



THE CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING BRAND-BUILDING STRATEGIES BY
ENTREPRENEURS:
A STUDY OF MSME BUSINESSES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Approval of the Thesis

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Abstract

THE CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING BRANDING-BUILDING STRATEGIES BY ENTREPRENEURS:

A STUDY OF MSME BUSINESSES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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The purpose of this study is to understand the challenges faced by MSME business owners in adopting brand-building strategies and propose strategies and tactics that can be adopted to overcome the problem. The theoretical framework was based on the work of Wongs & Merrilles (2005) which identified 3 levels of brand orientation amongst SMEs. The conceptual framework is based on 5 variables that are critical to the adoption of brand orientation by business owners.

This study was conducted amongst 234 MSME business owners in operation for a minimum of 2 years across 14 business sectors. A quantitative approach was adopted to be able to gather relevant and structured data using questionnaires ranging from the biodata of the business owners to questions on the Likert scale on each variable.

Five independent variables and one dependent variable of brand building formed the formulation of 4 hypotheses that tested the relationship between the variables. Data analysis commenced by turning the responses into composite variables for ease of testing. By adopting relevant statistical tests, all 4 hypotheses established relationships between the independent and dependent variables, where the null was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

Challenges were identified and recommendations were made for business owners to learn the rudiments of brand building and to enlist the help of their employees to execute branding. They also need to have a good attitude toward branding. This study is relevant for business owners to shorten their learning curve and is applicable for practice and learning.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

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Dedication

This is dedicated to the memory of my father, a foremost educationist, Late Chief Olusola Bayode, who was a source of inspiration to the commencement of this doctoral studies. He instilled the quest for knowledge in me. His memory is blessed.

Acknowledgement

I give all glory to God for the grace to complete this thesis. I thank my family, my husband, most especially, and my 3 lovely boys for helping me keep my eyes on the goal. They were understanding of my aspiration and the impact that this had on family time. It became a collective family goal to have this thesis completed. Thank you for your support towards my growth.

To my mother and my siblings, I am grateful for the roles you have played in my life and your moral support for my development.

I would like to thank my thesis Supervisor, Dr Abhishek Tripathi for his mentorship and guidance throughout the stages of this thesis completion, and who challenged me at the closing phase when I was almost giving up. His support was invaluable.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Definitions
CAC	Corporate Affairs Commission
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
EU	European Union
FINER	Feasible, Interesting, Novel, Ethical, and Relevant
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KMO	Kaiser–Meyer–Olki
MS	Microsoft
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MSMED	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMEDAN	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies of Nigeria
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
UK	United Kingdom
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UREC	University Research Ethics Committee
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

According to the classification by United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) for developing countries; firms with less than 5 workers are categorised as micro sector firms, between 5-50 workers are categorised as small sector firms, 50-99 workers are described as medium sector firms and firms with 100 or more workers are categorised as large sector firms (Odoom et al., 2017). Bringing it closer home to Nigeria, according to the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2013), a business with a turnover of fewer than N5m and an employee strength of not more than 10 is described as a micro business; a business turnover of between N5m-N50m a staff base of 11 to 49 personnel is a small business while a turn-over of N50m- 500m is described as a medium scale business. The small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria are critical to the economy, contributing about 48% of the national GDP in the last five years (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies of Nigeria {SMEDAN} & National Bureau of Statistics {NBS}, 2013).

Brand building is the process adopted by organisations to create a distinct identity for a brand. Urdu (1994) states that the future of many companies is dependent on brands and when they choose to adopt a brand strategy, it sets the brand on a new path. Most often, the practice is common with multinational companies, which possess the financial muscle to execute activities and drive consumer engagement activities. Brand building is often seen as relevant only to big organisations (Wong & Merrilees, 2005).

Brand building often possess a challenge for smaller companies as they cope with the day-to-day challenges of running their businesses and may not be willing to dabble into allocating time and resources to brand-building efforts. However, examples abound of how most multinationals,

as we know them today, started as MSME businesses managed by just one person and have grown over the years to their status. This underlies the impact and benefit that brand building can deliver for an MSME business. The benefit of adopting brand-building initiatives is enormous, especially for an MSME business. Expectedly, the MSME competitive space is very cluttered, making it difficult to have a cut-through for most players who often offer the same products that are mostly undifferentiated. It is believed that the survival of MSME businesses is hinged on the adoption of brand-building initiatives, as consumers have become more discerning and the environment more dynamic.

Keller (1998) proposes that brand strategy can be adopted by MSME businesses and not limited to multinationals only while Wong and Merrilees (2005), reiterate that both small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and big organisations can build brands, albeit in differing ways.

This study would aim to understand the current level of adoption of brand building by MSME business owners and the role that brand building has played in the operations of the businesses, it will also highlight the challenges faced by MSME businesses in Nigeria concerning building their brands and identify and propose strategies and tactics that can be adopted in overcoming the problem.

Research Problem Statement

The problem to be addressed by this study is the challenges faced by MSME business owners in the adoption of brand-building strategies. The contribution of the MSME sector to the Nigerian economy cannot be over-emphasised, as it is a catalyst for the growth of the economy (Adekunle, 2020; Tahir et al., 2021; Umar et al., 2020). According to SMEDAN (2017), they contribute 49.78% to the GDP of Nigeria, 77% of national employment as well as 7.64% of

exports. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2020) states that despite the importance of this sector to the growth of the economy, it continues to underperform. The composition of the MSME sector with the micro industries being dominant, has been predominantly driven by owner-managers, striving for income for themselves and a few employees; a demonstration that the country still operates at a rudimentary level (Etuk et al., 2014). Rather than uncoordinated and often tactical measures adopted by the MSME sub-sector, it requires a more strategic and integrated approach to business management (Okundaye et al., 2019).

From the aforementioned, it can be inferred that the growth of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise sectors is critical to the growth of the economy. There is alignment among marketing scholars and practitioners on the impact of market dynamics and its effect on developing vibrant brands. It is concluded that adopting brand orientation is a key imperative to the success of small enterprises (Odoom et al., 2016 & Osakwe et al., 2016). It is also suggested by researchers that SME businesses can reap both financial benefits (increase in sales revenue and profit margin) and non-financial benefits (brand visibility, brand perception, image, awareness, loyalty, and reputation) because of their branding efforts (Hirvonen et al., 2013; Odoom et al., 2017; Wong and Merrilees, 2008).

The brand remains a key asset which if well tapped into can drive consumer satisfaction and competitive advantage (Onileowo & Sadiku, 2021). A failure rate of 85% for MSME businesses in Nigeria within the first 5 years, (Gumel, 2019a) is mostly attributed to a lack of marketing strategies (Damitha and Jayasekara, 2019; İşkurak and Dikmen, 2021). It has become imperative to understand and identify roadblocks to their survival.

Even though literature has identified various challenges and militating factors against the growth of MSMEs in Nigeria, persistent issues gaining attention like lack of finance, technology

deficiency, skills deficiency etc (Gumel, 2019; Umar et al., 2020). However, without steadfast implementation of the intervention in SME branding, MSMEs will remain compromised. In the absence of this intervention, the competitiveness, and growth of Nigerian MSMEs do not look bright (Ogunsanya, 2021). There is still low adoption of branding initiatives by many MSME businesses due to the lack of know-how in the application of marketing and branding concepts despite the value it brings (Hong and Nguyen, 2020; Ogechukwu et al., 2013; Onileowo and Sadiku, 2021). MSME businesses will continue to operate at sub-optimal levels without a holistic view of driving business growth (Adekunle, 2020).

According to the study by SMEDAN (2019) the important role of Lagos State as the commercial nerve capital of Nigeria, as well as a key economic hub has been confirmed; contributing 11.5% of the number of MSMEs (of a total of 36 states of the federation). Lagos is a cosmopolitan city, with 16 local government development areas and a population estimated to be about 15m-20m, which makes it the largest city in Nigeria and the city with the largest population in Africa (Onilude & Vaz, 2021). Its population is spread across rural and urban communities. Lagos boasts a very vibrant economy and is home to several business hubs of Nigeria, with most commercial activities in Nigeria happening in Lagos (Erinoso et al., 2023). Lagos is a significant contributor to Nigeria's GDP of 15-30% while being only 8% of the national population. The growth rate of Lagos's GDP is at 5.8%, higher than the national at 5.2% (World Bank, 2023). This demonstrates the relevance and significance of Lagos to Nigeria as well as to this study. Hence a good location to locate the study.

Previously, research on the importance of branding was focused on multinational organisations (Odoom et al., 2016), necessitating a call by Abimbola (2001) on the need to

champion the relevance of branding to MSMEs. Many years later, a lot of research has been done in this area, and while some of these have identified some brand management concerns faced by MSMEs; there are still concerns around some literature still appearing scanty and scattered, with most of the marketing theories originally proposed for large firms, thus making their applicability in MSME business settings irrelevant and inconclusive due to the variance between MSMEs and large organisations in size and character (Odoom et al., 2016; Wong and Merrilees, 2005).

The current body of literature does not adequately address the challenge surrounding brand building, as most available literature on branding is from developed countries. It is imperative to identify the challenges faced by MSME business owners in Lagos, and by extension Nigeria and bring them to a point of deriving value from the adoption of branding, thereby contributing to the overall growth of the economy.

Research Purpose Statement

This study aimed to understand the current level of adoption of brand building by MSME business owners and the role that brand building had played in the operations of the businesses, it also highlighted the challenges faced by MSME businesses in Nigeria concerning building their brands and identified and proposed strategies and tactics that can be adopted in overcoming the problem. The purpose of this study was to understand the challenges faced by MSME business owners in adopting brand-building strategies as part of their business process.

This study focused on selected MSME business owners in the Lagos State of Nigeria who have run their businesses for a minimum period of 2 years and have a staff strength of between 1 and 10 employees. To resolve the research problem, a quantitative research method was used in the study, through primary and secondary data collection. Primary data was collected through raw data collection from pre-identified respondents while secondary data was through journals and

publications related to the research topic. A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions was used to ascertain the attitudes and perceptions of MSME business owners toward brand-building strategies. The Likert scale questioning was adopted in the survey to explore the motivations and behaviours of respondents.

A sample size of 234 was deployed for this study, which was identified using a multi-stage sampling technique; with the initial use of a stratified sampling method to identify unique groups within the population, after which the probability sampling of simple random sampling was deployed to choose the respondents for the survey.

Research Aims and Objectives

The research aim is the main goal or the purpose to be achieved in a research project. Sentences stating the aim of a project are usually quite brief, they are broad and introductory (Thomas & Hodges, 2010). To commence a thesis, it is important to understand and formulate the aims and objectives that the research is to achieve. It is necessary to do this as the aim and objectives will direct the scope and design of the research. The research aim is what dictates what is required to be achieved within the scope of the study and when this is achieved, it answers the research questions. With the aim known, the research objectives break it down and articulate the steps that will make it attainable.

While the research aim is a holistic view of what is to be achieved, the research objectives can be several listed objectives. With that done, it achieves the aim possible. While formulating a research aim, it is important to ensure that the topic is not too broad. A research topic should be specific and focused on an identified area; this will make the execution of the study precise and focused. Another mistake made with setting up a research aim is when the aim is set to achieve an unrealistic aim. Aims must be set at a level commensurate with what the researcher can make

happen. The resources at the disposal of the researcher need to be considered while setting the research objective. Research objectives that cannot be achieved within the time frame available to the researcher become unachievable. While concluding the research study, the researcher will validate the achievement of the aims and objectives of the research. If not fully achieved, a reason needs to be attributed to the discrepancy (Dudovskiy, 2022; Thomas and Hodges, 2010).

This study aimed to understand the current level of adoption of brand building by MSME business owners and the role that brand building has played in the operations of their businesses; to highlight the challenges faced by MSME businesses in Nigeria (Lagos State specifically) concerning building their brands and identify and propose strategies and tactics that can be adopted in overcoming the problem.

The objectives of the study are detailed below:

1. To identify the association of the level of awareness on the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners
2. To know how the attitude of MSME business owners drives their adoption of brand-building strategies.
3. To determine the association of motivation and perceived benefits on the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners.
4. To know the challenges faced by MSME business owners in adopting brand-building strategies in their business operations.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Once research objectives have been formulated, it is necessary to formulate the research questions. Getting the research questions right is the first step to having a solution to the research question. A good research question should be able to have certain properties – it should be

appropriate, meaningful, and purposeful. A good research question must be achievable, relevant to the study, and ethical and reasonably thought through. (Thabane et al., 2009).

A poorly crafted research question will impact negatively the design of the study and flaw the result that comes out of it. According to Thabane et al. (2009), research questions must satisfy the “*FINER criteria (Feasible, Interesting, Novel, Ethical, and Relevant) (p.73)*”. The research questions formulated for this study have undergone careful consideration to ensure that they fit the properties of a good research question.

RQ1: What is the association of the level of awareness on the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners?

RQ2: How does the attitude of MSME business owners influence their adoption of brand-building strategies?

RQ3: What is the association of motivation and perceived benefits with the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners?

RQ4: What challenges are MSME business owners facing in adopting brand-building strategies in their business operations?

This study aimed to understand the current level of adoption of brand building by MSME business owners and the role that brand building has played in the operations of the businesses, it also highlighted the challenges faced by MSME businesses in Nigeria concerning building their brands and identified and proposed strategies and tactics that can be adopted in overcoming the problem.

Research Hypothesis

A hypothesis indicates what your predictions are about your research. It provides a temporary response to the research question, which is yet untested. As such, it is applicable to

write different hypotheses that align with the research questions. Hypotheses measure a relationship between two or more variables; an independent variable and a dependent variable (McCombes, 2022). A hypothesis should be based on existing knowledge that is testable and can either be validated or rejected through a statistical method of testing. Hypothesis allows for a generalisation of an observation pending testing.

In this study, there were 4 hypotheses tested.

H1₀: There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand-building strategy by business owners.

H1₁: There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand-building strategy by business owners.

H2₀: The attitude of business owners does not influence their adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

H2₁: The attitude of business owners influences their adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

H3₀: Motivation and perceived benefits do not influence the adoption of brand building strategy by business owners.

H3₁: Motivation and perceived benefits influence the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

H4₀: There is no significant relationship between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

H4₁: There is a significant relationship between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

Nature of Study

For this study, a quantitative research method was used through primary and secondary data collection. A set of pre-determined respondents contributed to the primary data, identified using a multi-stage sampling technique, starting with a stratified sampling method and subsequently probability sampling of simple random sampling. Secondary data was sourced from industry journals and publications on the research topic. The feedback from respondents was sourced through a closed-ended structured questionnaire. The Likert scale questioning was deployed to explore the motivations and behaviours of the respondents.

Significance of Study

It has been established that there is a limited available study in brand building for MSME businesses in Nigeria, and where available, studies are foreign and not representative of current trends. The size of the MSME industry and its significance to the Nigerian economy implies that understanding the role of brand building in the growth of the sector and knowing the challenges currently being faced by businesses will help to unravel the steps necessary to remove the roadblocks. With the explosion of entrepreneurial pursuits in Nigeria, this study will be relevant to emerging businesses to have practical and relatable recommendations to shorten their learning curve. This study will also contribute to theory and practice by enriching available materials for students studying Entrepreneurship, management, and Consultants who support MSME companies.

The study will have implications for:

1. Increasing the knowledge of business owners and enriching the framework for MSME business processes.
2. Challenging the stereotype that brand building is only for big organisations.

3. Relevance to emerging businesses to have practical and relatable recommendations to shorten their learning curve.
4. It will add to the body of knowledge for both scholars and management who support small companies, as it will enrich the discourse on how businesses can create a competitive advantage for themselves.
5. It will make available original, credible and fresh literature that can be assessed for future studies by scholars.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the existing level of brand-building adoption by MSME business owners and to understand the impact of brand-building on such businesses while highlighting the challenges they face in the process of building brands. This research will identify and propose strategies that can be applied to overcome these challenges. The purpose of this study is to understand the challenges faced by MSME business owners in adopting brand-building strategies as part of their business process. The study is focused on selected businesses in Lagos, Nigeria that have been in operation for a minimum of 2 years with a staff strength of 1- 10 employees.

Under this literature review, six themes were reviewed. This research begins with a review of the literature on SMEs globally, their definitions understanding of their categorisation, and unique characteristics, and how they differ across the developed and developing geographies. The application of brand-building strategies in SMEs in Nigeria is considered and given in-depth analysis, considering how they have been applied to businesses within the context of Nigeria as a country.

The review tried to understand the level of awareness of what constitutes brand-building strategies amongst business owners in Nigeria and what has motivated them to apply these in their businesses. The study further highlights the attitude of business owners towards the adoption of brand-building strategies in their businesses. Understanding the limitations and challenges faced by business owners in the adoption of brand building requires intense scrutiny to know what hindrances are faced. The review of the literature was done using an extensive search of relevant

peer-reviewed scholarly materials from research databases such as ProQuest Central Library, Emerald Insights, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, Peer-reviewed journals from Academia Library and Global Journal of Management and business. The literature search used keywords such as “SME”, “Micro businesses”, “small businesses”, “brand strategies”, “brand loyalty”, “marketing strategy”, “brand orientation”, “barriers to branding”, “entrepreneurship”, “SME owner”, “business owners”, “brand identity”, “brand awareness” amongst others. The literature review covered materials extending from 1996 up to 2023. I categorised these articles into themes in alignment with the research questions and the themes used for this literature.

Theoretical Framework

Brand/Brand Building

A brand holds a deep meaning for consumers and is described as what differentiates a product offering from another (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). A brand enhances the memories of the consumers which entrenches the brand’s attributes based on consumer experiences (Godin, 2009). Brand building involves a process of operationalising the brand into the business structure (Yohn, 2013). Branding represents one of the core marketing practices that brings to focus the interconnectivity of the company with its external environment of which customers are important components. Branding enables companies of various sizes to create, nurture and innovate assets which leads to the perception of value and brand equity, driving profitability (Abimbola, 2001). Brand building builds a competitive advantage for the business versus its competitors.

Brand building strategy amongst MSME businesses.

The long-held perception is that branding is synonymous with big organisations and businesses, however, branding is not the exclusive preserve of large companies as SMEs can also adopt and benefit from branding (Ahonen, 2008; Berthon et al., 2008). The application of

marketing in SMEs differs from large multinationals as well and the application of branding in SMEs differs from the way it relates to large companies (Centeno et al., 2012; Vidic and Vadjnal, 2013). Consumers' attention is captured when businesses use points of parity and variances to differentiate their items from the competition. The definition of a strong brand is defined by favourable, continuous consumer perceptions of a brand that makes a distinction from the products of competitors. Serves as a quality assurance measure, growing customers' conviction that their belief will be reached and minimizing the chance of occurrence of the ambiguity of the purchaser's decision-making among other things (Brexendorf et al., 2015).

The important thing to note is how to be innovative and ensure that the applicability of principles is rightly done based on company peculiarities and needs (Berthon et al., 2008).

The study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of branding in MSME businesses and the relevance of marketing for MSMEs has been established (Wong & Bill Merrilees, 2005). The key characteristics of building a strong brand are described as brand name, awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and distinctive brand associations (Aaker, 1991; Aaker, 1996).

The theoretical framework of this study is hinged on the model developed by Wong and Merrilees (2005) which identifies four key constructs in brand strategy: brand orientation, brand barriers, brand distinctiveness, and brand-marketing performance. Brand orientation is the process where the brand is the central focus of the organisation, where the brand identity is protected, and the development of execution plans, all to achieve competitive advantage (Wong and Merrilees, 2005; Urde, 1999; Urde et al., 2011). Having a brand-oriented approach has been described as the starting point to having the brand being the basis of business strategy that allows a company to compete (Wong & Merrilees, 2005). Discussing barriers to brand building reflects the perception that many MSMEs do not have the time or resources to drive brand building within their

organisations. Other studies point to the fact that some SMEs do not invest in brand building, seeing the process as costs rather than seeing the benefits or value derivable from it. The third construct of brand distinctiveness is linked with the uniqueness of the brand, core to its essence, and brand identity (Centeno et al., 2012).

This position gives a competitive advantage to companies. The last construct on brand-marketing performance infers that the brand can be viewed from many perspectives – its financial value (Baumgarth, 2010; Neuvonen, 2016), its equity (Wong & Merrilees, 2015), or through the brand report card (Keller, 2000), or on the brand-building process (Abimbola, 2007). It believes that the appraisal of brands should be looked at from more than one dimension, due to its complexity.

This theory allocates businesses using the four constructs to arrive at three branding archetypes listed in ascending order – *minimalist brand orientation*, *embryonic brand orientation*, and *integrated brand orientation*. It recognises that organisations vary based on their level of brand orientation which invariably affects their distinctiveness and performance, which ultimately demonstrates the level of barrier existing in such business.

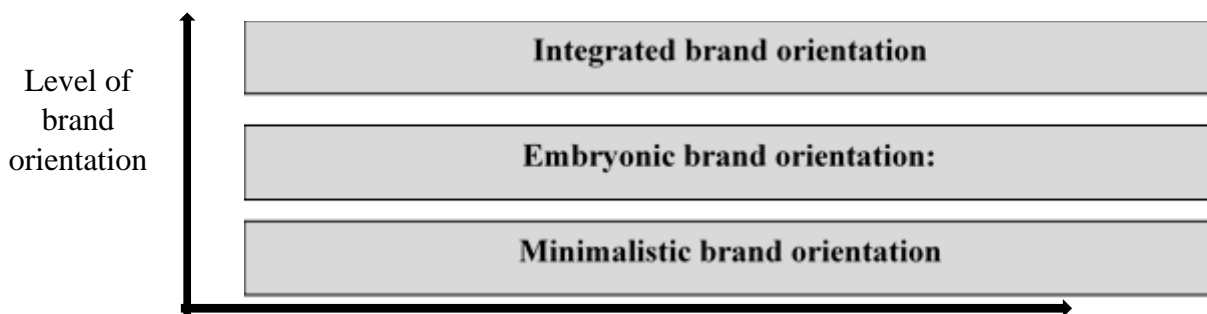
- i. **Minimalistic brand orientation:** The lowest level of brand orientation. Distinctiveness and brand performance are low. The company is short-term focussed, day-to-day transactional, and survival oriented. The brand barrier is said to be highest here, as many SMEs are reported to face dilemmas with investing money, and time, and changing routines and processes (Vidic & Vadjal, 2013).
- ii. **Embryonic brand orientation:** There is more marketing focus in this orientation level, and this is driven by the need of the company to achieve a competitive advantage, resulting in a higher level of brand orientation. Despite this awareness, the level of orientation is still

restricted as branding is still not fully entrenched in business operations. The brand barrier is the highest medium.

- iii. **Integrated brand orientation:** The highest level of brand orientation, increase in brand distinctiveness. The brand here is more embedded in the business and marketing strategy. Brand building plays a critical role in business operations and involves the use and deployment of diverse marketing tools and mixes. At the integrated brand orientation, the brand barrier is low.

Figure 1

Model of brand orientation



Source: *A brand orientation typology for SMEs: A case research approach*, Wong, H.Y. & Merrilees, B., 2005, P.159.

This theory depicts the relationship that exists between the four branding constructs and the transition from the 3 levels of brand orientation, the impact on brand distinctiveness increases, and the brand-marketing performance rises. The rationale for the choice of this framework is that it established the causal relationship among the four constructs, and it confirms the literature that brand orientation plays a critical role in the growth and value of a business (Hirvonen & Laukkanen, 2015). It demonstrates the relevance of branding to MSMEs. Though the research

method adopted was qualitative, the relationship can be further confirmed using quantitative research. The framework is aligned with the current study in many respects; it identifies with the research problem statement that business owners are hindered from adopting brand orientation based on their peculiar challenges as detailed in the 3 archetypes of brand orientation.

The research questions are answered through the theoretical framework that depicts the business dynamics which exposes the perception of the business owners to what brand orientation is based on how integral that is to their daily operations, whether they see brand building as a cost or a benefit to their business. The ability to accept a brand orientation clarifies the attitude of such business owners and the quest to achieve competitive awareness is closely related to the motivation for adopting brand-building strategies. The direct correlation of brand barriers as it relates to the adoption of brand orientation in the framework will shed more light on the challenges faced by business owners in adopting brand-building strategies in their business operations and confirm the variety of challenges as it applies to different business ventures.

