitive. Some of these problems range from poor product quality in the area of durability, reliability and pricing to the entrenched negative attitudes of Nigerians toward locally-made products.

Given the poor image of the Nigeria made-ins, it would be necessary to answer the following questions. Why are made-in-Nigeria products still less preferred to their foreign counterparts given that almost all the locally-made products bear NAFDAC and SON certification numbers? Could the reason be that the required standard for certifications lesser in value than their foreign counterparts, or that the officials of the Nigerian monitoring bodies are into some mischievous and unpatriotic games, allowing a pass for a product that has not actually met the stipulated standards? The neglect of marketing concept by Nigerian manufacturers in sensing and satisfying the needs of consumers has been blamed on the seller-market status prevalence in Nigeria. However, the Manufacturer Association of Nigeria and other related agencies have to evolve means of conducting a comparative test of local and foreign products to establish the underlying problems.

One key idea the market-oriented companies need to grasp is that, a brand only exists in a buyer's mind and it is the buyer who has the power to begin, sustain or terminate the relationship with it. As players in the global market, the Nigerian

business operators do not necessarily have a choice other than to embrace the result-driven philosophy in product designing, pricing, promotion and distribution of products. Borrowing a leaf from South Korea's experience, the Nigerian government can set up multi-billion naira ventures to help exporters improve the designs of their products. Additionally, industrial design renovation centres can be set in major cities nation-wide to help SMEs in the design of their products. Efforts should be made to enhance infrastructure by funding a 'Brand Academy' to train reasonable number of specialists every year on brand management, character design and industrial packaging. Government should endeavour to sponsor entrepreneurs to advanced countries like Germany, Japan, US, UK and South Korea to understudy their production system.

Having enhanced the quality of our local brands, a well-designed advertising campaign will then be helpful in repositioning and reviving the poor image of our domestic products particularly in the eye of the non-Nigerians. An effective advertising campaign should seek to improve consumer's knowledge of the benefit inherent in the product being advertised.

For branded exports to benefit from the helpful dose of COO halo effect, the product should chime with its COO in a creative logic manner in the minds of the consumers. When developing export promotion campaigns as one component of overall nation-brand strategy, governments, trade councils and export promotion agencies therefore need to carefully evaluate which of the countries' brands will most significantly benefit from initiatives of highlighting the product's COO. In conformity with the product life curve, it is useful to link national symbols with company products, or to choose a name that bears national connotations. In summary, a coordinated nation-branding campaign must be founded on healthy public-private sector collaboration.

A critical step in enhancing the image of Nigeria home-made products internally is to overcome the age-old colonial mentality of seeing local products as inferior to foreign made-ins. In support of Yusuf (2009) submission, there should be joint efforts on the part of the Nigerian business operators and government to sensitize and instil in the Nigeria citizenry the spirit of nationalism and pride in consuming their cultural and local products. Nigeria Export Promotion council (NEPC) should be revitalized to take up their responsibility of projecting the image of made-in-Nigeria products to the external market audience. Additionally, imports should be restricted through import duties and tight security at the Nigeria borders to check smuggling

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to determine the public image of the Nigerian branded exports and to investigate if there was significant difference between Nigerians and non-Nigerians in perception of the Nigerian branded exports. In addition, to identify the demographic and socio-cultural variables that influence perceivers'

image of branded exports. Also, to establish the relative image of Nigeria in terms of the branded exports among seven selected countries. Outside the demographic data, eleven items were drawn to elicit data on the image of branded exports. Data were analysed and results depicted negative image for the Nigerian branded exports. There was no significant difference between Nigerians and non-Nigerians in their perceptions of the Made-in-Nigeria products. The image of branded exports was not related to any of the independent variables. The comparative analysis result placed Nigeria in the 6th position among the seven countries. On the basis of our findings, we recommend that plans should be made by the government to set up multi-billion naira ventures to help exporters improve the designs of their products. Efforts should be made to enhance infrastructure by funding a 'Brand Academy' to train reasonable number of specialists every year on brand management, character design and industrial packaging. Additionally, the entrepreneurs and manufacturers should embrace market-oriented approach and also network with their counterparts from developed countries to effectively employ the latest technology. While targeting the external communities, efforts should also be made to market Made-in-Nigeria products internally by mitigating the effects of the age-old colonial mentality and to instil in the Nigeria citizenry the spirit of nationalism and pride in consuming their cultural and local products. Further studies can be done to evaluate the image of specific products made in Nigeria.

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