Though brand-building frameworks in SME businesses have evolved with time, a study was undertaken by Vidic and Vadjal (2013), classifying companies into four clusters: (1) ignorant, (2) users, (3) low-cost producers, and (4) differentiation producers is similar to the framework by Wong and Merrilees (2005) which recognises that SMEs will vary in their adoption of brand building and their level of awareness; which can increase progressively over time. The point of alignment of these two theories is that branding should not be a sole-standing strategy but should be embedded into the business strategy.

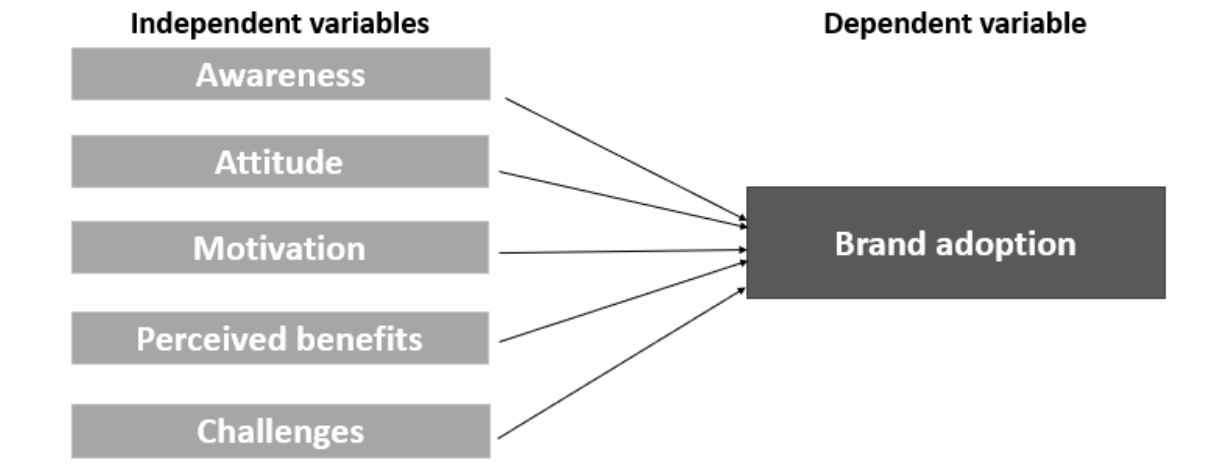
A more recent study has posed a criticism towards “brand orientation”, in its lack of clarity, as little attention has been paid to the prerequisites a company needs to have to become brand-oriented and how to achieve a brand-oriented mindset or how it can be executed (Neuvonen, 2016).

The brand strategy adoption study situated within the hi-tech SME industry focuses on the process of adoption of brand orientation or implementation, not just on the outcome like previous studies. It involves a process of awareness of brand strategy through the perspective of an individual (the business owner), who begins to search for information, which then leads to the formation of an attitude that may lead to the adoption or rejection of brand strategy and the implementation of same (Neuvonen, 2016). The brand strategy is seen as a prerequisite of brand orientation. This study highlights what drives a business owner to adopt or not adopt a brand strategy and emphasises the role of the business owner in the brand-building process which is said to be dependent on the business owner's attitude towards brand building, the commitment to the brand in some respect takes on the personality of the brand (Centeno et al., 2012).

An observed gap in the theoretical framework of Wong and Merrilees (2005) is that the adoption of brand orientation alone may not be the main driver of the increase in brand distinctiveness and brand performance. According to Wong and Merrilees (2015), brand orientation serves as an antecedent of brand engagement, recognising that branding practices are required to bring about engagement. Brand engagement involves a dual perspective from the business and consumer points of view, the combined effect of brand orientation and brand engagement results in growth for the business. Achieving higher levels of brand engagement directly impacts brand performance as every consumer experience and positive touchpoints with customers and key stakeholders further drive the brand. As such, this perspective will be explored in the study under consideration.

Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual framework for this study is hinged on the appraisal of the theoretical framework, leaning on the strengths and the areas of criticism.

Figure 2*Conceptual Framework**Source: Conceptual Framework developed by the researcher***Theme 1: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises: Global, Africa and Nigeria's Perspectives****The MSME Global, Africa and Nigeria definition:**

The acronym MSMEs means Micro, Small and Medium-sized enterprises, however, there is no standardised definition of what exactly actually constitutes an MSME due to variances in structures across many countries, institutions, and even within countries (Ajuwon et al., 2017; Dar et al., 2017; Mukhtar, 2013). Babani and Sharma (2015) state that different parameters describe SMEs globally. The definitions of what constitutes an SME are derivable from several factors, like the role they play within their countries and the policies put in place to support the sector; a small-scale business in a developed country can be a medium or large scale in a developing country (Mansour et al., 2019; Etuk et al., 2014). The definition of what an SME is varies from country to country and sometimes within the industry; a small-scale industry can be explained by the criteria of project costs, capital, size, number of employees, sales volume, annual business turnover, and

the financial position (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011; Xie, X et al., 2013). Prenaj and Ismajli (2018) state that SMEs in Europe are categorised using the criteria of employee number, business annual turnover, and balance sheet, and emphasise the importance of a unified definition given the single market nature of the region. Xie et al. (2013), state that the description of an SME category is distinctive in China and broader compared with other countries. This is based on the law of SME Promotion in China of 2003, it is based on the employee strength, revenues, and assets. In the United States, the small business criteria are based on ownership and industry structure, the number of employees, and revenue, while in India, the categorisation is dependent on the MSMED Act, of 2006 (Babani & Sharma, 2015).

Concerning the United Kingdom, an SME is defined as a business comprising less than 250 employees, while the European Union describes it as an independent venture with less than 25 per cent ownership control by another enterprise(s), with an employee base of less than 250 (Nwankwo & Gbadamosi, 2011). The categorisation based on turnover and employee count as stated earlier varies by country; The categorisation of SMEs is quite important in the European Union, as it is a factor in access to capital and other support programs with the number of employees being a critical assessor to determine classification (Babani and Sharma, 2015; Prenaj and Ismajli, 2018). Micro businesses are those with 1-9 employees and not more than €2 million turnovers, which is comparative to Nigeria at the same number of employees, though the turnover classification for Nigeria is less than N5m, EU small businesses of between 10 and 49 employees and a turnover not more than 10 million compared to Nigeria at less than N50m turnover but with same employee numbers, while medium-sized businesses in European Union will have 50–249 employees and fewer than €50 million turnovers compared to Nigeria at 50-199 employees and

turnover of below N500m (Mansour et al., 2019; Masocha, 2019; Prenaj and Ismajli, 2018; SMEDAN, 2013).

This classification and definition of SMEs vary as you move from country to country. In Tanzania, the number of employees and capital invested determines the categorisation; Micro with 5 employees and capital of 5m TZS, small with 50 employees and capital of 5-200 TZS and medium enterprises consisting of 100 employees and capital of 200-800 TZS. South Africa classifies small businesses across the various industry sectors as 50 employees and turnover of between R10m and R15m, while the medium enterprises vary from R20m-R50m (Masocha, 2019, Fatoki, 2011).

Contrary to the widespread practice of having SME classification based on employees, turnover, or assets on a country-by-country basis or by institutions, Gibson and Vaart (2008) contends that the ability of SMEs to promote economic growth has been hindered by defective definitions of what an SME is and further adds complexity to access to funding for SMEs. The use of employees' numbers and asset base connotes wrong definitions of SMEs. A company with many employees could be using rudimentary practices or manual labour which over-bloats its assessment compared to a much bigger company with a lower employee number but has a more efficient practice. In the same vein, asset as a criterion does not consider the capital efficiency of businesses. The use of business turnover as a measure of size closely identifies the functional and behavioural attributes of such an organisation and is a more befitting definition of an SME Gibson and Vaart (2008).

The point of alignment is that the definition of what an SME is would vary from one country to another, as they likely would be at different stages of economic advancement, however, a unit of measuring turnover denominated in US dollars is proposed (Gibson & Vaart, 2008).

SME from a global perspective

A look at the SME landscape across the world gives more insights into how these economies have positioned the SME sector and the impact that SMEs have had on the economy. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in the economy of every nation, creating jobs, and contributing to the GDP of economies (Abdullahi and Sulaiman, 2015; Prenaj and Ismajli 2018; Fatoki, 2011; Al-Tit, 2019; Tehseen et al., 2019). SMEs are by far the largest contributor to employment and the gross domestic product of many nations. For developed countries, Hyder and Lussier (2016) report that in the USA, small businesses account for 99.7% of U.S. employer firms, including 48.5% in private sector employment, and a share of 33% in export. The same trend is reported in the Eurozone, where there are about 98% of all enterprises, with 67% contribution to total employment, and 58% in gross value added. The United Kingdom's picture shows SMEs being 95% of businesses, 65% of labour and 30% of GDP contribution (Abdullahi & Sulaiman, 2015). The prevalence of SMEs in developing countries shows the same pattern; in Pakistan, where they characterise 90% of all businesses and 40% of GDP contribution (Haleem et al., 2019; Hyder and Lussier, 2016). Therefore, SMEs are a source of job creation and contribute both innovation and competition to the market (Bary, 2019; Singh and Paliwal, 2017).

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are said to be a key driver of the growth of an economy and an engine of sustainability and industrial development (Mutalemwa, 2015; Oladele and Akeke, 2016). Their sizes irrespective, SMEs constitute a critical contributor to a country's GDP, and they are known for their contributions toward economic growth, job creation and social progression of society. (Adebisi and Bakare, 2019; Rankhumise and Letsoalo, 2019). SMEs are important to many economies of the world and considered to be the backbone of the economy; as such their importance from several perspectives cannot be overstated (Karimi and Naghibi, 2015;

Masocha, 2019; Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2019). The importance of SMEs was re-emphasised by Hyder and Lussier (2016), as being indispensable to the economic stability of nations. In developed and developing countries, there is an increase in the focus of governments and institutions on the SME sector as a vehicle to drive economic growth and development (Ogechukwu et al., 2013).

The SME sector of India is strategically significant – 36 million businesses within the country and considered the pillar of the economy contributing to 45% of the industrial output, 40% of India's exports, employing 60 million people, 8% of GDP contribution, create 1.3 million jobs every year and produce more than 8000 quality products for the Indian and international markets (Singh & Paliwal, 2017). The role of the SME sector in the future economic development of India is important, as it serves as the bedrock of new thinking and entrepreneurial pursuits (Bamfo et al., 2015; Singh and Paliwal, 2017).

The contributions of SMEs vary from country to country; however, a constant factor remains in their importance to the overall economic growth of the respective nations. SMEs play a very strategic role in Asian countries. The SME's contribution to the total business is 99% in China, with a 75% rate of employment and 56% GDP contribution, 70% contribution to exports, and about 50% of its taxes come from MSMEs (Hafeez et al., 2013; Singh and Paliwal, 2017); similar pattern plays out in Japan where the majority of business consists of SMEs at 99.7% of businesses, 71% of employment and 55.3% GDP contribution. Indonesia has an SME share of businesses at 99.7%, 99.6% level in employment and 57% GDP contribution (Hafeez et al., 2013).

SMEs represent 90% of businesses in Malaysia, 56% of employment and 32% contribute to GDP. In contrast to most Asian countries, Malaysia seems to be an outlier, as their SMEs demonstrate a low level of productivity, the rate at which businesses are formed is low and only a

few businesses produce the output and generate employment, mostly in the informal economy ((Hafeez et al., 2013; Tehseen et al., 2019).

MSME sector in Africa

MSMEs form the critical backbone of most economies in Africa. In Sub-Saharan, Africa SMEs are said to make up 41% of economic growth (Tumwine et al., 2015). Across Africa, MSMEs operate in nearly all sectors of the economy and contribute to over 50% of employment and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Akinboade, 2015). Though they are more domiciled in the services and manufacturing sectors, they still maintain some presence in other sectors such as mining, and agriculture (Mutalemwa, 2015; Oxford Business Group, 2020). The African economies are comprised of two sectors – the formal and informal: The most distinguishing factor is that the informal sector does not operate with business registration and is more ad-hoc in operations and industrialisation plays a key role in the distinction (Mutalemwa, 2015). Africa comprises a mix of transition and developing countries and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are very integral to the growth agenda of these economies.

The definition of MSMEs varies across Africa and a few African countries have been randomly selected and discussed herein. MSME businesses are said to be catalysts for growth in South Africa (Celani & Zunckel, 2019). With a high contribution to the economy, MSMEs currently comprise 91% of formal business operations (Abor and Quartey, 2010; Akinboade, 2015) and it is predicted by the South African National Development Plan that SMEs will contribute to about 90% of the country's employment by 2030 (Mokuoane, 2016). MSMEs are currently the major sources of employment accounting for 68% of the employment (Rabie et al., 2016). They are a significant income generation source as well as in reducing poverty (Asah et al., 2015).

Unfortunately, they are still unable to achieve the possible potential, while recording some failures; a rate reputed to be in the range of 70% to 80% (Olawale and Garwe, 2010; Asah et al., 2015), significantly high in the first year at 70% failure rate (Rabie et al., 2016).

In Rwanda, SMEs comprise 98% of all businesses and are an employer of 50% of the private sector workers (Mutandwa et al., 2015). In Cameroon, SMEs make up 22% of GDP and employ a sizeable number of the country's labour force (Akinboade, 2015). In Ghana, it is said that SMEs contribute 70% of GDP (Abor & Quartey, 2010) and 92% of its businesses. In Uganda, the MSMEs sector consists of about 90% of the businesses in the private sector and is a key contributor to generating income largely for the poor in an informal sector characterized by a low level of productivity (Corti et al., 2019). The MSME landscape in Ethiopia does not show a strong sight; as it is confronted with many challenges limiting its success (Cherkos et al., 2018), most of the issues have been identified as deficit in infrastructure, low financing, poor managerial competency, marketing issues, raw materials inadequacy amongst others. The intervention of the government towards improving the contribution of the MSMEs is noted, despite this, the MSMEs are still performing sub-optimally (Cherkos et al., 2018).

In Egypt, the MSME sector is predominantly in the informal sector, operating without formal systems. The sector is expected to be the driver of both current and future economic growth in Egypt. The MSME landscape in Egypt is large, and diverse and constitutes about 2.5m businesses, a contribution of between 95% to 98% of the total non-agriculture businesses, employing 75% of the workforce (Bary, 2019; Mansour et al., 2019). According to Odongo and Wang (2016), MSMEs in Kenya are mostly domiciled within the informal sector of the economy and are popularly referred to as "*Jua kali*". They contribute over 80% of the employed workforce in the country and 90% of businesses. This sector helps in creating jobs for the wide number of

unemployed youths and it is fast-growing, confirming its role in the economic development of the country. The political and economic problems in Zimbabwe have had a big impact on employment, which has led to the migration of young people to the MSME sector with a new registration figure of 13,000 in 2017; there are a total number of 60,000 SMEs registered in the country – contributing 60% of the GDP (Ayele et al., 2018).

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria

The history of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Nigeria dates back several years when people traded in yams and other food items. Most of the small-scale industries developed from cottage industries to small enterprises and from small to medium enterprises (Ogechukwu et al., 2013).

SMEs are curators of new ideas, innovations, inventions, and employment. They assist in the development of the economy, which has necessitated the government at different times to develop policies that will drive sustainability and growth of the sector (Ogechukwu et al., 2013). The government established the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) in 2003, for the development and advancement of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector in a sustainable way (Mukhtar, 2013; SMEDAN, 2013).

It is a well-known fact that the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises sector is the growth engine of many economies around the world (Singh & Palimal, 2017) as they are drivers of innovative ventures which result in business and economic advancements. MSMEs are integral to the achievement of key economic indicators like poverty reduction, creation of value and wealth, job creation and overall economic development. (SMEDAN, 2013).

In a study conducted on Micro, Small and Medium scale enterprises (MSME) through a collaboration between The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2010, the sector was said to consist of a total of 17,284,671 businesses in Nigeria; with a split across the different components in this order - Micro enterprises constituted 17,261,753 or 99.87%, Small enterprises accounted for 21,264 or 0.12%, while Medium scale enterprises were 1,654 in number or 0.01%.

Table 1

Categorisation of MSME businesses in Nigeria

S/N	SIZE CATEGORY	EMPLOYMENT	ASSETS (=N =Millions)
1	Micro Enterprises	1- 10	Less than 5
2	Small Enterprises	11 to 49	5 to less than 50
3	Medium Enterprises	50 to 199	50 to less than 500

Source: National Survey of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) 2017, p.3.

Two years after this study, another study was commissioned in 2013 on the MSME sector and there was a significant increase in the population of the sector. The total number of business enterprises had risen to 37,067,416; Micro:36,994,578 – 99.8% of the population, small enterprises being 68,168, 0.18% contribution and the medium sector businesses stood at 4,670, 0.013% contribution. The composition of the MSME sector in Nigeria with the micro industries predominantly driven by owner-managers for income for themselves and a few employees (Etuk et al., 2014) shows that the country still operates at a rudimentary level. According to the study, by SMEDAN (2013) the important role of Lagos State as the commercial nerve capital of Nigeria, as well as a key economic hub has been confirmed, as it emerged as the most active out of the 36

states of the federation involved in the study, with the highest number of businesses - Micro: 3,224,324 (8.72%) and Small and Medium: 11,663 (16.01%).

The MSME contribution to GDP is well noted. According to the study conducted by SMEDAN (2013), MSMEs contribute 48.47% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in nominal terms and a 7.27% contribution to exports. The economic sectors are categorised into 3 sectors – Services (45.75%), Agriculture (42.02%) and Industry (12.26%). The MSME sector in Nigeria is said to be operating below optimum capacity and most of the businesses operate without a business plan or a clearly defined path of business management. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises are key drivers of socio-economic transformation in both developed and developing countries and are at the forefront of economic policy. Though (Karimi and Naghibi, 2015; Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011) state the importance of SMEs to the economies of the world as the backbone of many nations, MSMEs in Nigeria face volatility in the business environment, a major contributor to the success or failure of MSMEs in the country (Adebisi & Bakare, 2019).

In summary, MSMEs are huge contributors to employment, alleviation of poverty and economic growth amongst others, though the sector brims with dynamism and capability for growth, its trajectory is impacted by many challenges (Singh & Paliwal, 2017). Most businesses in developing countries are faced with challenges and limitations that impact their performance and perform below expectations (Abdullahi and Sulaiman, 2015; Tehseen et al., 2019), though it is found that all MSMEs do not face the same issues (Masocha, 2019). In this regard, several researchers have identified factors that impede the growth of MSMEs it is imperative that identifying the issues that limit their potential is a crucial point that must be explored, for them to realise their potential (Haleem et al., 2019). Globally SMEs face a myriad of problems (Rankhumise & Letsoalo, 2019), with some of this being a lack of support by the government for

MSME businesses (Hyder & Lussier, 2016). Some of these challenges are either financial or non-financial (Olayiwola et al., 2019), Singh and Paliwal (2017) list issues facing MSMEs in India as an infrastructural deficiency, access to finance as well as marketing-related issues. In Egypt, the issues facing MSMEs are said to involve internal and external factors - internal factors being skills deficiency and lack of experience, low staff competence and lack of good customer orientation. External factors relate to challenges with logistics, high distribution costs, intense competition, lack of access to finance and security challenges (Bary, 2019).

MSMEs in Nigeria being a major contributor to economic growth and development have brought to the fore how developing entrepreneurship can impact the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises. (Mukhtar, 2017; Olayiwola et al., 2019). Etuk et al. (2014) emphasises the significance of MSMEs to the Nigerian economy in generating employment for youths, reducing poverty levels, and driving income generation. The active participation of MSMEs within the Nigerian economy can drive higher revenue generation to the country through the export of goods as well as taxes. Through the collaborative study of SMEDAN and the NBS (2013), certain challenges facing the MSME sector in Nigeria were identified as lack of finance/capital, vulnerability to legal issues, lack of financial cover, lack of clearly defined planning and business plans which can result in business failure (SMEDAN, 2013).

If there is a commitment by critical stakeholders to the development of MSMEs, there will be a resultant transformation in the economy as a vibrant MSME is important to drive the economic development and advancement of the country (Mukhtar, 2013; SMEDAN, 2013). A dynamic MSME is vital and imperative for the overall economic development of the country, helping to drive a spread of development across regions and stimulating growth. Promoting SMEs increases

manpower which drives local participation in the manufacturing sector (Singh & Paliwal, 2017). Resources are better utilised through the dynamism of MSMEs which drives improvement in the standard of living of the populace, helping to reduce unemployment in Nigeria (Ogechukwu et al., 2013).

A critical element to the growth and vibrancy of MSME has been identified as the formalisation. Eniola and Entenbang (2017), mentions the access to financial resources like loans and grants are available to MSME businesses that have demonstrated seriousness through a business registration, which gives the needed resources to grow the business. This establishes them as formal businesses. In contrast, businesses that have not been registered operate in the informal sector, they may lack access to the same level of resources and information. businesses in the informal sector are less likely to have access to support from government or other agencies in areas of training, business support, and networking opportunities (Ratten, 2020; Williams and Kedir, 2016).

Theme 2: Brand Building Strategies

Brand Building Strategies in MSMEs in Nigeria

What is a Brand?

Keller (2003) refers to the definition of a brand according to the American Marketing Association (AMA) as a “name, term, sign, symbol, or design” in part or in combination, which has the aim to be able to give identity to products and services offered by the varying supplier to differentiate them from those of competing vendor” (p.30). Brand, as visual stimuli are important aspects of a brand strategy which helps in building strong brands (Vidic & Vadjnal, 2013). Another definition of a brand consists beyond just a name, logo term, sign, or symbol but is more about being a mix of tangible and intangible attributes and associations that bring about awareness,

reputation, and visibility (Ahmad et al., 2012). A brand creates awareness, perception, imagery, and perspectives in the minds of people and the marketplace (Keller, 2003). A brand is a perception that is engrained in the minds of consumers that makes them buy into a set of attributes, with the hope that it gives satisfaction to them; thus, customers give meaning to brands based on their experience (Batey, 2016; Ojasalo, 2012). A brand brings value to the consumers and the company (Keller, 2013) and the ability of a company to drive a linkage between its internal and external environment is determined by a brand (Abimbola, 2001), while a brand teaches the consumers about the product and how it can be identified (Keller, 2013). According to Chung et al. (2019), strong brands drive new growth opportunities for SMEs.

Brands can differ in their constructs, Ojasalo (2012) distinguishes the corporate brand and product brand; with the product brand being focused on the brand of an individual product or service while the corporate is the brand of the company as an entity.

Certain brand definitions are also appropriate for the nature of the firm, for example, for MSMEs. For instance, concerning Ojasalo et al. (2008), the brand represents the particular purpose, resources, communication, and brand growth process of the brand management system. It is intended that each stage of the brand development process act as a symbol for the organisation's brand. It is possible to create an enthused brand using branding. Essentially, branding is a process that culminates in the transmission of a concrete brand message to a targeted audience).

Stephen (2016) defined a brand as a differentiated entity and/or signs (such as a logo, trademark, or pack design) used to distinguish the products or services rendered by a single seller or a group of sellers and to distinguish these goods or services from those offered by competitors. Also known as brand names, brand names are any term, device (such as creatives, sights, signs,

sound, shape, or colour), or grouping of these that is used to identify a seller's products and offerings from the ones offered by other sellers. A marketing strategy that involves the use of patents, trademarks, well-known names, symbols, and logos to promote neither individual items nor businesses is known as branding. Items with a distinct personality must be offered as part of the branding strategy, in addition to the essential product.

Jin-Su and Tong (2015) stated that businesses must prioritise strategic resources to achieve their objectives, which is especially important in unstable marketplaces. In addition to having strategic resources, a brand has unique and valuable traits, which are documented in the company's resources as its brand attributes, a firm needs to have strategic brand resources that are beneficial to the company and capable of bringing value to customers' interactions. It was noted that the classification of resources by academics has traditionally been divided into two categories: tangible resources and intangible resources.

Branding defined.

Branding drives the continuous connection of the internal marketing activities of a firm with its consumers or customers on the outside. The branding process affords companies of various sizes to create, nurture, differentiate and drive awareness of their products. When customers form their perception of the products of the company, the organisation through branding can nurture such perceptions in a way that will create value and build brand equity for such brands (Abimbola, 2001).

The process of branding helps create a mental framework in which consumers can position brands based on the knowledge they have of them, which helps such consumers in the decision-making process. As such, consumers can identify differences between one brand and another within the same category and make choices based on product attributes and benefits (Keller, 2003).

Branding is a continuous process, and it is actively enabled by innovations and product differentiation (Vidic & Vadjal, 2013). When putting branding in context, it should go beyond the development of logos and designs; it must entail how relationships are built between the company and its customers at various points of interaction. Branding involves the experience of the customer, the emotional benefits the brand offers, customer perception, image, quality, and personality amongst several other variables; it is a process that must involve the entire organisation and their networks if it will deliver value (Ahmad et al., 2012) and branding is said to drive organisational performance (Odoom, 2017). Branding leads to strong brands and offers some benefits to organisations as it helps them to command premium pricing on their products, while it makes their messaging easily accepted (Ojasalo et al., 2008). Branding is also important when starting the company, it helps when recruiting new customers and when efforts are being made to drive retention of the customer base, categorised as fundamental to branding, is understanding customers' needs, how they see the brand, managing the brand consistently over time and communicating the brand proposition (Berthon et al., 2008; Bresciani and Eppler, 2010). Branding is relevant as it helps to associate a positive image with the brand (Spence & Leila, 2010).

According to Bilal and Malik (2014), the branding process is a synergised exercise for generating expertise through a combination of employees and competitive advantages to generate beneficial assets for the firm while also being relevant to the customers. In this way, branding is defined as an exercise related to brand development that includes planning and implementing brand development strategies such as utilising brand elements through branding strategies and disseminating communication through brand messaging strategies, assessing and following up on brand achievement, among other things. They stated that brand development techniques are tied to financial resources. The term resource refers to a specific component of a company's effort to

transform itself into an agent of social change. The financial resource remains a vital resource internally that is related to strategy execution, and it must be completely under the control of the organisation to maximize efficiency and effectiveness. Strategic resources refer to resources that are adequate for generating ambitious strategies and making a profit in the industry over an extended period. It possesses distinguishing features such as value, scarcity, imitability, and substitutability, among others.

Brand Building in MSMEs

Anarnkaporn (2007) asserts that branding should be an important tool to be used by SMEs to manage competition and Abimbola (2001) argues that SMEs have every reason to adopt brand building in their businesses, as it creates a distinct form of identity for them in the market-place and their brand name can drive connection and credibility with customers (Gillespie et al., 2007; Kapferer, 1997;) while projecting their competence, value and reputation. Another reason given is that branding enables continuous improvement for SMEs, and they can bring their creative flair, innovation, and distinction to light. With all these done, SME brands may enjoy differentiation and distinction that their competitors may not have, branding brings visibility to this, hence earning them a position that is difficult to copy or replicate (Abimbola, 2001; Mowles and Merrilees, 2005).

Abimbola (2001) decried the absence of scholarly writing on branding for SMEs, which was amplified by Krake (2005) and Centeno et al. (2013); however, there has been a marked change in the past few years with more papers being written on SMEs, even though gaps still exist concerning cohesive writing on the subject (Neuvonen, 2016; Odoom et al., 2017; Odoom and Mensah, 2018; Vidic and Vadjal, 2013). Given what is known SMEs consist of businesses with varying degrees of size, many SMEs that characterise the economy makes competition very intense

between businesses (Abimbola, 2001). The survival and growth of SMEs in this competitive environment hinge on their market understanding and the effectiveness of their strategies (Slater & Narver, 2000). This marketplace intensity places SMEs in the same space as big organisations. Given how markets have become more integrated, it has become more important for both large organisations and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to be equipped to face increased competition by achieving competitive advantage (Maurya et al., 2015; Tavares, 2015). An environment that is driven by innovation, active competition and advancement drives the connection between SMEs and branding (Abimbola, 2001), as such given that branding strategy involves the identification of platforms to create competitive advantage, branding becomes an attractive process that SMEs can adopt to manoeuvre in the competitive environment. It thus can become a platform to drive innovation and drive preference by prospective customers (Abimbola, 2001). Odoom et al. (2005) state that brand building as a strategic tool is quite valuable, leading to the top-of-mind recall for some brands in the customers' minds. The adoption of branding is changing how SME brands are being promoted and how the organisations are being managed (Tavares, 2015).

The branding landscape is mostly dominated by large organisations and most of the time, there is low clarity as to what the role of branding is to SMEs (Biswas, 2013; Centeno, 2013; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Some of the initial brand building recommendations and strategies were only applicable to large companies and not fit for MSME businesses as brand building is often commonly attributed to big companies (Odoom, 2017; Vidic and Vadjnal, 2013) and their applicability was faulty as SME marketing differs from those of large companies (Berthon et al., 2008), in as much as the issues they face differs from those of large companies (Centeno, 2013; Vidic and Vadjnal, 2013). Given the peculiarities of SMEs and the constraint of resourcing and

funding, it is important to have full knowledge and understanding of what branding is and understand the business-wide involvement of all employees. To make SME brand building successful, its design must be done with relevance to the business rather than adapting a generic application. In making a distinction between small and medium-sized enterprises, Odoo et al. (2017) mention that branding efforts may differ based on the size of a company or even the sector of the economy. What is important to note is that brand building can be implemented across SMEs as compared to big organisations (Ojasalo et al., 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2005;) possibly with lower resources and by being innovative; it is critical to focus on brand-building effort on using the right platforms and touchpoints as applicable to organisations (Abimbola, 2001; Vidic and Vadjal, 2013). Odoo et al. (2017) assert that considerable benefits can accrue to SMEs from brand building even with limited funds as well as what is obtained for large businesses with enormous resources. The study, however, shows that businesses with a bigger purse are in a better situation to execute a better competitive marketing campaign than those with smaller resources, while branding in manufacturing is higher than service industry, perhaps due to the tangible nature of products (Odoo, et al., 2017).

Ojasalo et al. (2008) support the notion that both internal and external branding of an SME is relevant; as the internal position results in external success for the organisation. Pertinent questions were asked by Krake (2005) concerning how branding is done for SMEs – what impact does branding have on SME performance? How do business owners go about branding? What barriers do they encounter in managing brands? These are relevant questions that will add to the body of knowledge as it regards brand building strategies in SMEs.

Brand Building Strategies in MSMEs

It is believed that the choice of adoption of branding is dependent on the business owners and its execution is hinged mainly on the practicality of the requirements of such companies, which may be about brand identity elements – logos and symbols (Berthon et al., 2008; Ojasalo et al., 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2005;). MSMEs adopt a short-term approach to brand building rather than a long-term view and the choice of the brand-building approach to be deployed is dependent on the type of company given that SMEs are structured in diverse ways but predominantly in a non-traditional flat and informal structure (Centeno, 2013; Odoom et al., 2017). Different perspectives on SME brand branding strategies have been offered by scholars (Odoom et al., 2017).

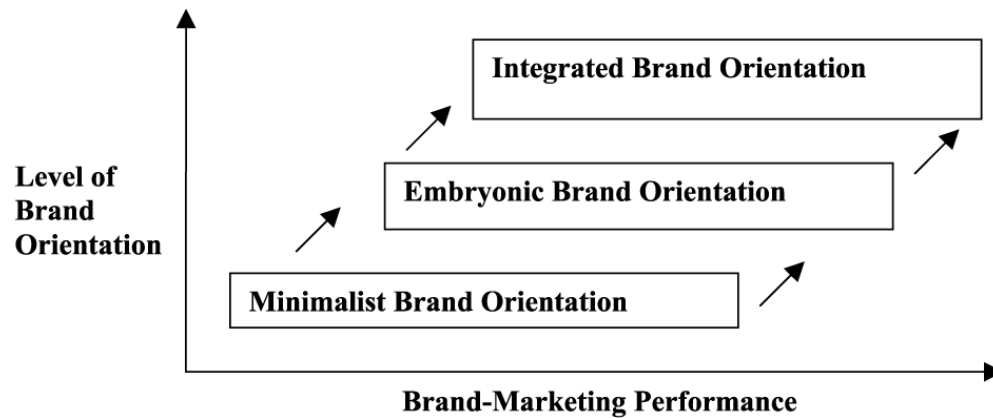
Some studies have made attempts to understand the way SME branding is executed and the role of brand building as a strategic tool and methodology. Krake (2005) reviewed Keller's five guidelines for SME branding, and arising from the evaluation, proposed a revised model for brand management called the funnel model, which hinged its approach on the various factors that affect brand management within an SME, like the influence of the owner, the market, the company structure; creativity affects the marketing activities deployed and budget is a determinant of execution.

Krake's (2005) funnel model concludes that the marketing activities deployed are integral to the business turnover and the brand recognition achieved. Bresciani and Eppler (2010) propose a two-step framework for brand management in an SME, namely brand creation sequence (brand strategy, choice of brand designs, and the brand activities) and a branding orientation approach which will involve the branding options to be chosen based on the peculiarities of the company involved.

Wong and Merrilees (2005) developed a theory based on the recognition that not all SMEs are brand-oriented, he however suggests that they can evolve through a framework that comprises four elements - brand orientation, brand barriers, brand distinctiveness, and brand-marketing performance. It further goes to elaborate on that as brand orientation evolves, it goes through 3 stages in its evolution in ascending order – minimalist brand orientation, embryonic brand orientation, and integrated brand orientation, which correspondingly relates to low, medium, and high-degree brand-building activity.

The minimalist is said to be those focused on a short-term horizon and day-to-day approach, a standard that generally shows a short-term focus and day-to-day transactional approach, the embryonic gives more attention to marketing and brand building to achieve differentiation and competitive advantage, though fails to see branding as integral to business success.

SMEs with an integrated brand orientation perceive the brand as vital to the firm's strategy and emphasise the brand's role within the marketing mix. Integrated brand-oriented firms deploy different promotional tools for their implementation. A company can move up the ladder from minimalist to integrated brand orientation, which raises the possibility of higher business performance. (Reijonen et al., 2012; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Brand orientation is linked to brand performance (Odoom et al., 2017), though complementing with innovation and social media presence drives a higher performance (Odoom et al., 2018).

Figure 3*Brand archetypes Ladder*

Source: A brand orientation typology for SMEs: A case research approach, Wong, H.Y. & Merrilees, B., 2005, P.158.

Though Odoom et al. (2017) contend that the model developed by Wong and Merrilees (2005) still lacks enough empirical-based models to demonstrate the relevance and role of branding to SMEs. Another criticism of the brand orientation model is the point of view of Neuvonen (2016) who says the model lacks clarity. More literature on SMEs is speaking to the adoption of brand orientation (Merrilees, 2007; Wong and Merrilees, 2008), it is however still necessary to have more studies done within the MSME constructs to validate this.

The often-mentioned brand orientation approach is an approach from the inside, starting with what the brand stands for – its vision, mission, and values (Urde et al., 2013). It relates to the importance of the brand at the heart of what the company stands for and the extent of centralisation of the strategy of the business around the brand. As such, brand orientation becomes the central theme in business decisions and directions. It emphasises the need to create a distinctive brand in the marketplace and the minds of the customers. Brand orientation is thus, the job of everyone within the organisation to pursue the same overall goal and objectives (Wong & Merrilees, 2005).

Wong and Merrilees (2005) submit that to succeed in the marketplace, having a marketing strategy may not be enough; there must be a well-thought-through implementation plan which is integral to business success. It appears that MSME businesses take on a more tactical approach to brand building like focusing on brand identity while medium-sized companies are more strategic (Renton, 2015), which seems to be in alignment with the perspective of the reductive and pragmatic approaches said to be typical of SMEs (Ojasalo et al., 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Centeno et al. (2013) and Bresciani and Eppler (2010) posit that branding within an SME is non-conventional compared to what obtains in large organisations.

It submits that the extent of branding in SMEs is largely dependent on the owner's perspectives, especially his entrepreneurial viewpoints and capability, as confirmed by Krake (2005) that brand owners are integral to brand building in an SME. Tavares (2015) contrary to the widely held view around brand orientation, believes that brand building in an SME is distinct and depends on having an entrepreneurial orientation mindset by the owner, which is linked to being proactive, innovative, and willing to make informed risks concerning brand building. As such key decisions are led by demonstrating strong leadership in the ability to discover brand opportunities that can yield results, leveraging the three areas of proactivity, innovation, and risk-taking.

Another framework on brand building is the four processes of branding as proffered by Keller (2013) namely - designing, implementing, managing, and measuring, summarised as identifying brand identity elements, elements within the marketing mix, driving brand associations, and marketing communications although Odoom (2016) posits that they may not all be relevant to SMEs. The work of Odoom et al. (2017) in assessing SME brand-building and how it impacts the output of the organisation, bearing in mind the variations in size across the SME

framework and sector, supports that of Krake (2005) on the relevance of these processes in an SME context.

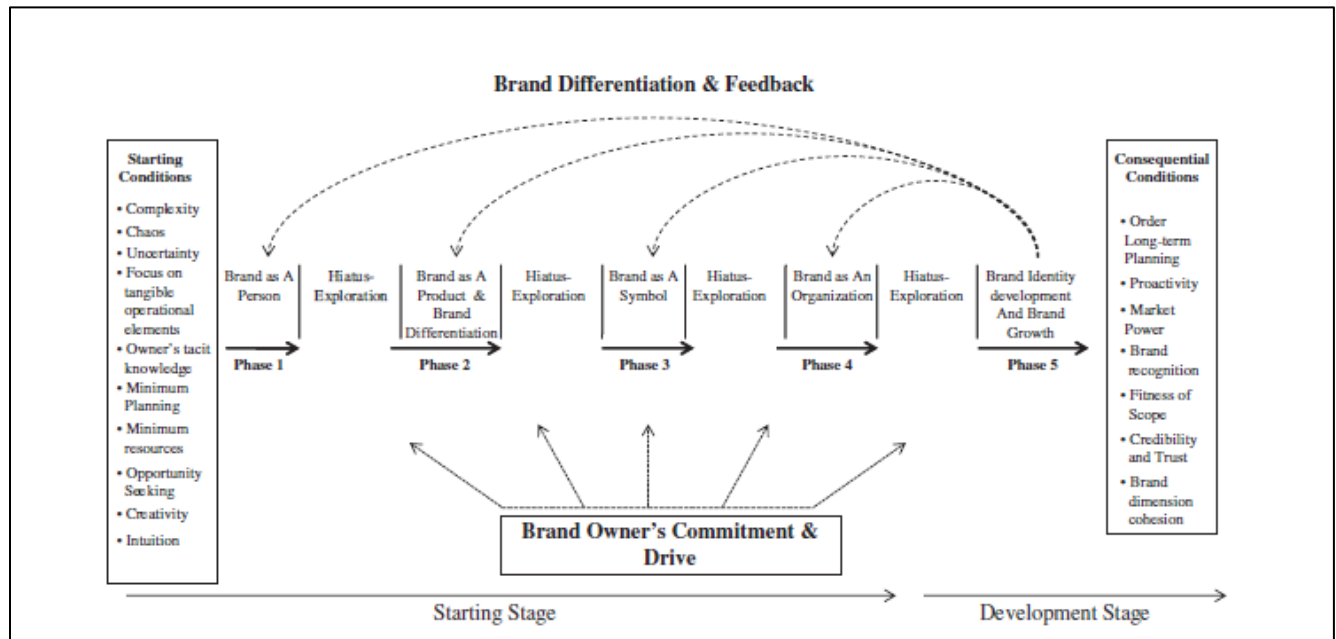
Two key components that drive brand growth have been identified as brand identity and brand differentiation (Burmman, 2009) and these have been related to the five phases of the SME brand-building model which was developed by Centeno (2013); with the dimensions of brand identity stated as a brand as a person, brand as a product, brand as a symbol and brand as the organisation. In a study conducted among 35 owner-managers from 30 companies, Centeno et al. (2013) relative to the four dimensions of brand identity, concluded that the brand takes on the identity and is the personification of the owner (Bresciani and Eppler, 2010; Saraniemi et al., 2010), though the close personification declines as the brand grows.

On brand as a product, brand differentiation through new product launches and innovation was called out as critical, while brand as a symbol includes the logos and colours used in representing the brand. Brand as the organisation relates to the values and the collaboration between teams in the company. The five phases of brand building consist of the starting and developmental stages – with the starting stages being the four dimensions of brand identity and brand identity development.

It is important to note that in between these phases represent the exploration periods of trial and error, risk-taking and experimentation during which the managers try to get a hang of each of the phases. What this model emphasises is the importance of the business owner as the originator and starting point of the idea conceptualisation which grows sequentially within the phases, facing challenges along the way but surmounting and moving along the progressive phases.

Figure 4

The five phases of SME brand-building



Source: Five phases of SME brand-building, by Centeno et al., 2013, p. 449.

There is a divergent point of view as to the perceived understanding of brand building strategies amongst business owners (Krake, 2005; Odoom et al., 2017) stating that SMEs are not aware of what brand building is and are ignorant in most respects of its practicality compared to Centeno (2013), who states in his study of 35 business owners that business owners demonstrated a good understanding of their environment and the brand.

Most SMEs do not make use of the mass media as a tactic (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010) concerning the choice of branding elements deployed by SMEs, Krake (2005) confirms the high usage of awareness-creating elements like business cards, office building branding, word of mouth, PR, and high usage of brochures amongst SMEs, while Odoom et al. (2017) mentions exhibition

as a good platform used by SMEs for product display and recommends the use of another mix of branding efforts rather than the use of logos, colours or packaging alone.

M'zungu et al. (2017) emphasised that branding strategies are important. They opined that the deployment of several brands in a market unit is a strategy employed by multinational corporations. Managers' key focus while developing their best brand mix is the extent of the way they deploy brand orientation (the types in addition to quantities of executed brands). This allows taking advantage of market representation while minimizing brand intersection. When it comes to internationalisation, they noted that large corporations can use a variety of strategies, including integrating stable neighbourhood brands, utilising worldwide ideas and local modalities, developing emerging brands, acquiring established neighbourhood brands and globalising them, and introducing new brand versions. The company's brand portfolio will be evaluated based on how it can realise the optimum brand equity, regardless of which technique is used. As a result, an established brand orientation that is universal based on the recognition of consumers and content, how they can employ numerous brands but coordinate them deliberately to reduce image and positioning disputes, is essential for successful international branding. Large corporations are also investing in the strategic development of their company outlook, as a company's depiction or image results in increased valuable assets for gaining lasting competitive advantage.

The pace of competition, customer needs, market characteristics, and industry factors all have an impact on brand orientation. Entrepreneurs (SMEs) that deployed significant investments in branding have received both financial and non-financial dividends. Even though branding is a fresh concept for many Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises businesses (MSMEs), a holistic examination of existing literature by Ahonen (2012) says that SMEs deploy branding, though it is

an understudied phenomenon. While MSME business owners do utilise branding processes while operating their businesses, it brings less significance due to the size and location of the company.

According to Eggers et al. (2013), many businesses have changed their names to rebrand their operations. They asserted that major corporations are more concerned with their company image through the design stage of the branding strategies than MSME business enterprises. This arises because of the growth of global business and corporate mergers and acquisitions. micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) remain a diversified group that is significantly affected by the surrounding vicinity and intimate constituency, which is true for brand management as well.

SMEs with a deeper interwoven brand building strategy have shown improved output (Berthon et al., 2008) and progressed to a later stage of global expansion, according to research.

In addition, the type of clientele, whether it is a consumer or a business, has an impact on the brand strategy of MSMEs. It is easier for micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) to concentrate on establishing a few powerful brands rather than spreading their limited resources across many consumers. This contrasts with large organisations, which are frequently required to increase their exposure and reach many consumers (Gundala & Khawaja, 2014).

Co-branding, collaboration with more businesses, and company branding are strategies that are infrequently deployed within the industry. Knowledge exists that the corporate naming convention does not correlate to the brand name in the commonality of cases. As it relates to strong brand value, the corporate name should be used as the company's official corporate identity (Baregheh et al., 2016). When it comes to large organisations, brand building requires a collaborative strategy and iterative process that spans years and involves the leadership team, as well as personnel and external constituencies. A constant comprehensive and integrative exercise

that integrates all aspects of the organisation through the organisation's fundamental principles should be carried out continuously (Baregheh et al., 2016).

Typically, branding is spread throughout several departments, for example, marketing, senior managers, and corporate messaging, and it is controlled by experts. The relevance of organisational culture in brand formation cannot be overstated because it represents a crucial part of the development of the functionality of the brand as well as the emotional values (Bang et al., 2016). Steadiness in messaging and alignment between the company and the brand value is very important in communication. Using this context, positioning is crucial and heavily depends on well-chosen communication strategies, which is what primarily differentiates large organisations and SMEs in terms of managing their marketing mix in comparison to larger corporations (Juntunen et al., 2010).

According to Saydan (2013), it is the extent to which national marketing strategies must be adapted to foreign markets, as well as the dynamics that trigger that adaptation, that present a challenge in the international arena. They noted that, the bare minimum of national criteria should be met. A higher degree of innovation, an emphasis on efficient connections established by the company or in liaison with partners, and the identification of cheaper messaging tactics to improve the brand are all required for effective brand building and management in MSMEs. It was further noted that improved performance and global expansion are more prevalent in MSMEs that have a strong brand orientation. MSMEs that adopt the brand building and management practices of large organisations benefit from their adoption. Strong brands are those that provide a unique and valuable proposition that is to the needs of their target audiences. In a marketing setting, the brand serves as a means of differentiating products from those of other vendors in the market. A brand may instil a sense of distinctiveness in a product. The product's uniqueness is evident in numerous

means, including usefulness, design, and value for money. Due to this simple yet effective notion, firms must invest extensively in brand creation operations aimed at improving product distinction.

Today's business climate requires that brands play a more active role in visualising and capturing the realities of today's business climate. This includes brand reputes and brand identity. New brands, like new products, require innovation, inventiveness, and a dash of flair for the unusual (Kalafatis, 2012).

Sharma et al. (2015) stated that a brand that successfully captures customers' thoughts wins their loyalty and a brand that successfully captures customers' hearts earns their devotion. It was noted that a brand serves as a representation of identity, providing cohesiveness and structure to it. Ideally, the target will be able to recall the features that have been developed each time they encounter the sign. When it comes to brands, a value proposition is defined as a proclamation of the functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits that the brand gives to its customers (Ahmad & Sherwani, 2015). However, most MSMEs do not prioritise brand identity. They do not develop formal brand building activities or a strong emphasis on Brand Identity. For those who do, the most critical aspect of brand creation is a bigger annual revenue (Mitchell et al., 2012).

As mentioned in the literature, the value placed on brand building by some micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) are limited. Some perceive it as a concept that is limited solely to the ownership of a mark or sign, the physical product, the service rendered, or the technology that is deployed, rather than seeing the company itself as a brand. The goal of recent empirical research and conceptual essays has been to reveal important features and processes in micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) (Eggers et al., 2013).

Small as well as medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) engage in several activities such as promotion in newspapers, brochures, and public relations. They place a high value on the brand name and logo in their advertising campaigns and are less likely to advertise on television or sponsor programs than other companies. A consequence of this is that micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) tend to place quite a strong emphasis on individualised selling or physical communication as necessary for demonstrating the high quality of their work, though the use of certain types of advertising like television, Yellow Pages, and promotional leaflets became critical in how branding was done in the past (Sandbacka et al., 2013).

Micro, Small and Medium business enterprises (MSMEs) are increasingly showing more reliance on word-of-mouth communication to disseminate their brand message, which some MSMEs rely heavily on to a large extent. It has been discovered that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) were not able to drive improved brand visibility through branding building, though it was achievable through communications strategy (Horan et al., 2011).

Micro, Small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) place a higher value on conventional branding approaches such as company, product, and joint/co-branding. They have used their brand resources as a channel and message for brand growth as part of their communication strategy. SMEs also place a higher premium on advertising technicalities such as publication frequency and channel types than on the strategy for using brand resources to attract customers. Additionally, MSMEs place a premium on tangible brand assets while overlooking intangible brand assets. As a result, their communication initiatives have a limited impact, which is not the case with a brand-oriented organisation (Odoom et al., 2017).

The brand-conscious organisation places a premium on communication efforts. Numerous characteristics define brand-oriented businesses. When designing a strategy, it's important to

consider the brand as a strategic resource, to emphasise inside-out procedures, to be honest in the face of market instability, and to emphasise meaningful relationships with stakeholders (Mijan, 2016).

Internal communication helps to build brand loyalty while also making the process of communicating brand values to customers easier to manage. Gromark and Melin (2011) prioritised internal communication as a means of establishing brand value among employees, which is followed by interactions with external stakeholders to develop brand equity. Communication processes are critical towards the establishment of the values of the brand, in addition to how products and services are delivered to customers and clients.

Brand orientation is a continuous process that involves interaction with customers and incorporates reciprocal interactions as well as interplay. This interaction is a constant process that ensures that the brand's value is established by the needs of consumers (Gromark & Melin, 2011). Messaging is an essential aspect of the brand orientation approach because it allows for the development of brands that are tailored to meet the needs of specific consumer groups. Brand assets are used to build internal communications, which then act as a springboard for external communication. Communication has developed into the most important tool for acquiring and communicating brand value to both inside and outside stakeholders over some decades (Gromark & Melin, 2011). It is possible to fit the wishes of unconditional clients even though brands-oriented businesses are primarily concerned with intrinsic brand value. Communication processes occur because of designing a branding plan and communicating with customers using brand resources, as well because of implementing an ongoing branding strategy (Gromark & Melin, 2011).

According to Agostini et al. (2015), brand-oriented organisations use their brand assets to build relationships with their customers. The brand function encourages customers to connect with

businesses, particularly when it comes to purchasing concerns and brand positioning about competitors. They observed that the brand orientation principle had played a critical role in coordinating the company's communication activities and enabled them to consistently communicate the brand's underlying value to customers, among other things. However, while brand differentiation (visuals and signs) and symbolism (brand character) are not directly connected with customers, a company has employed advertising strategy instruments such as artists and music to communicate with them indirectly.

Bridson et al. (2013) found that while advertising methods are effective at building brand difference, they are ineffective at developing communication with customers. The brand function is frequently responsible for initiating messages that detail the values/benefits derivable from such a brand with customers. Logos and brand graphics may be utilised as a channel of communication to attract customers and, more significantly, to supply them with information about the brand. They noted that brand graphics are capable of conveying if the behaviours of employees are consistent and in alignment. This is because an employee's attitude toward brand build-up allows the visual message that requires strengthening, which will have an impact on customers' perceptions. Brand communication necessitates the use of human resources in its execution. It was discovered that the corporation had misused the position of human resources in its communications with customers.

During their research, Gromark and Melin (2011) revealed that the firm began by creating an internal brand value among employees before offering that value to customers. Business owners should strive to maximize internal communication with their staff to generate brand equity and subsequently communicate that equity to the customer base.

It is relevant to be both mutual and consistent to ensure that brand equity is developed through the preferences of clients when communicating with customers. Hirvonen et al. (2013),

discovered that interlinking amongst employees improves messaging effects by assisting in the creation of brand messaging based on the resources available. This is made possible by the clarity of the processes, which allows for two-way communication between the business and its stakeholders.

Boso et al. (2013) noted that although advertising is a successful tool for increasing public awareness, word of mouth is more effective in creating long-lasting connections with consumers. The growth of resources enables communication to take an increased level of significant part in the organisation. The communication strategy of a brand-conscious firm begins inside and progresses outwardly due to its endeavours. To communicate messages and entrench a platform for branding strategy communication, a firm must expand the impact of its brand resources. Investing in the development of the assets of the brand enables a company to expand its brand awareness and build brand equity (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). When the potential for brand resources to contribute to competitive advantages is considered, they are classified to be the internal resources that represent the brand's physical and non-physical assets.

The increased ability of a business has enabled them to engage with customers and be convenient because of the introduction of digital platforms. Businesses can use the internet, social media, and other digital platforms to stay in touch with customers, increase brand recognition of their products, solicit feedback conveniently, improve product/service quality, understand customer expectations, build a sustainable brand, and influence consumer attitude (Ahmed et al., 2019; Algharabat et al., 2018; Lal et al., 2020; Puneet et al., 2018).

People are spending an increasing amount of time on digital platforms these days, according to research. When looking for information, on various items and service offerings and when communicating with family and friends, they turn to the internet for assistance. As a result

of this shift in consumer behaviours, businesses should adjust their strategies. It is established in this article that digital and social media are essential components of contemporary commercial marketing.

According to Hodge et al. (2011), micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) should engage in strategic brand planning and investment while also analysing the branding impact on both the internal and external customer bases.

A brand positioning strategy, according to Godeshwar (2016), aids in prioritising the brand identity's focus and the resulting communication themes. This allows a company to articulate its communication goals like the type of communication to convey, the degree of brand differentiation to be achieved, and customer-centric themes. Positioning is focused on developing the perception of a brand through the eyes of the customer in addition to achieving differentiation so that the brand stands out and is distinct from what is offered by competing brands and can align with what is expected from the perspective of the customers' needs.

Moreover, according to Odoom (2017), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) should explore touchpoints that differ from conventional marketing and rather concentrate on building touchpoints and messaging strategies that align with the SMEs' brand image. Firms must continually assess the impact of rivalry on their brands, especially in the face of fierce competition. They should keep track of their brands' success in the market in addition to the impact of market activities on brand value. Progress can be measured in a variety of ways, including purchases, consumption, brand recognition, recall, and advertising awareness, to name a few examples. In marketing terms, a brand serves as an agent for the many items that a company possesses. As companies grew, the brand progressed from a fixed definition that comprised just physical features

like signs and pictures to an ethereal definition that included either signs and inner brand elements or an amalgamation of both, over time (Santos-Vijande et al., 2012).

In MSMEs, branding and communication strategies are critical. While micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) know about the importance of brand building to their company, how they implement it is a different story and differs. Rather than this, MSMEs concentrate on their daily operations to stay afloat (Ojasalo et al., 2008).

Fauziah et al. (2012), assert that because brand building is comprised of both tangible and intangible features, it may be used to disseminate messages through the usage of these two parts. The brand's branding strategies assist the company in creating intellectual and emotional connections with customers and prospects. When organisations project their brand as an asset to increase brand equity, it becomes even more important to consider.

Brand Building in Developing Markets

Literature on building brands in developing markets is scanty (Nunez & Castaño, 2019). Branding in developed countries has birthed several well-established and powerful brands such as Coke, McDonald's, Levi's, and Kellogg's which have a high level of brand recall and identity (Keller & Moorthi, 2003). The developing markets are rapidly growing and serve as emerging markets with an increasing purchasing power for consumers. In these markets also, the environment is complex and very dynamic compared to the developed countries. New products are on the increase as well as digitalisation channels explosion. In such markets, the options to adopt and demonstrate product choices and communication channels are exploding; so is the potential of digital platforms; which offers an opportunity for consumer engagement (Rodrigues et al., 2023).

In developing countries, just as in the developed markets, the adoption of technology as a platform is driving customer engagement. However, in developing markets, the level of expertise in building brands varies compared to developed countries. In developing countries, the use of word of mouth is invaluable, and harnessing the power of word of mouth is invaluable, as it contributes to the customer journeys and how they make their choices. How consumers get to consider the brand in the first place is also a major consideration in emerging markets as well as the offtake on the shelf at retail which tends to be a longer journey compared to the developed markets. Companies that harness word-of-mouth effects, emphasize in-store execution, and get their brands onto shoppers' shortlists for initial consideration are more likely to capture the loyalty of emerging-market consumers (Rodrigues et al., 2023).

Word of mouth is prevalent in developing markets, partly due to the closeness of consumers in developing markets who are close to friends and family. Emphasising the relevance of word of mouth in consumers' journeys in developing markets, in a survey of food and beverage consumers in selected developed and emerging markets, 29% and 40% of the respondents in the United Kingdom and the United States respectively responded they received recommendations from their friends or family in choosing products. Whereas developing countries in Africa and Asia had higher numbers, Nigeria at 49% and 90% in Egypt just to compare (Rodrigues et al., 2023).

Sheth (2011) identifies the differences between developing markets and developed markets as it relates to branding and marketing. These are (i) the heterogeneous nature of the market, which is highly fragmented, (ii) sociopolitical governance, (iii) lack of requisite resources like skilled capabilities, raw materials, or power, (iv) unbranded competition, and (v) infrastructural deficiency, for instance technology and good access roads.

As indicated, the MSME sector is important for the survival and growth of the Nigerian economy. Concerning branding in Nigeria for MSMEs, there are impacts of environmental factors on their adoption, a condition which may not be prevalent in developed countries and even some other developing countries - infrastructural challenges, poorly managed government interventions, attitudes of business owners, all contribute to how branding is carried out (Ogundele et al., 2013).

Brand Building Strategies in MSMEs In Nigeria

A dearth of scholarly resources on the topic under review was discovered at the point of collation of literature. A search of the keyword “branding” on the database of ProQuest Central from a period of 20 years (2000-2020) turned up 155 scholarly peer-reviewed journals. However, further profiling this to SME branding only returned 8 journals of which there was no close relevance to the area under review. The closest literature available on the study area relates to that by Osakwe and Anaza (2018) on agro-based MSMEs in Nigeria. The results demonstrate that deploying both traditional and digital marketing touchpoints results in higher performance for the firm; further, he posits that having initiatives that drive customer retention and online promotional tactics leads to customer loyalty. The study reinforces the need for owner-managers to have a demand building strategy that is hinged on brand orientation. A further search using the keyword “brand building” in Nigeria returned a larger base of 406 journals. However, while reviewing these, it was discovered that the word “building” contributed to the large pool and was not mostly related to brand or brand building as a construct. Literature is still mostly thin in the study area as the articles had insignificant references to brands. However, an attempt is made to review the few pieces of literature available. In a review by Ntamu (2011) on the branding project of Nigeria, despite the strong linkage between national branding and product branding, they lacked a strong

framework upon which the strategy and tactics were laid. The project ran afoul of earlier discussed brand orientation which was described as the brand being at the heart of the company, in this case, the nation (Wong & Merrilees, 2005).

The failure of this project lays credence on the importance of being appropriately oriented on brand building and the need to have an alignment between the internal and external perspectives of the organisation (Abimbola, 2001). Innovation has been identified to drive competitive advantage and distinctiveness by SMEs (Vidic & Vadjal, 2013) this was the path taken by Guaranty Trust Bank in Nigeria. Halliru (2016) details how the bank was able to impact the market rather than react to the competition within the banking industry, by becoming a pioneer of new technologies and by aligning the entire organisation towards the brand vision, values and culture (Wong & Merrilees, 2005).

As a result of the branding efforts, Guaranty Bank earned the reputation of being a pacesetter in the minds of customers (Halliru, 2016). The importance of understanding how brand building strategies impact SMEs in Nigeria has been further demonstrated by the gap exhibited in the scholarly literature; being grossly inadequate.

Barriers to Branding for MSMEs

There is a perceived inference that some MSMEs still have barriers to the adoption of brand building strategies in their businesses; some of which are time factors or adequate resources to execute brand building activities. Some previous studies, however, have identified that SMEs see some business investments in their businesses as a cost rather than value; hence they are reluctant to invest funds (Odoom et al., 2017; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Reijonen et al. (2012) suggest that SME branding practices lack clear positioning and distinctiveness within the marketplace,

while Ojasalo et al. (2012) found that lack of clear market segmentation and poorly defined branding goals were additional issues for SME organisations. Brand regulations affect both big and small companies, but given the size and resource limitations of SMEs, they seem to be most affected (Odoom et al., 2018).

The absence of adequate resources, such as funds, time, knowledge, and expertise, is yet another hurdle in the way of progress for micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) businesses. Berthon et al. (2018) however asserted that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can govern and utilise the complete capability of their products creatively on a shoestring budget and that SMEs can pursue branding even with limited resources.

In the field of branding, resource limitations are a high occurring challenge (Odoom et. al., 2017), particularly financial constraints caused by a shortage of brand asset knowledge (Suhaini & Hasmini, 2016). As a result, a communication plan's ability to be implemented depends on the availability of financial resources. As a result, micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) have used several channels to engage with their purchasers to boost brand visibility (Horan et al., 2011). Aside from the general lack of resources that micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) face, product-related problems are another barrier to their success.

A key challenge identified in the literature for MSMEs is the prevalence of most pieces of literature within the SME sphere still focused on developed countries while countries in Africa and Asia still lack the requisite literature relevant to their locality or industry. (Odoom et al., 2017).

Theme 3: Knowledge/Awareness of Brand Building amongst Business Owners

Knowledge, Skills and Brand owners' role

Competence is defined by Ritter and Gemunden (2002) as the knowledge and skills that an individual possesses, which in the SME manager is the ability, attitude, and experience that is deployed to the management of their organisations (Taipale-Eravalta et al., 2015). Wulani et al. (2019) highlights the need for SME owners to possess the right skills and competency to be able to impact their team to achieve high performance; having the right skills by owners will help in eliminating some of the challenges faced in business operations (SMEDAN, 2013)

Decisions within MSMEs are made by the owners (Centeno et al., 2013; Horan et al., 2011; Krake, 2005). Literature has affirmed the role of SME owner-managers in the growth of the enterprise arising from their personality, as the personality of the brand owners leaves an imprint on their brands. (Boubakary, 2015; Centeno, 2013; Centeno, 2019; Garavan et al., 2016; Gray, 2006; Krake, 2005; Muhonen et al., 2017) such a role also extends to drive employees to achieve organisational goals (Franco & Matos, 2015). For SME owners to operate effectively in their strategic and operational functions, the right competencies, skills, and expertise are needed (Garavan et al., 2016), without which it can become a militating factor for driving business performance (Shokri et al., 2016).

The owners' ability, skills, knowledge and expertise influence the choice of their business strategy (Centeno et al., 2019; Wijewardena et al., 2008). The knowledge of the business owner determines the way they process information when it is passed on to them, as understanding arises from the way they apply their knowledge and how they structure such information which they then distil into their business operations (Shane, 2000). As such the business owner in an SME is seen to be the originator of knowledge and the driver of passing on knowledge to their employees; this

includes the choice of a marketing decision (Janet & Chua, 2013). The experience and knowledge of the business owners contribute to their perception and acceptance of branding strategy within the company (Krake, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2012). The application of skills and knowledge by SME owner-managers delivers good results for their companies as well as the reverse is the case if they lack skills (Murphy, 2010) as an insufficient application of skills by owners creates challenges for the business and a lack of knowledge on what branding entails affect its adoption (Hirvonen and Laukkanen, 2014; Scheers, 2018). In a study of SME owners conducted by Scheers (2018), it indicated that 74% of SME owners said there was a positive correlation between the absence of marketing skills and the rate of business failure in South Africa; such poor knowledge resulted in issues in the businesses such as low access to market, poor location of business ventures and poor acceptance of product offerings.

A study by Lee and Griffith (2023) states that knowledge and awareness of brand-building strategies drive strategic decision-making in MSME businesses. When there is a considerable knowledge in brand building, MSME businesses, are more open to the adoption of brand building. A business with better awareness can derive good success, improved brand recognition, customer engagement, and market share. Smith (2021) says that MSME business owners, with a well-rounded understanding of branding are better positioned to drive brand building execution.

The role of owner-managers in strategic decisions generally and specifically such as in brand-building adoption is called out (Mintzberg et al., 2005; Porter, 2008; Shrader and Siegel, 2007). It is said that the owner-manager can be a source of competitive advantage if they demonstrate a unique level of competence, capabilities skills, and expertise (Mulani et al., 2019). Day (1994) identifies that competitive advantage can be achieved through assets and capabilities; A company that can have high branding know-how is better placed to execute brand orientation

compared to those companies that lack such (Centeno, 2013). The knowledge of the owner can galvanise into driving the vision and goal of the business (Neuvonen, 2016).

The term brand awareness describes the consumer's familiarity with a certain product or service. Brand awareness has the potential to influence decisions about brands while being in the context of driving consideration (Ramaseshan et al., 2013). Brand awareness can influence consumer behaviours by impacting the establishment and power of brand connection inside the image of the brand. The recognition of the brand is the initial stage in any marketing strategy, and it is also crucial for customer acquisition. Advertising is a critical component of brand recognition, and there are numerous ways to do so these days, through the internet, celebrities, and brand names, to name a few (Ong et al., 2016).

Brand association refers to the connection of a brand with certain concepts which a customer recalls from an encounter with a brand (Alhaddad, 2014). The consumer recalls a brand based on a distinct set of traits, experiences, and visuals, in a way that distinguishes the brand. This one-of-a-kind collection may consist of a concept, emotion, object, experience, personality, relationship, person, thing, or image. It can take the form of anything tangible or intangible. It could be directly or indirectly tied to the brand's offerings. It is, nonetheless, something that helps the buyer remember and identify the brand (Jayswal & Vora, 2019).

The brand association is critical, since it has an impact on the company's future, as customers will make purchasing decisions based on the brand association. In the customer's mind, a brand association is a mental connection. Furthermore, brand connections can affect product distinctiveness and user pleasure. People have traditionally connected brands with conventional attributes such as surroundings, attitude, and certain sales products, among others (Jing et al.,

2014). However, in this digital age, there are numerous ways to strengthen the relationship between technology and the Internet.

In the process of developing a brand for MSME business, the brand owner/manager is critical. Brand operations are subjectively influenced by the personality (beliefs and values) and aims of the brand owner/manager. According to Kennedy and Wright (2011), brand owners/managers should educate themselves about the branding industry before beginning any branding process, perform rigorous research (which covers self and market analysis), and improve their managerial abilities before embarking on any branding process. Businesses will gain from the capacity to better match branding initiatives with available resources, which will result in increased brand performance.

Marketing skills are important to the survival of a business and can determine its positive or negative performance based on the impact of such skills on business decisions and marketplace acceptance (Rankhumise & Letsoalo, 2019) and it is common to have a diverse range of skills amongst owner-managers (Centeno et al., 2013). The skills repertoire of owners will impact the level of brand-building activities implemented as owners lead in brand management (Gundala & Khawaja, 2014). Horan et al. (2011) also confirm through the study of the relevance of owners to branding activities.

Skills and information of business owners can be acquired through the widespread availability (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018), especially now in the digital age, irrespective of the age of the business owners. This position is more superior to a previously held belief that there is a generational gap in marketing activities (Gilly & Zeithaml, 1985). Which summarises that older business owners might be less inclined to adopt new marketing strategies, due to their preference for their old habits. Recent studies, however, have started to challenge this

view. This position has been challenged by Martin and Wright (2005), indicating adoption of brand building by older entrepreneurs.

Owner-managers' brand awareness and knowledge

Brand orientation is defined as a process that strategically places the brand at the centre of the business operation (Evans et al., 2012; Hodge et al., 2018; Urde, 1999). An important element of brand orientation is the level of awareness of owners of brand building. This includes knowing what constitutes a brand and understanding what a brand should be before the business is set up (Frese and Gielnik, 2014; Sa Liow and Chai, 2015). Hogarth-Scott et al. (1996) describes micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) business owners as being often all-rounders and, as such do not have the requisite skills to handle complex marketing models and strategies (Scheers, 2018), while Kennedy and Wright (2016) states that brand owners must know about branding. Brand knowledge is said to be the first stage of the brand orientation adoption process, comprising of information gathering and know-how and, in some cases, referred to as an antecedent (Kogut and Zander, 1992; Neuvonen, 2016). Having brand orientation is said to add value to SME businesses (Berthon et al., 2008; Centeno et al., 2013; Hirvonen and Laukkanen, 2014).

SME owners are yet to come to terms with fully understanding the strategic importance of branding given the competitive environment they find themselves (Osakwe, 2013). The scope of the understanding of what constitutes branding is limited in SMEs and their owners and at best a narrow understanding is the norm (Banerjee and Dasgupta, 2009; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Huang and Lai, (2011) submit that most managers do not know the depth of what brand management entails, due to their lack of awareness of the concept, while the concept is in its infancy amongst some SMEs (Boyle, 2003; Krake, 2005). The narrow definition and understanding of branding focus on marketing as a concept, which is only the promotional and

executional aspect of branding (Branding & Marketing, 2018). SMEs often mix up the implementation of marketing activities with branding; a small part of what branding entails; the entire brand adoption process consists of brand planning, which includes the creation of identity and symbols, investing resources to drive differentiation, and identifying channels to drive communication and a process that drives performance and measurement (Hodge et al., 2018).

While relating gender and entrepreneurship, studies have mentioned the impact of male and female business owners on their approach to branding (Brush et al., 2018; Coleman and Robb, 2016). They say that female business owners might be less likely to engage in brand-building strategies, due to conservative business practices or limited access to capital, though this is countered by Díaz-García et al. (2017), who posits that whatever gap exists is narrowing, as there appears to be no significant differences in how they adopt brand building strategies as the gap is diminishing (Alsos et al., 2019).

Other influencers of business owners are practical business experience and exposure which may play a more significant role in brand-building awareness (Jones and Rowley, 2011; Kara et al., 2005) as they find out that practical knowledge and industry-specific experiences aid in strategic decision-making. Though Solomon et al. (2018) believes that higher education plays a critical role in knowledge of contemporary business practices, including brand management.

In the study of 5 SMEs in Ireland conducted by Horan et al. (2011), an outcome of the study was that SMEs did not do branding because they lacked the knowledge and expertise to do so. Though the owners understood the value of driving awareness for their products and services, they executed this which is not all that branding entails (Forgacs, 2003). In some respects, SMEs believe that branding is only related to having a company name and logo (Banerjee and Dasgupta, 2009; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). But branding goes deeper than developing a name or a slogan,

it is a process that involves stages of implementation even before the brand is created (Hodge et al., 2018; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). While some owners have a fair idea of what brand strategy is, they do not see it as important (Huang & Lai, 2011). Makhitha (2016) says that SMEs often lack the fundamental knowledge of the market they operate in, and this results in challenges with marketing their products to the right market segment (Van Scheers, 2011). In the research by Lekhanya (2010), where the use of marketing by SMEs was surveyed, there was a lack of knowledge of marketing or expertise in marketing, and the use of marketing tools by owner-managers was limited. Radipere and Van Scheers (2005) attributed the issues faced by SMEs as related to marketing and brand building capabilities, like lack of knowledge of the market, and low access to products amongst others. Though marketing was done to some extent by SMEs and the owners were aware that they could grow profitability through marketing, it seems overwhelming for SME owners as they lack the knowledge to execute; hence it is done haphazardly (Scheers, 2018). In the 8 firms (Wong & Merrilees, 2005) surveyed, they believed in branding and practised some brand activities, but still did not see branding as critical as an immediate intervention.

In a study conducted by Gundala and Khawaja (2014) of SMEs in Dubai, out of 62 respondents, 32% mentioned that brand building is incorporated into their business and 68% do not do branding. With the majority not involved in brand management, they attribute this to many factors, chief amongst which is the knowledge of owners and employees is limited. Many barriers can limit the SME from creating a brand. When asked why they did not incorporate brand management in their company activities, their responses include the following – lack of experience of staff and ability to create awareness plans 28%, overdependence on owner 23%, inadequate marketing strategy 10%. It was pointed out that owners under study majorly lacked branding

knowledge – 53% lacked knowledge, 23% had partial knowledge and 24% were said to have brand knowledge (Gundala & Khawaja, 2014).

This mixed execution of branding resonates with the model of Wong and Merrilees (2005), in a framework to describe the adoption of brand strategy by SMEs. This can be related to the way brand owners demonstrate their knowledge of brand orientation and its relevance in their businesses. Three archetypes are named minimalist brand orientation, embryonic brand orientation, and integrated brand orientation. This was brought to life in a study of 8 SME businesses; 2 of the companies were minimalist – meaning there was a high barrier to brand strategy, lacking knowledge of what branding is and how it can impact their businesses as they focus on short-term views and more transactional. 3 companies were embryonic, they fared a little bit better having a fair idea of what branding is and the awareness being higher amongst owners, hence a more pronounced brand orientation, albeit, random and in between. 3 companies demonstrated integrated brand orientation, showing a higher level of brand distinctiveness and a good knowledge of what constitutes a competitive advantage. They show a higher degree of importance to the brand and the brand is seen as integral to business operations with the use of several marketing tools. A criticism of this study though is that it may not allow for generalisation as it was a qualitative study involving only 8 SME businesses (Wong & Merrilees, 2005).

Though SMEs are often constrained by budget (Horan et al., 2011; Keller, 2003), it is believed that they can still create a unique type of execution for their brand activities through creative and affordable offerings. (Berthon et al., 2008; Ojasalo et al., 2008). However, the ability to make this possible is hinged on the considerable know-how of branding strategy and process, which involves the knowledge of how to develop and apply the right strategy to yield the best performance (Centeno, 2013). It is important to bring to light the argument that unless SMEs

receive adequate information concerning the performance benefits of branding, they are likely to remain reluctant to invest in it (Hirvonen & Laukkanen, 2014).

Moreover, it is important to recognise that having some semblance of brand orientation in an organisation does not necessarily mean that the organisation has deliberately adopted a brand-oriented perspective, nor that they have fully committed to this approach or succeeded in implementing it (Hodge et al., 2018). Strauss and Corbin (1998) mention that having prior experience leads to the concept of branding, one of which is the owner-manager's subtle knowledge, resulting in planning, and brand identity among others. In Centeno et al. (2013) five phases of SME brand building, the first four stages speak to brand identity creation during which there is an evolution of knowledge, capabilities, and competencies, while the fifth stage is the development of brand identity stage. The process is not straightforward as owners may experience hiatus and trial and error from one stage to another. It is believed that owners' knowledge increases over the process of brand strategy and management.

Theme 4: Motivation of business owners towards brand building adoption

SME Owners' Motivations

Motivation is a process that drives the focus of a person to be relentless and disciplined towards the achievement of a goal, it is the driving force to achieve a goal, a desire to succeed and avoid failure (Machmud and Sidharta, 2016; Robbins et al., 2011), it has also been described as a process that drives and inspires certain behaviours (Borgatti and Cross, 2003; Zimmerman and Chu, 2013). The motivation of the management affects the way that business is operated (Ncube and Zondo, 2018; Weber et al., 2015). Motivation is the drive that leads to the attainment of goals and expectations (Becchetti et al., 2013) and it has been identified that motivation is a critical

factor in the entrepreneurial space (Antonites & Van Vuuren, 2014). Motivation plays a crucial role in the establishment and growth of a business (Grant and Berry, 2011; Tu and Lu, 2014).

Business owners enter into business for different motivations (Nieman & Nieuwenhuizen, 2009); when they are forced into entrepreneurship this can be referred to as push motivation, while the motivation related to financial goals and identified opportunities arising in the market is termed pull motivations (Asah et al., 2015; Block and Wagner, 2007; Marn et al., 2016; Ncube and Zondo, 2018; Sharafizad and Coetzer, 2015). It is stated that SMEs who are pull-motivated achieve better success than entrepreneurs who are push-factor motivated, who have lower goals and are more driven by lifestyle choices (Block and Sandner, 2009; Weber et al., 2015)

In understanding the adoption of strategic decisions within an SME, knowing the characteristics and motivations of the owners is important, as the motivation of the business owner is a valuable factor in decision making (Hashim et al., 2018; Marn et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2006). Business owners are motivated to engage in strategic activities by the need to achieve, take risks, and drive innovation (Kisfalvi, 2002), and when they achieve success, they can retain this motivation (Korunka et al., 2003).

Goals are drivers of motivation as well as intentions as they become an anchor that the individual rests upon to achieve the expectations already set up to be achieved (Reijonen, 2008). The achievement of business goals and vision is said to be a motivation for owners to demonstrate strategic thinking, to succeed (Cardon et al., 2009; Reijonen, 2008; Reijonen, 2014), which implies that SME owners' motivation is driven by the success of the organisation (Becherer et al., 2008; Marn et al., 2006). Motivation to achieve goals can be related to the intention to act and intentions reflected in how micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) business owners operate (Ncube &

Zondo, 2018). When MSME owners have a high growth motivation, they can achieve growth (Delmar & Wiklund, 2008).

The findings of Kotler and Keller (2016), state that motivated entrepreneurs are more proactive in executing strategies that can enhance their business's market presence and competitive advantage. The drive to set themselves apart in a competitive market, to deliver long-term business growth and have a loyal customer base are drivers of motivation that will lead them to adopt brand initiatives. The findings relate intrinsic motivation - personal satisfaction, drive to having a lasting brand legacy, plays an important role in building brands. While extrinsic motivations, like financial rewards and competitive advantage, can lead to the decision to develop brand-building strategies. This is in line with the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which states that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are important in influencing human behaviour, including entrepreneurial actions.

According to a study of 260 SMEs undertaken by (Marn et al., 2016) in Malaysia, the motivations of business owners were studied along with push and pull factors. The results showed a stronger correlation of pull motivational factors between personal development and financial goals with strategic planning adoption. SMEs who are driven by the desire for growth are motivated to engage in strategic planning and the motivation demonstrated by owners can drive the strategic planning process in SMEs (Charles et al., 2015; Moog et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2006). The study in contrast says non-engagement in strategic planning can arise due to the owners' desire to operate on a limited scale of operations or low growth goals (Marn et al., 2016; Walker and Brown, 2004; Weber et al., 2015). Related to this study is the study of 300 SMEs in Tanzania, in studying the push and pull factors of motivation; the pull motivation factors turned out to be the most important motivation for SME owners – to be innovative, and to drive success in their

companies (Isaga et al., 2015). This research answered the question of what drives the association between motivation and business growth, and there is a positive correlation, as identified by previous research (Cassar, 2007) which demonstrated the resilience of owner-managers and how they do better than other business owners who are motivated by push factors (Isaga et al., 2015).

Though motivation amongst entrepreneurs is said to differ across geographies based on differences in psychographic, cultural, or educational qualifications (Gabrielsson & Politis, 2011), as contained in previous studies done that submitted that push factors were of more relevance in developing countries (Benzing et al., 2009; Chu et al., 2007) this was contradicted in the study conducted by (Isaga et al., 2015) who concluded that in the study undertaken in Tanzania, that the geographical location didn't show a difference in developing versus developed countries.

Motivations of owners to the adoption of brand building strategies

The adoption of strategic thinking delivers and results in brand orientation, at the discretion of the business owner (Gati and Beuer, 2019; Reijonen, 2014). The SME business owner is mostly responsible for marketing and brand-related activities and contributes to the brand building of the SME in the way they demonstrate their passion (Dion and Arnould, 2016; Hashim et al., 2018; Kienzler, 2017; Krake, 2005). Motivation gives an insight into why a business owner can adopt strategic and brand orientation (Hogarth-Scott et al., 1996). While some literature has given reasons why business owners should be motivated to adopt brand building strategies (Inskip, 2004) there is an acknowledgement that there are challenges of resources like money (Abimbola, 2001; Krake, 2005), but submits that despite that, some SMEs are willing to invest in branding (Hodge et al., 2018). There is affirmation from Calabro (2005) that the value derivable from branding is a motivation for SME owners to adopt a branding strategy as branding lowers the cost of sales and

amount incurred in acquiring customers and it impacts positively the bottom line (Centeno et al., 2013; Horan et al., 2011). The reality of a more competitive landscape is a motivation for the adoption of brand-building strategies in small organisations (Calabro, 2005) as well as the ability of branding to confer a competitive advantage on such brands (Berthon et al., 2008; Osakwe et al., 2015; Renton et al., 2015; Wong and Merrilees, 2008). In a study of five SMEs in Ireland by Horan et al. (2011), it was found that many SME businesses adopt branding due to the desire to succeed, and this fact was demonstrated by the SMEs studied, who want to use branding to drive growth and success in their businesses (Horan et al., 2011); such drive was seen in companies like Microsoft, Gap, Starbucks, and Dell Computer, whose owners started them as SMEs but they have now grown into big corporations driven by the owners' drive (Abimbola, 2001; Ng and Kee, 2017).

Various studies have highlighted the impact of motivation in the adoption of brand-building strategies in MSMEs in studies that will be reviewed subsequently. The role of the SME owners is critical, and this can come to bear on driving growth (Delmar & Wiklund, 2008); their motivation to drive business advancement affects the decisions they undertake for business operations (Delmar and Wiklund, 2008; Walker and Brown, 2004). In a study undertaken by Wang et al. (2006) on 486 SME businesses in Australia, along with the 17 areas of push and pull motivational factors, the pull motivations factors of personal development motivations and financial motivations were seen to be more crucial in the SME owners' strategic decisions, while the push factors motivation had a low drive towards growth (Wang et al., 2006).

In the study of 111 SMEs across the auto component industry in India, Roy and Banerjee (2012) submit that SMEs demonstrate different motivations according to the criticality of their products and their marketing orientation. The SMEs were clustered into 4 quadrants representing

their motivations and marketing orientation. Cell 1 had low marketing or brand activities but is motivated by the desire to raise the status of its products from being a commodity to a premium brand. Cell 2 had a low branding orientation but was motivated along with their long-term vision for the company which will drive them to adopt branding. Their motivations differed from the SMEs currently involved in marketing activities or branding. Cell 3 was already active in marketing but was motivated to drive superiority for their brand (Tickle et al., 2003) while cell 4 was at an advantageous level of their operations with an appreciable level of branding. Their motivation was to ensure higher business growth. This varying motivation can be summed up in their adoption of branding strategies as either customised or standardised based on their peculiarity (Roy & Banerjee, 2012)

A study of 112 SMEs by Ncube and Zondo (2018) was undertaken to understand the motivation factors that influence SMEs in South Africa. The study was to demonstrate how SMEs with varying growth motivations can differ according to how they adopt market and brand orientation strategies. The results depicted that 96.7% of the owners said that businesses will grow better through motivation and 95% of the SMEs sampled agreed that motivation has a positive effect. (Ncube & Zondo, 2018) and when there is an appreciable level of growth intentions, such SMEs gravitate more towards branding than those who have lower motivations for growth by Ncube and Zondo (2018). The value of branding is made applicable regarding brands as valuable assets and brand building as a focal in their strategy and business operations. This result suggests that SMEs have recognised the importance of brands in creating sustainable competitive advantage (Berthon et al., 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2008). In an empirical study of SMEs in Australia conducted by Wong and Merrilees (2015), they developed a model that used brand engagement as a pivot with antecedents and consequences to it. The results relate brand orientation as an

antecedent to brand engagement. The higher the engagement, the higher the brand orientation. In this construct, a brand-oriented company is more motivated to drive engagement. Brand engagement can be structured strategically to give consequences of brand performance (brand equity, and loyalty) which ultimately leads to financial performance. The prospect of the consequent of brand engagement should spur companies to adopt brand orientation. García-Cabrera et al. (2016). When opportunities are discovered, human motivation influences the decisions made, so the variance across people in entrepreneurial motivations will influence whoever pursues entrepreneurial opportunities and how they undertake the entrepreneurial process Shane et al. (2003). The entrepreneurial motivation, in addition, may be conditioned by the institutional structure of the organisational field (Stenholm et al., 2013; Trevino et al., 2008).

To be motivated to adopt brand-building strategies, SMEs would require knowledge about the value and importance that the adoption of branding strategies brings to their businesses for them to be open and ready for adoption, as well as know the challenges posed by branding (Roy & Burjamee, 2012).

Regarding the benefits derivable from brand building which could serve as motivation for owners to adopt a brand building, branding is said to contribute to improved sales performance and ultimately higher financial performance (Agostini et al., 2015; Merrilees et al., 2011). The equity of the brand has an appreciable impact on the performance of SMEs (Asamoah, 2014), in terms of sales growth and new product success. The adoption of brand orientation has a marked difference in SME companies that are more vibrant and growing than those that are doing poorly (Reijonen et al., 2012). Aside from the financial value, other benefits from brand building adoption are – solid brand reputation, strong brand identity, awareness, and brand loyalty (Hirvonen et al.,

2013; Wong and Merrilees, 2008). SMEs doing well can be linked to brand-building adoption compared to those not on board (Reijonen et al., 2012; Renton et al., 2015).

Theme 5: Perceived benefits of brand building

Perceived benefits for business owners

Brands play quite a vital role in consumers' lives and the value of organisations. They offer varying benefits and value to the users, the company and by extension the business owners. Adopting brand orientation brings different benefits to the organisation and the business owners. Brand building influences customer buying decisions and increases sales and profitability. Branding is a critical element that helps a business differentiate its products and services (Tali et al., 2021). Branding can influence consumers' perceptions and how they relate towards a brand; the brand image in their mind, and their purchasing behaviour toward the brand, which drives sales, and ultimately the market share (Zhang, 2015).

In a study undertaken by Chovanová et al. (2015), on the impact of Brand on Consumer Behaviour, to examine the impact of brand on influencing consumers to purchase a product. It was concluded that the brand is the critical factor which determines the consumer purchase decision-making. Out of 650 respondents, 52% answered in the affirmative that brands determine how they purchase. In a study conducted in Nigeria by Ogbuji et al. (2011), studying the impact of branding on consumer choice established that a brand name has a stronger influence than product quality, as well as the impact that the name of the producing company has on the choice of brands. In this case, it states that when a company is known, the brand name can gain market acceptability and share due to its association and the reputation of the manufacturer.

Perceived benefits can drive the adoption of brand-building strategies. When business owners recognise the tangible and intangible advantages of branding-such as increased customer loyalty, brand recognition, and competitive differentiation, they can be driven to deploy time and resources in branding efforts (Aaker's, 1996). Such benefits can be high market positioning, premium pricing, and enhanced brand credibility. By the time business owners see branding as a valuable tool that can lead to a successful outcome for their business, they are encouraged to prioritise branding in their overall business strategy, in line with the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), suggesting that the perceived outcomes of an action strongly influence the intention to perform that action.

This demonstrates the strength of the impact of branding. Another identified benefit of branding is that it improves the company's public image. Branding helps to confer a strong identity of a product in the minds of the consumers to give preference to that brand; SMEs are deploying resources into brand-building strategies to drive visibility and market growth and performance (Berthon et al., 2008; Roy and Banerjee, 2012). The components of a strong brand identity such as logos, colours or characters differentiate it from other competing brands and make it easily identifiable at the point of purchase (Ward et al., 2020).

Branding makes a business achieve superior business performance. SMEs that adopt branding are said to achieve a superior brand performance, more than those that do not (Hirvonen and Laukkanen 2013; Raki and Shakur, 2018; Renton et al., 2016; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Building an effective brand strategy can induce high performance for the SME ((Hong & Diep, 2016) as previous studies show that brand orientation positively affects brand performance (Huang and Tsai, 2013; Wong and Merrilees, 2008). SMEs adopting branding hope to achieve business growth and brand identity and drive relevance through differentiation standing out product recall,

and high product quality perception (Hong & Diep, 2016). This will deliver higher business performance, brand awareness, and an increased consumer base (Hong and Diep, 2016; Roy and Burjamee, 2012). The profitability of businesses is impacted by adopting brand orientation (Osakwe et al., 2015), there also exists empirical support that asserts that brand orientation is linked to the profitability of organisations (Gromark & Melin, 2011); as also concluded in a study by Laukkanen et al. (2013), indicating that brand orientation is linked brand and market performance.

The impact of branding makes the business stronger & creates differentiation, giving the company an edge over its competitors: They create points of differentiation from one product to another., making brands easily identifiable. Brands can also differentiate one company's product from another (Daud & Ghani, 2013). Branding leads to elevated expectations of the business performance, builds trust and makes the business distinct thereby shielding it from brand imitators (Liow & Chai, 2015). Branding enhances the image & credibility of the company: The decision to purchase is hinged on a brand's image, whether to buy one or its close competitor. Brand image is important when a customer buys one product over another. Well-established brands have a reputational advantage as they can be easily recognisable and well-known.

The value of a business is driven by branding as it increases the value of the company. Branding is integral to driving and creating value for the business and the customer, and creating a competitive advantage (Holt, 2015). Adopting brand building enables a brand to occupy a certain level of value in the mind of the consumer (Chovanová et al., 2015). A brand cannot be separated from the organisation's value, it is an important strategic asset. Brands also drive a competitive advantage for the company (Wong & Merrilees, 2008). A key benefit of branding is its ability to drive strong association for the business, making the business more recognisable.

A key benefit of branding is the ability to drive a strong recall and familiarity for a product, they offer tangible information about products and create associations that linger in the minds of consumers or customers (Chovanová et al., 2015). When consumers interact with a brand, they store the information in their memory. It acts as a memory cue, allowing them to retrieve relevant information from memory. This information may be about the experience of the brand, brand perceptions or brand associations. Tellis (n.d) contends that familiar brands are selectively given more exposure, attention, comprehension, and retention by consumers. The benefits accruable from branding relate to consumer or customer recognition - the ability of the product to stand out and be seen distinctively from another. Firstly, branding will benefit in terms of customer recognition. The image of a brand is instrumental when a customer chooses a product over another. The reputation of a well-established brand makes a brand easy to recognise. The trust gained in that brand makes consumers patronise them repeatedly (Daud & Ghani, 2013).

Branding bestows a company with a strong brand name, which ensures that introducing new products is less risky, assuring consumers of quality if they have previously used a product from that company (Daud & Ghani, 2013). Another benefit of brand building is hinged on driving better association and knowledge of a brand. Branding confers on the product the consideration of being top on the list of choices as the linkage with known and strong brands is higher than unknown brands (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003).

Branding inspires employees and makes them more motivated. Branding offers a strong tool for companies to be more competitive in the ever-changing business landscape (Hasni et al., 2018). Companies make deliberate efforts to build their brand equity, ensuring that their strategies contribute to how brands are built. (Ayrom & Tumer, 2021). Employees play a significant role in building their company brand driven by the drive of such companies both internally and externally,

leading to the building of trust and reputation (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). A study undertaken by Weiz (2020) on the “impact of Organisational Brand-Building Strategies on Organizational Brand Equity” concluded that there exists a positive direct relationship between brand-building strategies deployed by an organisation and the strategies on employee-based brand-building, which impacts the company’s values and reputation, a position that strengthens how much commitment, trust and credibility that employees place on the organisation. (Glynn, 2012).

For any business that intends to build a sustainable customer base, branding drives customer loyalty. In a study undertaken by Ayuba et al. (2022) to study the impact of branding on consumer loyalty in Abuja Nigeria, that there is a strong positive relationship between branding and customer loyalty. It indicates that loyalty builds trust which can drive a deeper market penetration of its products. Branding leads to customer loyalty, and with loyalty, customers become brand advocates and ambassadors (Ayuba et al., 2022). Customers can go to great lengths to promote and drive the image of a brand. This infers that organisations should prioritise branding to drive brand loyalty.

A powerful brand will help the business acquire and sustain new customers. Building a strong brand helps satisfied customers remain with the brand, even if the price changes; they find the brand proposition compelling enough for them to remain (Daud & Ghani, 2013). Leading to an increase in profitability, share and brand image.

Theme 6: Attitude of business owners towards brand building adoption

Brand orientation and owners’ role

The concept of brand orientation focuses on how the activity of a business is entirely driven and focused on the brand, using brands as a strategic tool (Hirvonen et al., 2016; Wong and

Merrilees, 2005). Evans et al. (2012), describe brand orientation as the manner that which a business leverages the brand and uses it as a guiding light for making decisions that dictate the behaviours of the brand. In this construct, the brand is the central figure around which businesses plan their business operation and strategies. Under this literature review, it is important to understand brand orientation concerning the attitude of the business owner/manager and this can incorporate the values, beliefs, and attitudes of an organisation towards brand building orientation (Muhonen et al., 2017). Having a brand-oriented perspective alone may not be enough as it is only a first step toward the execution of brand-building strategies and activities (Muhonen et al., 2017). Keller (2008), refers to strategic brand management as involving designing the brand, setting up the implementation of marketing initiatives that build on the brand, and the build-up and measuring of brand equity. Brand building management is described as a process involving four steps of brand positioning, market planning, brand performance, and brand equity.

Micro, Small and Medium business enterprises (MSMEs) continue to exhibit a negative attitude toward branding and want to devote financial resources only in the future. The mindset of SMEs' managers is a contributing factor to their decision to withdraw from branding efforts. The owner/manager can have a big impact on brand management because most SME owners have a survival attitude and place a high priority on sales rather than brand promotion and marketing.

In an MSME setup, the adoption of brand orientation and engagement is largely dependent on the owner-manager as they are critical decision makers (Centeno et al., 2013; Horan et al., 2011; Krake, 2005), as the responsibility for brand management mostly resides with owners and not commonly allocated to other people in the SME organisation. The buy-in and agreement of the owner are important for executing brand strategies (Mitchell et al., 2015; Neuvonen, 2016). The owner-managers personify the brand as their person and character often rub off on the brand, which

is critical to achieving brand recognition (Kienzler, 2017). Krake (2005), in his funnel model, looks at how internal management operates and states that the owner determines the level of attention branding receives within the organisation and highlights the owner as the mirror and personification of the brand ((Blomback and Brunninge, 2013; Huang and Lai, 2011).

There is said to be a close correlation between the personality of the SME owner-manager and that of the brand, with the owners being instrumental in initiating brand building strategy and driving the entire process; therefore, the adoption of brand building strategies has been hinged on the buy-in and commitment of the owner (Centeno et al., 2013; Krake, 2005). As such, adopting brand building by MSMEs relates to the owner-manager playing an important role in making brand-related decisions, starting from having a brand orientation to the development of a brand identity framework and execution (Centeno et al., 2012; Krake, 2005). The role of owner-managers in brand orientation impacts the business more obviously than in large organisations (Krake, 2005). The current market and business environment have put pressure on businesses, necessitating the need for SMEs to find means of gaining competitive advantage; branding has been identified as one way to achieve differentiation for their products (Tavares, 2015).

To summarise the role of owner-manager in MSME brand building attitude and adoption, it is highlighted that critical elements required are the experience of the owner, the depth of knowledge of brand building, and the level of ingenuity deployed by the owner (Krake, 2005).

Owner manager's attitude to brand building

What the owner-manager knows about branding is determined by their past experiences which then forms their attitude towards brand building strategy. Brand management in operation by SMEs is characterized by an intuitive process under the influence of owner-managers (Centeno

et al., 2019) as the one who has control over the business operations and the future, with decision making residing squarely with the individual and is driven more by experimentation, through learning through experience and knowledge acquired over time (Neuvonen, 2016; Tavares, 2015). SMEs are built in a non-conventional manner, with limited resources, based on intuition and no clear planning, using innovative experimental, and creative means (Centeno et al., 2019; Neuvonen, 2016). SMEs are diverse and they demonstrate diverse attitudes towards brand building adoption; with attitudes said to be representative of the thoughts and feelings regarding a specific thing that is integral to the goals that micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) business owner-managers set (Reijonen, 2014).

Centeno et al. (2013) posit that brand owners start from the perspective of not knowing about brand building or being brand oriented. They, however, can migrate from that point to learning and implementing brand-building strategies due to their exhibition of certain behaviours and characteristics which are integral to SMEs. These behaviours are attitudes that are geared at risk-taking, being willing to be innovative and the zeal to accomplish and get results.

In a study conducted by Hirvonen et al. (2013), though SMEs are said to do branding in some format, they are conducted informally and not in a logical process compared with large organisations (Krake, 2005). These small organisations do not place a lot of emphasis on brand building, and it is not high on their list of priorities; they do not chase the goal of developing vibrant brands and they do not check if branding is making an impact on their businesses (Horan et al., 2011; Krake, 2005). In furtherance of this notion, a study of the software industry conducted by Ojasalo et al. (2008), showed that brand building was being done in a haphazard and unsystematic way. It appears according to Centeno et al. (2012), that the practice was more of

experimentation and trial, rather than a focused approach to brand building, they build on such trials rather than a structured format (Centeno et al., 2013; Reijonen, 2010; Stokes, 2000).

Another attitude exhibited by SME owner-managers is that they believe that branding is not within their purview (Merrilees, 2007) and this attitude impacts their choices and behaviour, as short-term sales are given more attention and prominence than branding (Krake, 2005). SMEs tend to use ad-hoc approaches in striving to survive (Berthon et al., 2008; Reijonen, 2010), giving in to the everyday pressure of business which requires their daily attention and decision making, a situation that overtakes any strategic thinking and action (Hirvonen & Laukkanen, 2014). Though many SMEs recognise that branding is value-adding, they are constrained from giving immediate focus to branding and defer it to a later period (Horan et al., 2011; Ojasalo et al., 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). The limitations arising from resource availability like the inability to leverage the right expertise and the uncertainty about the positive impact of brand building on their businesses may account for the limited energy put behind branding by SME owners (Horan et al., 2011).

There is the concern and perception that branding may not be for SMEs, though there is a wide array of literature on branding for organisations, it was not certain that these could apply to SMEs (Hirvonen et al., 2013). There is a perception that branding is for big organisations only (Berthon et al., 2008; Krake 2005; Merrilees, 2007; Wong and Merrilees, 2005), and that SMEs lack the resources available to large organisations, hence cannot adopt branding (Ahonen, 2008). Many models of branding were framed from the viewpoint of large organisations based on the characteristics of such organisations which includes a formal way of brand practices, rational processes, structured team working, execution of a mass media plan and the use of well-refined indices for performance measurement (Tavares, 2015). The literature points to the fact that SMEs

show a shallow definition of branding which is limited to brand name, logos, and a few other elements (Wong & Merrilees, 2005). SMEs' activities are not structured and follow the personality of the owner, who determines the activities that occur since they are plagued with limited resources and budgets, and they lack the requisite branding knowledge and capability of staff (Neuvonen, 2016). As mentioned, brand management is distinct within the construct of SMEs; SMEs can be said to be more entrepreneurial orientated when perceived from the perspective of the influence of the personality of the owner-manager on the operations (Tavares, 2015). Having an entrepreneurial nature is said to be inimical to the long-term growth of SME businesses.

The relevance and importance of values is an integral component of SME brand building, (Centeno et al., 2019). Having a brand identity is a follow-up to being brand-oriented, and the components of brand identity are brand values, brand positioning and brand vision (Muhonen et al., 2017). The brand identity is determined by the association that a business owner relates with (Ojasalo et al., 2008; Spence and Essoussi, 2010). Arising from the alignment of brand orientation with the personality of the owner-manager, there must be value alignment also (Blomback & Brunninge, 2013). Neuroven (2016) in his study of high-tech industries found out that business owners are unable to see consistency between brand strategy and their values. The business owners do not see the adoption of brand brand-building strategy as an enhancement to their status. They rather saw innovation as more value-adding to their business and the brand as enhancing their social status in their community (Centeno et al., 2019). They connect values achieved to product features rather than brand strategy. It goes further to say that given the context of a high-tech industry; brand building may be adapted to take a different format; with innovation being an overriding factor (Neuroven, 2016).

The decision undertaken will determine their new rules for applying branding. In the same study, in a case where the manager decided not to adopt brand brand-building strategy, it resulted in paying more emphasis on other areas of the business, like new product development. Stokes (2000) says that SMEs are largely entrepreneurial, and their concentration is based on new product development and innovation compared to brand-building strategy or any of its implementations. Depending on the complexity of the market, in the case of hi-tech industries, owners may reject brand orientation as the foundation of the business due to the need to begin to make immediate money from the venture, as the main objective of launching a new product is for cash flow generation. The need to generate cash and the time factors critical elements that affect the attitude of owner-managers to brand-building adoption and as such, make it more of an occasional adoption of strategy (Neuroven, 2016). Spence and Essoussi (2010), reinforce the role of the owner's value in the adoption of branding strategy. He reports that the values attributable to brands in the manufacturing context have affected their business operations. This implies that some SMEs, have their operations planned about their brand values. (Urde, 2003). Within the context of the high-tech SME managers reviewed, branding was not seen as fitting with their peculiarity and as such not considered (Neuroven, 2016).

Having a positive attitude towards branding helps business owners helps in recognising the value and influences their adoption of brand building strategies (O'Cass & Weerawardena, 2009). MSME business owners perceive brand building as a strategic asset that can differentiate their businesses, as summarised by Reijonen et al. (2012) that brand orientation can be an important element in adopting branding practices. Berthon et al. (2008), suggests that the attitude of the business owner in being open to innovation can drive them to adopt brand-building strategies. The

formal registration of a business by owners signifies an attitude towards professionalism, a prelude towards adopting structured and strategic approaches to brand management (Leung & Jha, 2017).

Practices of branding strategies by business owners

In a study of 244 micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) businesses in the craft industry conducted in South Africa, it was observed that common to say, to remain afloat and be competitive, to focus on innovation and extending their product lines (Neuvonen, 2016). Other research demonstrates that SME owner-managers are mostly strongly focused on product orientation, with them placing more emphasis on making products available and they rarely practice branding according to the defined definition of it (Krake, 2005; Makhitha, 2016; Ojasalo et al., 2008). These businesses mostly lack knowledge of the market they operate in; they lack expertise on how to access markets for their products (Makhitha, 2016). The element of branding that they practice is related to activities like giving out brochures, pamphlets, and business cards to communicate their product range; they also showcase their products through sales, exhibitions and word-of-mouth. It was also found that though the use of the internet is known to some, the utilisation is still in its infancy and not yet fully leveraged (Makhitha, 2016).

In another study conducted by Horan et al. (2011), of the five SMEs that were surveyed, they all recognised the importance of brand building, but they were hindered by the resources to pursue it. The procrastination of the implementation of brand building can also be linked to the unstructured nature of SMEs, and the influence of owner-managers was made quite evident. The ability of the owner-manager to effect changes on the business and adopt brand building is said to be present in the study under consideration, these changes are made on an incremental basis over time.

A study of 15 Swiss start-up businesses, was reviewed under these three headings: perceived relevance of branding, brand creation and brand-building activities. Under relevance about half of them had documented some level of brand strategy before the commencement of operations, while half did not see the relevance of brand strategy, but rather would deploy other tactics (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010). On brand creation, a large number had a name and had gone ahead to create visual identity elements like logos. On the last point of brand activities, there was an extensive demonstration of brand activation elements mostly unconventional like newsletters, events, and websites; the advertisement was said to be expensive and was not used; The evident point was that the choice of activity was largely driven by industry type and relevance. (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010). Huang and Lai (2011) in their study of two SMEs say that SME companies do not pay adequate attention to brand management; despite knowing its importance they still consider it not relevant to their operations. The choice of brand elements deployed by SMEs is related to the involvement of the owner and the influence they exert (Centeno et al., 2013; Horan et al., 2011; Muhonen et al., 2017)

There is criticism of the appropriateness of SMEs to be brand-oriented based on their characteristics and the prerequisites for getting brand orientation, as they fight for survival daily to focus on important operational issues (Neuvonen, 2016; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Research conducted on the perceptions of managers about branding seems relatively scarce (Centeno et al., 2013; Gundala and Khawaja, 2014; Hoskisson et al., 1999; Urde, 1999), although managers are the drivers of companies' performance, and their decisions correlate to a large degree with the success of a brand (Berthon et al., 2008).

To adopt a brand strategy for SMEs, Neuvonen (2016) states is done by the perceived value derivable against the costs of adoption to the organisation. The attitude of owners towards the

adoption of brand building strategy is determined by their perception of the advantages to be enjoyed. When business owners perceive the risk to adoption due to the cost involved in branding, it can be attributed to their lack of in-depth knowledge of the fundamentals of branding. In a closer look, SMEs show indication of having an interest in branding (Wong & Merrilees, 2005) and even in the face of limitations have deployed creativity in their approach (Muhonen et al., 2017); they have leveraged external support in the deployment of brand identity and execution plans through their network as well as other professionals (Hirvonen et al., 2013; Juntunen et al., 2010)

As reviewed above, most existing studies on MSME branding strategies focus on firms from Western countries. These studies often fail to distinguish between branding strategies targeting developed markets and those targeting developing markets. This results in a critical gap in the literature as there are distinct characteristics between developed and developing nations (Chung et al., 2019).

Theme 7: Challenges faced by Business Owners in adopting Brand Building Strategies.

While the importance of MSMEs to the economy of many nations cannot be over-emphasised, due to their importance in the growth of the economy and the generation of jobs and unemployment reduction (Bhoganadam and Rao, 2017; Daud and Ghani, 2013), however still face a myriad of challenges (Rankhumise & Letsoalo, 2019). These challenges have been documented and are often discussed in various literature (Bhoganadam and Rao, 2017; Mukherjee, 2018; Muktah, 2013; Singh, et al., 2019). The challenges may vary across sectors, industries, and countries (Singh et al., 2019), this fact is summed up by Gherhes et al. (2016) in their study of MSME businesses which states that the challenges faced by businesses will differ across the construct of the SME spectrum based on their business size. While reviewing this literature, however, since the scope of the study is hinged on MSME businesses and their owners' adoption

of brand building strategies, these challenges will be reviewed under two main sub-headings in the generality of applicable issues across this segment; General challenges faced by MSME owners and challenges faced in adopting brand building strategies.

General challenges faced by MSME owners.

When challenges are perceived as too great, MSMEs often face resource limitations that make it difficult to allocate resources to brand building, they therefore prioritise immediate and urgent requirements. The added requirements of brand building can be daunting for a business owner, especially if they are facing operational challenges, as it may pose an added challenge rather than a strategic benefit (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001; Ruvio et al., 2014).

Despite the benefits that accrue from SMEs and the value, they add to economies, (Oluboba, 2002), they still face challenges (Mukherjee, 2018; Ojasalo, 2012; Singh et al., 2019). The following challenges are most pervasive:

1. **Constraints of access to money/finance:** Most SMEs face the indifference and reluctance of the formal banking industry in terms of providing them access to funding for their financial requirements (Etuk et al., 2014; Mukherjee, 2018). Most SMEs often are unable to clearly articulate their financial positions, they are sub-optimal in articulating their business proposals, they lack the muscle to get the collateral to back up the funding required and are often unable to match equity funding (Mukherjee, 2018; Singh et al., 2019). These issues, therefore, make them unattractive to support and they are perceived as high-risk (Singh et al., 2019). The structure of SMEs makes them ineligible for funding support as they are often not process-driven, lack the structure to pass on the business across generations and owners, most are not open to new ideas and ownership (Bhoganadam and Rao, 2017; Mukhtar, 2013). A similar finding resulted in a study conducted by Mishra et al. (2016) on MSME businesses in Oman

in understanding their challenges, access to funding followed a similar pattern of issues faced by SMEs, as most MSME businesses are perceived not to be creditworthy. As such, SMEs resort to accessing funds from informal means such as their savings and borrowing from friends and families and credit unions or cooperative societies (Etuk et al., 2014; Singh et al., 2019), the microfinance sources are unable to satisfy the financial needs of MSMEs, therefore stifling their capability to grow and expand (SMEDAN, 2013; Singh et al., 2019).

2. **Shortage of Skills:** Inadequacies within the internal workings of the business contribute to the failures of SMEs, these are mostly centred on managerial skills, financial skills, business understanding, human resources and marketing competencies (Mukherjee, 2018). A consequence of financial challenge is the inability of SME owners to be able to employ or engage workers who possess the requisite skills and competencies; they, therefore, end up having semi-skilled or even unskilled labour (Mukhtar, 2013; Petkova et al., 2008; Singh et al., 2019). The impact of this is felt on productivity, growth and expansion limiting the ability of the business to compete favourably in the marketplace. This dearth of skills is also evident in the ability of the business owner to be able to provide the right entrepreneurial and leadership skills and direction for the business and its operations (Etuk et al., 2014). Lack of the right business skills is also noticed among MSME owners/managers as skills such as business planning, organising, coordinating, leadership and communication are not in abundance (Gherhes et al., 2016), a most important skill said to be lacking among SME owners is marketing skills (Mishra et al., 2016). Training opportunities help in raising the bar concerning technical and managerial competencies; a lot of business failures are attributed to poor managerial and entrepreneurial skills of the business leaders, who are also blamed for the inability to know the right competencies required in specific roles within the organisation (Etuk

et al., 2014; SMEDAN, 2013). Baloushi (2017) claims that marketing and branding challenge or gaps considerably hinders the growth of SMEs and the relevance of having the requisite marketing skills and competencies has been emphasised by Rankhumise and Letsoalo (2019).

3. **Inadequate Infrastructural and Institutional Support:** Weak infrastructures and the inadequacy of vital services required for the effective running of businesses, a major hindrance to the sustainability of SME businesses (Mukhtar, 2013); such as telecommunications, accessibility to business through road networks, electricity, water supply and access to technology; all of which directly affects the operational cost of the SMEs towards cost efficiency; weak infrastructures impact the productivity and the profitability of SMEs (Etuk et al., 2014; Mukherjee, 2018; Mukhtar, 2013). For SMEs to fully occupy their position as the growth engine of any economy, they must demonstrate efficiency in the utilisation of their resources, which runs through the entire value chain from material sourcing, production process, and right to distribution to the end-users (SMEDAN, 2013). Technology is a critical component driving the efficiency of the business in achieving business growth; this is often deficient in SMEs and oftentimes the knowledge of it should be led by the owners (Gherhes et al., 2016). The availability of essential infrastructures and technological support drives competitiveness in the economy (Mukherjee, 2018). Support services of government institutions like the Police and the judiciary are mostly ineffective in providing adequate security and judicial coverage to MSMEs. MSMEs are still disadvantaged in such areas as fees charged for product registration – there is no consideration for the size and uniqueness of MSMEs in the fees charged which hits the smaller businesses harder than bigger businesses (Etuk et al., 2014).

4. **Poor Management Practices and Low Entrepreneurial Skills:** MSME businesses cannot adhere to accounting practices and there is often no distinction between business finance and personal finance management, which invariably makes their records unreliable (Rankhumise & Letsoalo, 2019). Proper record keeping is a bane of many MSME businesses, and this puts a limitation on how they can play and control their business operations. Most MSME business owners are constrained in their exposure and educational background hindering them from identifying and taking advantage of business opportunities that may support their expansion (Huang & Lai, 2011). The ability to have relevant business acumen is a key driver for growth and most SMEs remain stagnated in their mindset, which makes them remain at the subsistence level rather than see the big picture and drive a long-term vision for their companies to drive better competitiveness (Etuk et al., 2014; Mukhtar, 2013). It is identified by Gherhes et al. (2016) that an area of challenge for MSME businesses is the absence of growth ambition as some owners place more emphasis on non-value enriching aspects of business owners rather than on areas to drive financial benefits and growth.
5. **Poor Implementation of Policies:** In circumstances where policies have been put in place to aid SME businesses, the poor implementation of such policies and the inconsistent application and administration of incentives that were aimed to drive the growth and expansion of SMEs have adversely affected the SME sector. The impact of this is that businesses are not able to plan which has resulted in a low level of confidence by MSMEs in the ability of respective government agencies to fulfil or see through the implementation of programmes set up, instability in government, addition to poor accountability in public service, all contribute to SMEs being underserved (Etuk et al., 2014). Mishra et al. (2019) mention that there are often

stringent government policies that hinder the operations of SMEs and tax laws do not seem to favour SMEs (Mukhtar, 2013; Rankhumise and Letsoalo, 2019; Raza et al., 2018).

6. **Restricted Market Access:** A challenge faced by MSMEs is having access to the market and getting demands for their products; the inability to drive business activities through sales poses a limitation on their growth (Mukhtar, 2013). Many reasons have been attributed to lack of market access, some of which are non-product standardisation, quality of products which implies damaging the image of the products (Daud & Ghani, 2013) increased level of competition, as well as generally low purchasing power (Mukhtar, 2013). Another reason for the lack of access could be attributed to the lack of knowledge of what consumer wants and producing what is not needed Rankhumise and Letsoalo (2019).
7. **Globalisation Challenges:** Globalisation has its gains and problems for MSMEs, benefiting from globalisation requires the MSME to incur costs that will put them in good standing to enter new markets; resources that are often difficult to come by, in addition to other challenges plaguing them like low-quality products, lack of technological support, understanding consumer needs and preferences amongst other issues (Mukherjee, 2018). These challenges put a significant level of pressure on SMEs as they tend to stifle their ability to compete favourably due to the dominance of often bigger multinational companies that exert weight on SMEs (Mukhtar, 2013).

Challenges faced by business owners in adopting brand-building strategies.

Horan et al. (2011) state that many SMEs do not survive the early years of their existence, partly because of a lack of focus on branding. The adoption of branding in MSME businesses is said to be hinged on the owner/managers' ideals, which incorporate their branding and

entrepreneurial orientations (Centeno et al., 2013). MSME business owners play a significant role in the management of the brand as their personality is intertwined with that of the brand. As such, their action, and inactions as it relates to brand-building adoption invariably affects the fortunes of the brand (Gundala et al., 2014). Results from several studies show the relevance of branding in smaller businesses that aim to drive growth, at local and international levels (Krake, 2005; Odoom et al., 2017; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Brand building has been said to deliver superior performance for SME businesses and the benefits of branding to the organisation's performance (taking advantage of opportunities, driving innovations) have been documented (Merrilees, 2007; Odoom et al., 2017), but even despite these benefits, business owners still find it challenging to adopt this practice in their business operations; these challenges may be internal or external to the business (Hirvonen et al., 2013). It is imperative to understand the factors that are limiting SME business owners from adopting brand-building strategies in their businesses. In a study of the SME software industry in Finland, some of the factors identified as challenges faced by SMEs in adopting brand-building strategies in the sector are peculiar to that sector and are listed as - the influx of many technological players and increasing competitive activities which makes distinctiveness difficult, speed to market with communication due to rapidly changing consumer preferences (Ojasalo, 2012). There are other more general issues related to affecting MSME businesses like resources both from the know-how and costing perspectives (Ojasalo, 2012), the perception that brand building is for bigger companies and the commitment of staff to brand-building efforts (Merrilees 2007; Ojasalo, 2012).

Understanding what contributes to business success or what challenges businesses face is important to SME owners and policymakers, Rankhumise and Letsoalo (2019). As such, there will be a review of the most pervasive issues facing business owners in brand-building adoption.

1. **General lack of awareness and knowledge of branding:** SME owners often have partial, or no knowledge of what brand building is and are sometimes unaware of the value that can be derivable from brand-building strategies (Gundala et al., 2014, Horan et al., 2011). According to SMEDAN (2013), the need to have a clearly defined branding framework is not pervasive. When a company does not understand the role of branding in their business, it leads to a lack of understanding of articulating its target audience and message; when a company is unable to transmit the right message to its target audience, it can make the business unsuccessful (Daud & Ghani, 2013).
2. **Lack of skills and knowledge of branding:** Another major challenge facing MSMEs is the non-availability of the right marketing or branding skills to deploy in their businesses, given the importance attributed to the impact of brand building on business performance (Odoom et al., 2017). Such a gap can stunt the growth of such organisations that are incapable of conducting key initiatives like Research and Development, identifying new markets, and innovating on new products (Mishra et al., 2018). Among SME owners/managers, it was said that there was a low appreciation of what branding is and the branding concept was not quite pervasive in usage, which is evident in the lack of attention being paid to what the brands stand for (Krake, 2005; Merrilees, 2007). The lack of know-how and experience in branding are some of the reasons adduced for the non-adoption of branding strategies by SMEs (Horan et al., 2011).
3. **Budget restriction:** A common challenge prevalent with MSME businesses in their adoption of brand-building strategy is said to be budget availability and limitation (Horan et al., 2011; Keller, 2003). Budgetary issues are a key driver for the adoption of brand-building strategies as business owners primarily restrict branding due to unavailability of funds, they limit funding

also due to a lack of knowledge on the application of branding and a perception that branding is not required. They want to save money for important things. (Berthon et al., 2008; Neuvonen, 2016). On the contrary, though, Centeno et al. (2013) in a study of the five phases of SME brand building concluded that some owners did not see lack of finances as a challenge or barrier to their growth but rather as a way of improving their creativity on how they deploy brand building strategies through innovation.

4. **Resource constraints:** MSMEs are more likely to face challenges of resources of time, skills/capabilities, human capability and general terms. This makes the owner-managers focus their attention on what they believe is essential and important as branding is often seen as inconsequential (Berthon et al., 2008; Centeno et al., 2013; Hirvonen et al., 2013; Huang and Brown, 1999; Neuvonen, 2016;). In circumstances where SME owners recognise the importance of branding, they still find it challenging to commit time and money resources to the current situation. They end up postponing implementation which may be related to their unstructured way of working (Horan et al., 2011).
5. **Pressure of everyday decisions vs strategic more important decisions:** MSMEs are faced with daily pressures for survival (Neuvonen, 2016), it is more practical for them to prioritise selling over the need to do branding to keep the business sustaining (Krake, 2005). These pressures place the burden on SMEs to give their attention to short-term business strategies, which makes them de-prioritise a long-term branding strategy (Spence & Hamzaoui-Essoussi, 2010) and procrastinate the deployment of branding strategies in the future (Horan et al., 2011; Ojasalo et al., 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2005).

Having reviewed available literature on the challenges being faced by MSME businesses in adopting brand-building strategies, it will be exigent to further understand how these challenges

play out within the context of sectors and the local sphere of this study. In reviewing the study conducted by Reijonen (2010) of 106 SMEs, a key takeaway is that there were differences in how marketing and branding were carried out by sector and by business size, especially among MSME businesses.

It can be inferred that as such, the challenges may vary by sector, location, and business size (Kiliç, & Özdemir, 2016). Given the above and the fact that most of the literature available was on MSME businesses in Asia, India and Europe, the need for further studies to confirm the applicability of these challenges to MSME businesses in Nigeria is required.

Challenges on the failure rate of MSME businesses

MSME businesses experience failure in the first few years of existence. Despite the potential identified as possible through this sector, they are still unfortunately unable to achieve the possible potential. The failure rate of MSME businesses in South Africa is said to be in the range of 70% and 80% (Asah et al., 2015; Olawale and Garwe, 2010), with the first year being more significantly high at 70% failure rate (Rabie et al., 2016). The same is said to occur in Kenya where the failure rate is equally a challenge at 70% within the first three years of operation (Douglas et al., 2017).

Nigeria does not fare better as 80% of SMEs do not survive beyond 5 years (Aminu et al., 2015; Ibiwoye et al., 2020), while Asikhia and Naidoo (2020) refer to the failure rate as 85% due to inadequate knowledge of the market landscape. This position was aligned with the small and medium-scale Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria studies (SMEDAN, 2012; SMEDAN, 2017). The challenges faced by SMEs leading to their failure are given as related to the unfavourable business climate and how government policies affect their operations.

The low survival rate of SMEs in Nigeria, with most not surviving their first five years of commencement, is said to be related to the various commonly known issues plaguing SMEs (Eniola et al., 2015). In a study of 15 business owners who closed their businesses in the past 4 years, 64% failed because the owners did not prioritise the importance of promoting their businesses (Okoro et al., 2020).

Summary

The study under review hinges on the adoption of brand building as a strategy for MSMEs and understanding the challenges that MSMEs face in the operations that prevent or limit them from adopting brand building.

The MSME landscape is quite complex with no uniformity of definitions. The definition varies across countries and agencies based on policy focus, the commonly used classification is that which is based on the number of employees or their business turnover (Etuk, 2014; Mansour et al., 2018; SMEDAN, 2013). The importance of SMEs to the economy of most countries has been well documented and reviewed (Adebisi and Bakare, 2019; Mansour et al., 2018), they account for a large number of companies in an economy (Beck, 2005; Berthon et al., 2008) and contribute significantly to the GDP of developing countries (Odoom et al., 2016); Ghana 70% GDP and 92% of businesses, 60% GDP and half of the workforce in Zimbabwe, 80% GDP and 99% of non-agricultural businesses in Egypt and 34% GDP and 91% of businesses in South Africa (Abor and Quartey, 2010; Awiagah et al., 2015; Bary, 2019; Mansour et al., 2018). They are major contributors to employment (Asah et al., 2015; Xie et al., 2013). The relevance and importance of this sector of the economy make them an interesting and important subject of research (Abdullahi and Sulaiman, 2015; Al-Tit, 2019; Fatoki, 2011; Hyder and Lussier, 2016; Prenaj and Ismajli,

2018; Tehseen et al., 2019). The role and contribution of MSMEs are even more pronounced for Africa in general and Nigeria in particular as developing nations, due to the dearth of infrastructures and basic amenities relevant to the survival of the MSME sector (Adebisi and Bakare, 2019; Bary, 2019;).

As important as MSMEs are to the economy, they are often faced with a myriad of problems that limit their ability to fully be the growth engine of their countries (Abdullahi and Sulaiman, 2015; Mansour et al., 2018; Tehseen et al., 2019). Specific to Nigeria, which is the country under study, the performance of the MSME sector is sub-optimal with operations largely being informal. It is summarised that some of the challenges facing MSMEs in Nigeria are infrastructural deficiency, financial issues, operational issues, access to the market and understanding of the targets, the competence of the owner and lack of experience amongst some other issues (Etuk, 2014; Mukhtar, 2013; SMEDAN, 2013).

The literature reviewed provided a more in-depth appraisal of SMEs in developed countries but the same cannot be said of available literature in developing countries, especially in Nigeria. This literature gap is one of the areas that this research will address in providing specific data that applies to Nigeria. Available literature points to the benefits derivable for the effective functioning of the MSME sector that have been recognised by the government as well as developmental agencies; the question to ask is how MSMEs can overcome some of the challenges limiting them from achieving their optimal capacity. This is where brand building comes in. Literature has identified and emphasised the value that the adoption of brand building brings to MSMEs (Agostini et al., 2015; Berthon et al., 2008; Hirvonen et al., 2013; Merrilees et al., 2011).

Within the MSME construct, business owners are crucial to the operations and the decisions undertaken in the business. Oftentimes, the personality of the business owner is engraved

in the business as they bear their character to the business (Mitchell et al., 2015; Renton et al., 2016; Spence and Essoussi, 2010). Considering the importance of the role of the business owner, the choice of strategy and execution is mostly determined by them without much of a delegation to other staff members. The personality of the owners permeates into the strategy and operations because of their values and personality. (Centeno et al., 2019).

In the consideration of brand building, understanding what brands are is imperative, which is described as a combination of tangible and intangible attributes which confers a reputation, awareness, and visibility of a product (Ahmad et al., 2012). The process of branding involves creating a differentiated product through the design of what the brand stands for, its visual identity, and its positioning and forming an impression in the minds of consumers in a way that shapes their perception to decide on choices of competing brands based on benefits and brand attributes (Keller, 2003; Odoom, 2016). The process of brand building is not a one-off but a continuous process that leads to competitive advantage (Abimbola, 2001; Merrilees et al., 2011). For some time, there was a widely held belief that branding was only applicable to large corporations and multinationals and either varied or not applicable to SMEs (Berthon et al., 2008; Spence and Essoussi, 2010). The applicability of branding to MSMEs has gathered momentum and it is submitted that branding is relevant and beneficial to MSMEs as much as it does to multinationals (Agostini et al., 2015; Centeno et al., 2013; Odoom et al., 2017; Wong and Merrilees, 2008). Even though previous strategies have been focused on branding for large companies (Odoom, 2017; Vidic and Vadjnal, 2013), there is confirmation that branding can also work for MSMEs, if creativity is deployed (Berthon et al., 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2005).

Attention was called to the field of MSME branding by Abimbola (2001), who stated that SMEs can benefit from brand building too (Berthon et al., 2008; Mowles and Merrilees, 2005),

which was further expanded. Even though there have been more studies in this area, there is still a gap in the field of SME branding as it is said to be sparse literature (Neuvonen, 2016; Odoom et al., 2017; Odoom and Mensah, 2018; Vidic and Vadjal, 2013). The concept of brand orientation was championed by Urde (1993), and it has subsequently gained traction from several researchers (Hirvonen et al., 2013; Hirvonen and Laukkanen, 2014; Renton et al., 2016; Wong and Merrilees, 2005).

Brand orientation has been described as the positioning of the brand at the heart of the organisation, with the business strategy driven by what the brand entails, thinking from inside to outside (Evans et al., 2012; Hodge et al., 2018; Urde 1999, Urde et al., 2013).

Wong and Merrilees (2005) in their four constructs of brand orientation describe 4 components of brand orientation and the resulting 3 archetypes - minimalist, embryonic and integrated brand orientations, recognising the differences in the level adoption of brand orientation. The study carried out by Odoom (2016) on 430 SMEs with the theory of brand-building efforts and performance of SMEs by Keller (2013) as a base confirms that SMEs' scale of branding varies across firms and correlates to the business performance of such companies (Odoom, 2016). The higher the level of brand orientation, the more distinctiveness achieved by such a business (Renton et al., 2015). The criticism of this theory is that it was limited to only 8 firms, a qualitative study that cannot be generalised.

Another model reviewed is Centeno et al. (2013) five phases of SME brand building, which articulates the stages involved in creating brand identity elements and the development of brand identity elements. Keller (2013) suggested four processes for brand-building involving design and implementation. Reijonen *et al.* (2012) identified that SMEs that had a good performance were those that adopted market and brand orientation compared to those that did not. Another theory

reviewed on brand management was Krake (2005), who designed a framework for managing SME brands successfully.

To further the research objectives, it is necessary to understand how SMEs are currently executing brand building in their organisations, the benefits that accrue from executing branding and the challenges that business owners encounter that may limit them from adopting brand building.

The role of MSME owners in decision-making has been widely reviewed in addition to their impact arising from decisions made about brand-building adoption (Centeno et al., 2013; Horan et al., 2011; Krake, 2005). The importance of the owners in making brand management decisions and input in marketing decisions was called out as critical (Centeno et al., 2013; Horan et al., 2011; Krake, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2015; Neuvonen, 2016).

Previous knowledge, experience, and expertise of brand owners in marketing or brand building feed into strategy adoption. The knowledge of owner-managers is largely limited to brand-building strategies, due to the weak base of their experience and competence and there is often an assumption that marketing activities are the same as branding (Banerjee and Dasgupta, 2009; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). SME owners are often laden with every task of the business (Berthon et al., 2008) which does not allow them to have specialised skills and competence in branding matters.

Some business owners limit their awareness of what branding is to just symbols like a logo, but branding is deeper than just a logo (Hodge et al., 2018). Previous studies point to a lack of awareness and brand knowledge as impediments to the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners (Horan et al., 2011; Lekhanya, 2010; Radipere and Van Scheers, 2005; Van Scheers, 2011). The cruciality of know-how, awareness, and knowledge of branding impacts the

ability of the owner to deploy a branding strategy even in the face of militating factors (Centeno, 2013; Frese and Gielnik, 2014).

Given the knowledge and awareness of branding, the attitudes of owners differ. This can be related to the model of brand orientation by Wong and Merrilees (2005) which discusses the brand orientation archetype and emphasises the ascending level of branding adoption in addition to their execution of marketing activities. Business owners execute marketing based on their needs and situation (Carson & Gilmore, 2000) and as such, their attitude toward branding is mostly intuitive, their actions are mostly experimental, unstructured, and haphazard (Centeno et al., 2013; Centeno et al., 2019; Neuvonen, 2016; Ojasona, 2008; Reijonen, 2010; Tavares, 2015;).

The literature on the motivation of the MSME business owner emphasises the importance of the business owner, as motivation is a critical requirement in decision-making (Hashim et al., 2018; Marn et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2008). The goal of the owner drives the motivation, while motivation itself is the intention to act (Ncube & Zondo, 2018). Acting on motivation to adopt branding drives growth and performance. It is stated that the motivation amongst entrepreneurs varies across geographies based on differences in culture, exposure, and outlook (Gabrielsson & Politis, 2011), though this point was countered by Ncube and Zondo (2018). It will be imperative to confirm this perspective in the study.

The constraints that owners face make branding a short-term view rather than a strategic decision, hence putting it on the back burner (Spence & Hamzaoui Essoussi, 2010); when they are faced with these challenges, they focus on activities they believe will deliver the greatest benefit (Carson & Gilmore, 2000). Most SMEs are in survival mode, struggling to move the business a day at a time (Berthon et al., 2008; Reijonen, 2010). The attitude of SME owners is remarkably diverse as they differ in structure and operations; their level of brand knowledge is varied and

depends on prior experience and knowledge. The attitude of the owner-managers changes as their skills and awareness evolve. This aligns with the submission of Centeno et al. (2012) in the theory of the 5 phases of brand building, which identifies a hiatus between one phase of the process and ascribes that to a period of error and a period of learning over time ((Berthon, et al., 2008). Some SMEs still have the belief that branding is for big organisations (Berthon et al., 2008; Krake 2005; Merrilees, 2007; Wong and Merrilees 2005), though literature has debunked this perspective (Wong & Merrilees, 2005). The personal value of the business owner comes into play in their attitude towards branding. Owners are more inclined to identify with any decisions that will align with their values (Muhonen et al., 2017).

As indicated, MSMEs have a mixed attitude towards branding strategy, even in the face of obvious limitations and challenges, some owners still proceed to embrace brand building (Berthon et al., 2008). The challenges faced by owners are a major factor that limits their performance and growth, whether internal or external factors (Hirvonen et al., 2013; Singh et al., 2019). The lack of knowledge of branding has been identified as a challenge when considering that the owner is the major decision player in the firm, knowledge helps in processing information and limited knowledge and awareness implies that they may not consider branding strategy in their operations (Centeno et al., 2019). Funding is another challenge, with multiple areas to deploy money to, it becomes a constraint to prioritise branding.

Some considerations were occasioned because of the review of the literature under this study. There are divergent views on the possibility of SMEs being brand oriented because of their characteristics of unpredictability, the informal structure, and the constraint that they face in their operations, it seemed only fair that they pay attention to the daily operations only (Neuvonen, 2016; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). Owners' attitudes can be a function of how they perceive the

benefit that brand building offers them, which will affect their adoption decision. Another point to consider is whether the choice of brand strategy is a function of the location and industry under consideration.

The major criticism of most of the literature reviewed was that it centred majorly on the developed countries like Australia, Europe, and Asia (Berthon, 2008; Merrilees, 2007; Merrilees et al., 2011; Mowle and Merrilees, 2005; Wong and Merrilees, 2005; Wong and Merrilees, 2008;) with few emanating from the developing countries (Odoom, 2016). The admissibility and generalisation of these in developing countries are being questioned, as it would be necessary to validate whether the effectiveness of brand orientation is environmental or industry-dependent (Hirvonen et al., 2013; Mann and Kaur, 2013; Wong and Merrilees, 2008).

Some of the previous studies and theories were criticised based on generalisation; due to the qualitative nature of the study and the limited number of respondents (Wong & Merrilees, 2005). It is said that there is no universally accepted framework for SME branding in all settings (Odoom, 2016; Odoom et al., 2017). It is imperative to confirm or refute these assertions.

Branding Equity, Identity and Brand Association

Brand equity refers to the unique impact that company awareness effects on how people respond to a brand's campaign. The strength of equity that a brand acquires is derived from what people have learnt, experienced, and been told about the brand over time due to their experiences (Huang & Cai, 2015).

How consumers choose products has become increasingly diverse as the complexity of the environment and culture intensifies. There are several strategies available to be executed by a firm, however, a good strategy involves the creation of unique experiences through the quality of service. A critical element that the determination of the strength of the firm's association with the

brand is one of the essential brand strategies used by the company manufacturing the product or providing the service. Different brands offer a variety of services, and the performance of the business will influence the consumer's assessment (Buil et al., 2014).

A strong brand can give a variety of marketing benefits while also increasing a company's overall competitiveness. A powerful brand has a strong value in the sense that customers have a higher level of engagement in marketing activity when there is brand recognition, as opposed to lower brand recognition. When the brand is recognised, there is a favourable customer connection to marketing campaigns, as opposed to a non-recognizable brand (Harcourt & Gladson-Nwokah, 2020).

In the case of powerful brands, personal association with such a brand is the exclusive distinctive behaviour, which results in a specific brand connection characterized by attitudinal attachment, brand connection, and customers' active buy-in (Ong et. al., 2016). These connections are made possible by the expressions that the brand offers consumers who have an affinity to its ideas and image, driven by a strong relationship with the brand. When it comes to brand recognition, consumers' perceptions differ, which has implications for their responses to marketing campaigns. As a result, the development and administration of brand identity are essential components of a successful brand-building process (Harcourt & Ikegwuru, 2018).

Agostini et al. (2015) posited that a visionary management approach should be used to lay the groundwork for strategic brand expansion. They averred that the brand recognition approach directs brand commitments and ensures the continuity of marketing activities for a period. Brand identity strategy should relate to definite and restricted core values which complement company values and culture. Business owners/Entrepreneurs are creative individuals who act as the focal point for brand development and identity building in MSME business enterprises. The necessity

of a clear association between the person of the business owner and the brand is highlighted by knowing that the business owner is the brand's incarnation and defines the identity (Agostini et al., 2015).

Brand value is a scaling of how much the worth of a product increase when there is a relationship with a brand entity plus the connotations that go with it (Hirvonen et al., 2013). Brand value can be expressed in a variety of ways, including consumer awareness of the brand, its strength, and its unique connotations, among other things.

Brand identity is the first stage in generating brand equity. This is brought about by a distinct group of connections that a company desires to establish or keep. An abundance of research has demonstrated the importance of brand associations, illustrating how they can have a positive impact on customer decision-making, choices, and intent to buy, inclusive of the acceptability of product extensions (Agostini et al., 2015; Odoom, 2016; Mann and Kaur, 2013) brand association, relates to the consumer needs which can be described as practical (fixing issues connected to consumption) or emotional which defines their need beyond the physical attributes derived from a brand (consumer's desire for self-improvement, belonging to a group of people, and so on). As such, you find that emotional values are more differentiated than functional values in terms of meaning and connection (Juntunen, 2014),

Hirvonen et al. (2013) asserted that customers form beliefs about brands not only through primary brand connections, it also because of other forms of connections (like the originating countries of the brands, the company's distinction, the anchor person's character, or surrounding activities) to the degree that the brand can leverage these secondary associations. It was noted that connections are equally important in the development of brand equity in MSME business. As with big corporations, these linkages should be symbolic not just of customer requirements, but also of

the entrepreneur's personal qualities and characteristics. Because entrepreneurs are the major transmitters of a brand's identity, it is imperative to have a significant level of consistency between their projected character in addition to the connotations associated with the brand. Therefore, entrepreneurs must cultivate their public image in the same way that CEOs of large corporations do. SMEs are also advised to choose a few product attributes to serve as the brand's core relationship rather than a combination of features.

As with big organisations, both emotional and functional values, as well as their interrelation, can be incorporated into a single system of values. Thus, affiliations in SMEs are more closely tied to the entrepreneur than they are in large organisations, where affiliations are built on the backs of consumer research to satisfy latent needs (Gundala & Khawaja, 2014). Odoom et al. (2017) noted that brand value can be calculated if it can be quantified. It was observed that there has been a plethora of strategies developed to accomplish this in large organisations. However, this does not apply to situations in SMEs, which have inside structures that exhibit more collaboration and are informal. There are no objective criteria to assess and compare brand recognition in SMEs, and even fewer criteria to assess and compare brand awareness in large corporations. When it comes to brand management, examining the effectiveness of prior initiatives is a distinguishing trait between SMEs and large organisations. For MSMEs, evaluating brand activities can be difficult (Odoom et al., 2017).

In the case of limited liability corporations, consolidated marketing messaging is a key aspect of their overall brand value plan. To build brand visibility and a strong image of the brand, effective communications must be used in conjunction with other marketing efforts. This results in differentiated responses, which in turn contribute to the development of brand knowledge, which in turn results in the development of brand equity (Hankinson, 2012).

According to Urde et al. (2013), communications can only result in significant brand equity when brand identities are tightly integrated into a company's total marketing plans, which include decisions about product pricing and distribution as well as advertising, promotion, and other marketing activities. They stated that brand-conscious businesses will be more proficient at integrating their marketing messaging into their whole business strategy than their competitors. Businesses that are born in another country sometimes are deprived of the resources essential for holistic marketing and promotion, opting instead to distinguish themselves via product change/transformation. additional marketing facets include innovative marketing strategies that increase brand visibility and credence. Other value may result through a single or a combination of events, such as brand development, packing, placements, sales, advertising, and customer experience.

Hirvonen et al. (2013) submitted that the search for a brand identity serves as the jumping-off point for brand-building activities. They asserted that for entrepreneurs, the most successful method of determining brand identity is to align the company's brand identity with their own beliefs by communicating a message about the personal values of SME owners and converting them to corporate value. For MSMEs, brand management is critical, with an internal passion for the brand and an active role for the entrepreneur. It is the distinct collection of brand connotations that helps a company establish a relationship with its intended audience which is known as brand identity. These connections are valuable because of the benefits they provide in terms of functionality, emotion, or expression. The brand is more than just a physical object; it is also a set of other key relationship features that distinguish it from the competition. The impact on organisational performance will be beneficial if the brand identity is defined by the owners' norms

and beliefs. The company's output will be improved because of the establishment of a strong brand identity.

Mitchell et al. (2012) observed that numerous MSMEs operate inefficiently and ineffectively regularly. This is a result of a lack of business knowledge among their employees. Marketing functions as a key aspect of operational capability. By showcasing their products to the customer, SMEs are enabled to generate revenue. Conventional marketing, which relies on older methods of promoting products and services, has declined in popularity in recent years. Organisations and businesses typically gain more from utilising digital platforms to advertise their brand offerings and services rendered to clients. Social media, the internet, smartphone applications, and a variety of other digital communication platforms have all become indispensable in today's world. People across the world are well connected via the internet. With a total global population of 4.66 billion people using the internet daily, the internet accounts for 59 per cent of the entire population (Statista, 2020).

According to Baldinger et al. (2013), MSME have a higher vulnerability to losing market share than large corporations. MSME branding requires agility, speed, versatility, and being intense on the important requirements of converting the vision of the business owner into a brand identity that will stand the test of time. While MSME recognise that having a strong brand is critical for success, they rarely include brand management in their daily operations. MSME prioritise their offerings as well as implement a marketing strategy that places a higher priority on high turnover over the long-term goal of brand awareness.

For businesses, brands have evolved into an inextricably linked component of their value, a significant strategic asset and one of the most important success factors, with an impact on every strategic and investment decision.

In contrast to product measures, operations metrics are by far concerned with the assets expended on the building of brands: the funds expended, the capability employed, the choice and integration of target audiences, the governance and inclusion of branding personnel, both inside and outside the company, the interlinking of personalised campaigns and creative expressions adopted for every component of the promotional campaign deployed, the utilisation and governance of brand-related databases, as well as the geographical integration of the brand. Product measures are more concerned with the resources expended on product development (Sedaghat & Moakher, 2012).

As proposed by Hodge et al. (2011), creating a primary identity serves as a focal point for both purchasers and the company itself. The expanded identity consists of the entire components of brand identification that are not included in the core identity, such as logos and slogans. Inextricably connected to the essence of the brand (or company), the product cannot be separated from it.

For active communication, the brand position statement highlights and prioritises components of the company's identity that are important to the company (s). When communicating with external stakeholders and/or employees, the brand position statement conveys how the company wants to be viewed. An effective brand position statement, according to Aaker (2011), should demonstrate a competitive advantage while also reflecting current communication objectives. Every touchpoint of connection between the stakeholders of the brand and the brand itself, encompassing product configuration, emerging product development, and expansion and placement strategy, is required to be addressed in communications. Additionally, internal branding should be applied by communicating the brand's essential ideas and identity to all members of the organisation's personnel.

The brand identity encompasses the brand's entity and functionality, in addition to employees, innovation, communication, brand character, culture, social capital, and pedigree. A company's vision and capabilities can be brought together using these resources, which can then be used to transform the brand into an attraction tool capable of intellectually and emotionally connecting with potential customers. It is feasible to boost communication efficacy and support long-term brand development operations by employing brand assets as the primary source of inspiration for brand development strategies. The communication here concerns marketing communication, which is described as a firm's effort to educate, communicate, excite, and be a constant reminder to the purchasers of what the brand offers, either directly or indirectly, to customers.

It serves as the 'tone' of the organisation as well as that of its brands. For Keller (2009), eight fundamental types of marketing exist, these are classified into events and experiences, advertising and promotion, public relations, direct marketing, experiential marketing: word-of-mouth marketing and personal selling.

These types of marketing aid the development of brand value by imprinting memories and developing distinct brand personalities in the marketplace. There will be improved sales which will have an impact on the value of the company's stock. However, marketing communication is associated with financial resources, and its execution expends time and effort as well as high costs. Due to this, most firms choose to restrict their use of communication methods. Therefore, the company must develop its brand within certain marketing communication spaces to communicate its messaging (Keller, 2009), and it must consider the availability of resources to execute the appropriate forms, which may include micro, small business and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

Research provides answers to questions when it is applied to a scientific process. Every research process has its purpose and objectives which it aims to uncover through the application of research. According to Pandey and Pandey (2015), the research aims to have familiarity with a phenomenon to derive new insight from it, to explore objects in view, and to have the ability to describe the attributes of a particular thing, person, or group, and to ascertain the relationship between variables. For any research, the major objective is to ascertain the reality and facts which have not been unravelled (Mishra & Alok, 2017).

There are different types of research available depending on the aims and objectives of the researcher. Descriptive research is a survey that explains the circumstances as it is, where the researcher only reports what is happening or what has already occurred. In descriptive, surveys, comparative and correlation methods are deployed. Another type is analytical research, where facts and data that exist are analysed. Other types are applied research where solutions are sought for practical problems that are encountered by individuals or society while fundamental research looks for information that can be applied to an existing body of knowledge. Quantitative research involves a focus on non-numerical data (Mishra & Alok, 2017).

The research process is very important to achieve the objectives set out for the study. That is why the researcher should take adequate care to ensure that the right criteria are set up and followed throughout the procedure. The researcher should state clearly the purpose for which the research work is being undertaken, and the procedure to be used should be indicated to achieve the objectives set forth; this may become useful for another researcher who may wish to repeat the process.

The researcher here focuses on the MSME sector in Nigeria with particular emphasis on Lagos State. The aim is to undertake this research study by looking at various aspects of the business owner, related to motivation, attitude, perception, and knowledge of brand building and how this drives their relationship to how they relate with brand building adoption. The key focus is on how they currently execute brand building strategies, their awareness and knowledge of brand building, their attitudes, and motivations and to ascertain the challenges being faced in adopting brand building strategies.

This chapter will focus on discussions related to the research methodology; research methodology is the path taken by researchers to undertake a research study; from the problem formulation, research objectives, research design; a process of data collection, analysis, and results. The methodology chapter gives insights into the outcome of the study to meet the research objectives (Kassau, 2019). Research methodology does not offer solutions and varies from research methods. The methodology provides the framework to discern what method is appropriate for a certain case and details how a research study should be done. The methodology describes the process by which research is carried out while the method describes the way or the format of data collection or how the result should be analysed (Igwenagu, 2016).

This chapter begins with a recap of the purpose statement and research questions. This chapter discusses the research methods that were used in the research process, the researcher identifies the research strategy adopted, describes the research design and the reason for the choice, and the methodology discusses the data collection method and the justification for the choice. The sources of data are mentioned as primary data, which is the data that will come from this undertaken study, and secondary sources, comprising the other data from literature and journals or publications. The instrument used was discussed, particularly the need for the development of the research instrument with an emphasis on piloting the instrument to test for validity and reliability. The population of the study is discussed in detail highlighting the description and demography of the sample, information on the respondents provided, the criteria for inclusion, who they are, and how they were sampled. The process to determine the sample of respondents of the research is detailed, starting from the qualifications and characteristics of the respondent, the choice of the appropriate sample to select to avoid errors was discussed, much of which is scientific and statistically defined rather than a thumb-up decision. The process of developing the instrument utilised necessitated a self-developed questionnaire rather than using an existing instrument. The technique for the analysis of data is discussed.

This chapter discusses ethical issues that might arise during the research study, highlighting that prior approval was received from the ethics committee to proceed with the study. The importance of applying an ethical lens throughout the research process was identified right from data collection to analysis and reporting, and the role of the researcher was called out to ensure that this process did not fail. This chapter covers the definition of the variables of the study, data analysis techniques and statistical tests for the study were discussed and the use of SPSS software for data analysis was mentioned. The reliability and validity analysis of the research instrument

and how it was adequate in answering the research questions, ethical consideration, and reporting of results were considered.

As such, the purpose of this methodology is to satisfactorily answer the research questions and resolve the research problem and achieve the research objectives.

Research Problem Statement

In formulating a research problem, it is important to have a good understanding of the problem from a systemic point of view and then reframe this from an analytical perspective. The research problem under review here was reviewed with the project supervisor who is more experienced in the research field (Mishra & Alok, 2017).

To define a problem is to point attention or to drive attention to the core of the problem. It is important to define the need for a problem as it sets the direction for the study, the problem determines the procedure to be adopted for the study and helps the researcher to control his/her bias in the study. The problem identification gives an understanding of the variables that should be studied and makes the study practicable to undertake (Nayak & Singh, 2015).

It is imperative to identify the challenges faced by MSME business owners and bring them to a point of deriving value from the adoption of branding. Having a robust brand-building orientation in the deployment of business strategy (Urde, 1994) demonstrates the role played by MSME -business owners/managers who want to achieve growth in the market environment.

Research Purpose Statement

This study would aim to understand the current level of adoption of brand building by MSME business owners and the role that brand building has played in the operations of the businesses, it will also highlight the challenges faced by MSME businesses in Nigeria concerning building their brands and identify and propose strategies and tactics that can be adopted in

overcoming the problem. The purpose of this study is to understand the challenges faced by MSME business owners in adopting brand-building strategies as part of their business process.

Research Approach and Design

The two most common research approaches are quantitative and qualitative approaches, though the use of the mixed method through triangulation is becoming more prominent among researchers (Johnson et al., 2001). As such for the three research methods, the type of data required to answer the research question is the main determinant in the choice of which approach to adopt (William, 2017).

The choice of method to adopt is important in any study and depends on the nature of the phenomena under consideration; the choice of method should be determined by the research questions to be answered; as the research approach choice contributes to the success of the study (Basias and Pollaris, 2018; Kelle, 2006; McClunie-Trust, 2018; Tobi and Kampen, 2018). Another determinant of the choice of method is the number of cases under study. A large number necessitates the use of quantitative while a low number of cases will imply the use of qualitative methods (Stichler, 2016); though this can be challenged as the number of cases may not implicitly dictate the choice of methods but other factors like time and resources and the need to apply a localist perspective (Qu & Dumay, 2011). It is imperative to discuss the three research methods to provide context as to the decision to adopt a particular research method in this research.

The use of quantitative research is a process of testing theories through a review of relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative approach supports the implicit and explicit, especially for researchers comfortable with numbers and depicts the relationship among variables (Turner, 2015). The quantitative method provides an objective measure of reality and allows the researcher to explore and better understand how complex a phenomenon is

(Williams, 2017). It involves research conducted in an interpretive format and knowledge acquired through measurement. Quantitative data helps to facilitate objective results, and it can layer up a study with information previously known and unknown (Lynch et al., 2017).

The qualitative approach relies on the essence to capture life as lived, which requires watching people in their natural setting and interacting with them in their natural environment (Abusabha & Woelfel, 2003). Qualitative research seems more appropriate for research into new areas and answers questions like what, how, and where (Basias & Pollaris, 2018). It provides an in-depth perspective of the phenomena and goes beyond the correlation of variables that the quantitative approach offers (Johnson et al., 2001).

The third type of research approach is mixed methods, which involves combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches when a single approach does not achieve the objective (Yin, 2012). Given that both the qualitative and quantitative methods have limitations as well as their strengths; proponents of the mixed methods recommend the combination of both methods to compensate for any gaps (Kelle, 2006). The fusion of the two opposing methodologies aims to highlight the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both (Williams, 2017) while bringing out the benefit and value of aligning objectivity with in-depth research (Abusabha & Woelfel, 2003). The mixed-methods approach offers researchers the opportunity to design a single research study that answers questions on the complexity of a phenomenon and how measurable variables can be related (Williams, 2017). By combining quantitative and qualitative data sources from standardised questionnaires, in addition to open-ended qualitative interviews, variances can be eliminated (Kelle, 2006). In mixed-method research, the qualitative and quantitative parts cannot substitute themselves as they have their roles to play; quantitative research helps to reach a large

heterogeneous group, while qualitative provides context and understanding to actions (Kelle, 2006).

In comparing the merits and demerits of using any of the three research methods; the qualitative method is said to breed trust with respondents, as they are most willing to engage with the researchers in a familiar environment versus the quantitative method. Qualitative allows for narratives, as interviewers can probe deeply and interact with the respondents, it is flexible and allows for interaction (Kelle, 2006). However, a downside of the qualitative method is that it does not make room for generalisations due to the lack of representativeness of the studies.

The proponents of the quantitative method describe it as objective, non-biased, quantifiable, and not influenced by personal feelings or opinions and the data are comparable (Basias & Pollaris, 2018) while the demerits are highlighted as being limited in nature and not in touch with reality. It is said that human experiences cannot be quantified in numbers or by manipulating variables, which is brought about by restricting answers to closed-ended questions. (Abusabha and Woefel, 2003; Kelle, 2006). Furthermore, it is said that the quantitative method using variables has some flaws as it measures changes and not the cause of those changes (Hasan, 2014).

In some respect, there could be a problem concerning the understanding given to the meaning of words or phrases used in a questionnaire, even when such questionnaires have been well constructed, the survey may return invalid responses or a misleading view of the respondents interpret it differently than originally intended (Kelle, 2006). It appears that the mixed method enriches the picture, providing a check of one method over another (Greener, 2008). The mixed method allows for cross-validation of data; and the ability to add objective and subjective perceptions. Using both methods eliminates weaknesses from both (Abusabha & Woefel, 2003).

Combining qualitative research with mixed-method research gives an understanding of some statistical results that were previously not understood. It helps to resolve the validity of quantitative measurement and instruments, while the use of quantitative study in a mixed method helps to confirm the findings from qualitative research; even though the gap here is that sometimes there is a lack of rigour in methodical integration (Onwuegbuzie & Corrigan, 2018). The limitation of transferability and generalisation in small-numbered qualitative research can be overcome if the research is further expanded in large-scale quantitative research; on the flip side, a system of merging qualitative and quantitative methods where quantitative research is first executed, and qualitative research follows to help provide context to some narratives that are missing in the initial quantitative (Kelle, 2006).

The use of the mixed method is not without criticism; though the mixed method is said to help with removing the limitations and weaknesses inherent in the quantitative and qualitative research methods, however, opponents of the mixed method have questioned the necessity of using the method, as no matter the interpretation of evidence of a study, it is not possible to escape subjectivity as you cannot remove the researcher from a study, and the possibility of providing an account of research without a bias of the research is slim; as such the necessity of using a mixed-method can be questioned (Loo, 2011).

Researchers must be able to do a self-criticism of the research approach they have elected to use, which will enable the development of skills and the right application of knowledge of self and others (Qu & Dumay, 2011). As is often the case, 'proponents of each approach are more likely to protect their perspective regarding their choice while highlighting the limitations of another, which results in overlooking the clear weakness of their methodology (Kelle, 2006).

In the case of the study under consideration, where the purpose of the research is to understand the challenges faced by MSME business owners in adopting branding strategies, the adopted approach is the quantitative method. The justification for this choice is driven mainly by the construct and nature of the research questions. The study aims to understand the effect of specific variables (Apuke, 2017) and the relationship between each other, while also aiming to understand some measurable variables. The MSME industry is highly fragmented and heterogenous which will necessitate having respondents across various sectors and business sizes. The use of a quantitative study allows for having a significant number of respondents to ensure a good representation of this population and the use of the quantitative method makes the processing of this large numeric data easier and comparable (Basias and Pollaris, 2018; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2014).

In choosing the quantitative method, consideration was given to the qualitative method and mixed method, but they were not adopted for varying reasons. The use of the qualitative approach has not been adopted due to its inapplicability to the current study. The study involves many cases which is impossible to address using qualitative and the area under study is not particularly new, while the need to study the respondents in their natural environment is not necessary (Basias & Pollaris, 2018).

The quantitative approach provides a more structured approach to data gathering for this study and provides some structure and consistency to business owners in making their responses logical and not subject to ambiguity, it is quick and provides precise numeric data which can be used to see the big picture, and be generalised (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2014). The mixed method is expensive, time-consuming, and requires a significant level of resources that are not available in this research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2014).

While recognising the flaws of using a quantitative approach in this study, such as the possibility of not being able to gain more context as to the peculiarity of the individual business owner; however, given that MSME owners are generally known to be diverse and unstructured, a structured format is better served as it will help the business owners to put into the right context their responses. Concerning gaps relating to the use of language, the questionnaires are designed to use simple and relatable words and phrases (Youngshin, 2015).

Research Design

A research design refers to the structure that details how data will be collected, analysed, and interpreted to answer the research question. It is a framework for planning your research and answering your research questions and it is aimed at providing an appropriate framework for a study. The research design involves setting up a framework for the activities that will take place throughout the research process. This design will put a structure in place to ensure that the research questions can be answered satisfactorily. The choice of the method to be adopted in the research, the operationalisation of the constructs, and setting up the sampling strategy are integral steps within the research design (Nayak & Singh, 2015).

The research design process involves many interrelated decisions (Kassu, 2019; Rezigalla, 2020). It is important to identify the right study design as it is the most important element in determining the methodology of any research study (Omair, 2015; Wushe and Shenje, 2019).

This study will use the quantitative research method and is based on a descriptive research design to understand the awareness, knowledge, motivation, and attitude of MSME business owners to brand building and the challenges faced by MSME business owners in the adoption of brand-building strategies. Descriptive designs simply describe the makeup and characteristics of

the sample that is under consideration (Ivey, 2016), using a descriptive research design allows the researcher to use consistent measurements which is objective and subject to scrutiny (Omair, 2015; Wushe and Shenje, 2019). To have a robust research design, it is important to outline the process for collecting data, the development of the instrument, and the sampling process. In this study, data will be collected using a structured questionnaire that encompasses the variable constructs that will answer the research questions. The instrument will be developed and subjected to a pilot test to test for validity and reliability as the researcher did not find any existing instrument that will fulfil the requirement of the research questions. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the population, stratified sampling is done, through segmenting the population into different strata based on the sector of the economy they belong to and their commonality. This will ensure that the interest of each group is represented and offers a good representation of each stratum and allow for the generalisation of the study. The choice of using stratified sampling is to recognise each group distinctively and to increase the power of the analysis. Then the researcher will apply the probability sampling method, simple random sampling to get actual respondents from each cluster.

Data Collection

When the need to conduct research arises, it is necessary to collect data. Data is the required information needed to investigate a problem and answer research questions. It is therefore mandatory to gather data to be able to achieve research objectives and provide insights. The data required may be primary or secondary data (Mazhar et al., 2021).

Once the research problem has been crafted and the research design has been completed, the need for data collection arises. It may be that the details of the facts are already existing somewhere and are only required to be accessed, or it may require a new set of data to be collected. This decision of what to do will be determined by the researcher.

According to Mazhar et al. (2021), data collection is the step taken to gather, review and do an analysis of research to gain an understanding. The process of data collection is the most significant in the research process as the data will contribute to the strength of the output of the study; the choice of data is dependent on the type of research to be undertaken.

For this study, the researcher decided to use the quantitative research method which will involve numeric data and descriptive data. The researcher will use a combination of primary and secondary data collection. This combination will enrich the study as it offers fresh perspectives from respondents while at the same time offering the opportunity to use pre-existing data to provide context to the study. Respondents who are carefully sourced and whose profile fits the research design will contribute their responses to a set of pre-determined questions; this will be the source of the primary data. Secondary data will be sourced from industry journals, and peer-reviewed scholarly publications on the research topic; these will be retrieved using keywords. The importance of data collection cannot be overemphasised, as it offers a robust basis for good research. When data is collected in an unbiased way, it is very crucial and beneficial (Mazhar et al., 2021).

Primary Data Collection

Primary data is data that is collected by the researcher for the sole quest of answering some research questions, one in which data is collected precisely by the researcher to achieve a certain research purpose; as such it is factual and original. It may be expensive to undertake primary data, and it may necessitate a significant time. It may be that it is the only option available for the researcher (Ajayi, 2017; Salkind, 2010). The collection of primary data can be achieved through the deployment of methods, the most used methods are self-administered:

Observations: This results in the common method when a behavioural study is involved. Different approaches can be adopted, it can be structured or unstructured, controlled or uncontrolled. The observation method necessitates structured planning which requires follow-through and check-ups. This can be done in a natural setting or a laboratory.

Experiments: This is structured research is where the researcher wants to find out the causes, effects, and processes that are in place regarding that process. The researcher oversees the study, and as he leads and conducts the process, he determines what will be the subject under consideration and how they will be treated. While actions are being administered to the subject, the researcher monitors those actions and the corresponding reactions of the subject. This type of study is mostly done within the confines of the laboratory.

Personal Interview: This can be an in-person or telephone interview where a guide is used to ask questions. Interviews may be structured or unstructured. Required to capture the feedback is either a notebook or recording device to ensure that nothing is missing or lost while transmitting the feedback from the respondents.

Surveys/Questionnaire: This involves a set of questions that have already been developed and can be deployed through online or offline means. Online means that they are administered via the web or through emails and they can be accessed from telephones, tablets, or laptops. The offline administration can be through a paper-based question or responses through non-internet-based formats.

Focusing on the questionnaire as a method of collecting primary data, offers the researcher the opportunity to construct the types of questions to be asked (Kassu, 2019). In this study, data collection will be mostly by a closed-ended structured questionnaire. The questionnaire has been designed to have 8 sections in which each respondent is required to answer questions in all 8

sections of the questionnaire. It starts with an introductory part detailing the research objectives are enumerated and the need for the study is indicated by the researcher.

The other sections of the questionnaire comprise the biodata of the respondents (MSME business owners, excluding their name or business name to preserve their confidentiality). Information on the business and questions are detailed along the lines of the various variables in the research questions.

The questioning formats are multi-varied – multiple-choice questions are asked in some instances, and rating questions are used adopting the use of the 5-point Likert scale questioning to explore the awareness, attitude, motivations, perception, and other behaviours of the respondents.

Secondary data collection methods

The secondary data are those collected by other people outside of the researcher; it gives further perspectives to the research area and fills gaps in certain areas (Kassu, 2019). Using secondary data can be beneficial as it is cost-effective and convenient. The availability of good secondary data gives researchers access to a large database of data which is a good opportunity for the researcher. The availability of secondary data can provide data that is representative of a population which can allow for generalisation. Using data that already exists can accelerate the pace of work for the study, thereby advancing the contribution to the body of knowledge (Johnston, 2014). Watchouts for the collection and use of secondary data are that it must align with the conditions of the primary data being gathered. Another limitation of using secondary data is the fact that given that the researcher was not involved in the data collection of that study, there could have been situations that arose which would have limited the output; not knowing the problems

encountered during such studies. This necessitates the need to be careful while checking for secondary data publications, to ensure that a careful examination of the documents is done.

Secondary data can be used in different ways. It can be used on its own with the objective of re-appraising the data with a different research question, it can also be used in combination with other data sets to check for variables' relationships. A third way in which secondary data can be used is that it can be used in combination with primary data collected in a study (Panchenko1 & Samovilova, 2020). In this case, secondary data will be used in conjunction with the primary data to be collected during this study.

In the case of the study under review here, the secondary data documents were sourced through the utilisation of online resources, topic-related books, and scholarly journals that are mostly peer-reviewed from different databases, which provided a rich content of information (Azimi & Saidi-Mehrabad, 2016). The researcher also ensured that secondary materials used are carefully reviewed to be certain that it provides information related to the research questions to be answered and that the objectives are like that of the study being reviewed.

Population and Sample of the Research Study

The population is defined as all people or items that are under a study to be understood, while sampling describes the process by which a part of the population can be selected for investigation (Creswell, 2003). Sampling involves selecting some part of a population to learn or understand something from the population (Xiangrui, n.d.). Sampling involves choosing from the data to gain more knowledge about their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours. There is no best sampling method, however, the choice of a method adopted depends largely on the context and the objectives of the research (Hair, 2003; Palys, 2008). Sampling involves selecting a group from a wider population to determine the characteristics of the population. The sampling process

involves different milestones; knowing the population, determining the sample frame, knowing what sampling method will be deployed, the sample size that is adequate to be representative of the population, executing the sampling, and collecting data (Igwenagu, 2016).

Bearing in mind the fragmented nature of MSME businesses in a cosmopolitan location like Lagos State, it was imperative to work in a structured manner to identify the appropriate population to work with. The classification of MSME have been defined in previous study (SMEDAN & NBS, 2017). To engage businesses that fall into this category, it was important to ensure that the source of data was accurate, trusted, and reliable. The singular most trusted source of MSME data in Nigeria is the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), which has conducted surveys in conjunction with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) to promote and facilitate the growth of MSMEs in Nigeria. The latest study, whose fieldwork was conducted in 2017 is the most up-to-date publication on MSMEs in Nigeria.

As such, this report and the database formed the basis for the population of this study. The report in the public domain was not adequate to achieve the description of the respondents required for this study; hence the need to engage the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) as gatekeepers of this information, was a logical choice to engage with the respondents. The database of NBS was provided to the researcher. This database was comprehensive and robust, and it captured relevant information on the MSMEs. This database contained the listing of all MSMEs in Lagos State captured in the study undertaken by the National Bureau of Statistics in conjunction with SMEDAN.

According to the research design set up at the beginning of the study, the respondents for this study are MSME business owners who are domiciled in Lagos State; with the inclusion criteria of having been in business for a minimum of 2 years and a staff strength of between 1-10

employees. The low survival rate of SMEs in Nigeria is said to range from 80% to 85% within the first 5 years (Aminu et al., 2015; Eniola et al., 2015; Ibiwoye et al., 2020) was a factor in determining the inclusion criteria for the study. The choice therefore of choosing businesses with a minimum existence of 2 years is driven by the fact that the period would be enough time to have experienced some of the challenges that usually plague MSME businesses. Within this period, they could also have identified the need for adopting brand-building strategies or otherwise. The starting point of a business is the right time to build up a brand platform for the brand in which all other strategies can be built. The researcher believes that this is the minimum number of years of existence required. This of course does not alienate other businesses that are older than 2 years, but only sets 2 years as the minimum basis for inclusion.

A critical point to note from the information available from the NBS study is that MSME businesses can be categorised into two segments. The informal segment and the formal segment. The informal segment comprises those businesses that are migratory; they do not have a permanent fixed address as they move about to the exigencies of business demands and are often limited by regulations that prohibit their set-up in certain areas. The MSMEs that fall under this category are generally income-generating for daily sustenance and they do not have any employees, often being managed by the owners (SMEDAN & NBS, 2017). The second segment is the more formal businesses that have a business name that may either be registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) or not registered, they would have a fixed business address, and they have employees who are being paid wages. Due to this differentiation, it became apparent that the bulk of the national database of MSME businesses which was reported in the SMEDAN and NBS report operates in the informal sector. The focus of this study is on those MSMEs who have a business that fits certain criteria; MSME businesses that are registered in Lagos State, that have been in

operation for a minimum of 2 years, and who have an employee strength of between 1-10. It became apparent that the requirement of this study qualifies to be under the second category of MSMEs businesses, the formal MSMEs. From the database, the total population for this description was 566 business enterprises across 16 sectors of the economy.

This population is appropriate to answer the research questions as they are derived from a carefully reviewed list in the database to include those that fit the inclusion criteria. The sample frame identifies and lists all the MSME businesses within the population, and it is within this frame that an appropriate sample will be drawn (Creswell and Clark, 2007; Hair, 2007). A sample frame is defined as a list that captures the population from which the sample units will be obtained (Igwenagu, 2016).

Considering that the population contains MSMEs across different sectors of the economy, the researcher further undertook to classify the population into sector categories for ease of identification. This is also more important to give this visibility to sectors within the population; to ensure that the eventual sample size to be selected will be representative of the entire population.

Selecting the sample size is deemed an important criterion for the success of the study under consideration and to determine the ideal sample size, it was necessary to conduct a power analysis. Power analysis is used to determine how many respondents are required to answer the research question or null hypothesis (Jones et al., 2003). Having an underpowered and overpowered study can be a problem. Underpowered studies can lead to false negatives, inflated effect size estimates, and lower positive predictive value (Button et al., 2013), while overpowered study wastes resources and can be said to be unethical in certain circumstances (Crandon, 2017).

Hence it is important to have a good sample for the study with a focus to have a sample that is large enough to have sufficient power to detect a meaningful effect. In this study, the power

analysis calculation yielded a result of 234 respondents, upon which the study was conducted. The key components that went into the calculation of the sample size - Margin of error = 5%, Level of significance = 95%, Smallest effect size = 50%

Power of the test calculation = Sample Size = $N / (1 + N * e^2) = 564 / 1 + 564 * 0.0025 = 234$

Stratified sampling is used when there are clusters within a population, in such a situation, it is recommended to sample each of the clusters independently through stratification. Stratification is the process of clustering units of the population into common groups before sampling is done. Each of the created strata would be mutually exclusive: with only one chance of occurring once within the strata and in the overall population. This often improves the representativeness of the sample by reducing sampling error (Igwenagu, 2016).

Researchers rely on stratified sampling when a population's characteristics are diverse, and they want to ensure that every character is accurately represented in the sample. In a stratified sample, researchers divide a population into homogeneous subpopulations called strata based on specific characteristics (e.g., race, gender, location, etc.). With every member of the population being in one stratum, each stratum is sampled using the probability sampling method, simple random sampling, allowing researchers to estimate statistical measures for each sub-population. The characteristic of each stratum is based on the nature of the business and the products or services that they offer. It is believed that business owners operating in each of these categories are doing so under identical conditions. Each business owner can only occupy one subgroup, as such, it is important to do a thorough clustering across the sectors. Given the list of every member of the population, it is important to ensure that there is no overlap across the stratum and that the list is mutually exclusive. Together, each stratum contains the entire population when combined, they make up the entire population for the study. Stratified sampling gives a more accurate

measurement of the variables under study, having lower variance within a subgroup and the entire population (Xiangrui, n.d.)

In this study, the following process is followed in selecting the sample for the study. The population is clearly defined as formal MSME businesses in Lagos State according to available data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Given that the stratified sampling approach has been identified for the study, from the population of the MSME businesses, it was identified that they cut across several sectors. This necessitates the need to cluster the strata by sector groups.

Sample selection was done using a stratified sampling method, dividing the population by sector and subsequently probability sampling of simple random sampling. In the first stage, the entire population of the SME database was stratified into 16 strata based on the common characteristics of the sector and industry that which they belong. These sectors varied from Accommodation and food services, administrative and support services, entertainment/recreation, manufacturing, and wholesale/retail amongst others. This was further reviewed to 14 strata as two strata had only one element which defeats the purpose of random sampling within each stratum. In all, a total of 14 strata were developed from the population. The sample size from each stratum was taken based on the percentage contribution of each sector to the entire population. This percentage was then used in assigning numbers to the sample size by sector. Having done this stratification, respondents are selected based on simple random sampling (Avasthi et al., 2017).

Materials/Instrumentation of Research Tools

Sample size

The random sample size should be adequate to avoid errors or biases. The adequacy of sample size depends on a variety of factors, of importance is the relativity of the absolute sample

size to the population, the objectives of the study, and the analytical tool to be used for the analysis. What is important to recognise is that what qualifies for sample size is the number of obtained responses, and not the number of respondents contacted, which may require enlargement to consider non-responses (Taherdoost, 2016; Taherdoost, 2018). The use of a larger sampling size may reduce the possibility of errors, as it progresses, it appears not to add any value and the return is diminished, and a larger size will be more expensive. The sample size should not be too small as it may lead to a risk where the data is not enough to support the hypotheses, and it may weaken the relationship between variables. There may also be a scenario where objects that could point the research study in a different direction are missed. A larger sample size may be required for a heterogeneous population and a smaller sample size for a homogenous population (Fowler, 2019).

To ascertain the right sample size can be subjected to calculating the size using some statistical formulas. Common formulas could be (i) the traditional/common sense method where researchers choose what they think is right based on the experience of another researcher who has used that successfully in a similar study. (ii). The resource equation is based on an experience that has occurred in the past, especially from agricultural and industrial research. (iii). Power analysis uses a mathematical relationship between variables to calculate the ideal sample size. Mostly 5 variables are provided (standard deviation, the power, significance level, sidedness of test, and effect size) while the 6th, often the sample size is required to be determined (Festing, 2018).

With the population already divided by strata, the selection of samples within each subgroup should be adequate to draw statistical conclusions about each subgroup. In all, a total of 14 industry sector groups and 564 businesses qualified as the population; it is from this group that the sample size was drawn. A total of 234 respondents. Knowing the desired margin of error of

@5% and confidence level of @95%, as well as the power of 80%, using the sample calculator yielded a sample size of 234.

Thereafter, adopted probability random sampling to sample within each subgroup/stratum. Having done this, the randomisation in the two methods adopted will allow for a representative sample within each subgroup.

The details of the respondents are detailed in Table 2 below, across the various sectors of the economy. In all, there are 14 business sectors and 234 business owners that cut across these sectors.

Table 2

List of business sectors of MSME business owners in Lagos State

S/N	SECTOR	INDUSTRIES	SME POPULATION	% CONTRIBUTION/ SECTOR	SAMPLE SIZE
1	Accommodation & Food Services	Short lets, Restaurants, Beverage services	59	10%	24
2	Administrative & Support Services activities	Photocopying, Auxiliary financial services	31	5%	13
3	Agriculture	Poultry, Hunting, Trapping & Related activities	8	1%	3
4	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	Creative, arts and entertainment activities	24	4%	10
5	Construction	Construction of buildings	7	1%	3
6	Education	Pre-primary, Primary & Secondary	60	11%	25
7	Human Health & Social works	Hospital activities	29	5%	12
8	Information & Communication	Motion picture, Satellite telecommunications	22	4%	9
9	Manufacturing	Bakery, Furniture, Food, Printing, Textiles	99	18%	42
10	Other Services activities	Drycleaning, Hairdressing, Contract brokerage	32	6%	13
11	Professional, Scientific & Technical works	Accounting & Book keeping, Legal, Funds	73	13%	30
12	Real Estate activities	Real estate activities with own or leased property	22	4%	9
13	Transportation & Storage	Travel agency, Urban/Suburban transport	11	2%	5
14	Wholesale/Retail Trade	Books, computers, accessories, Equipment	87	15%	36
			564	100%	234

Adapted from Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, Lagos State Data set, 2017

Data Collection Instrument

The use of quantitative research is to determine the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent or outcome variable within a population (Spardling University, n.d.). The

sources of data may be classified into (a) primary sources and (b) secondary sources. Primary sources are sources from which the researcher directly collects data that have not been previously collected. Primary data are first-hand information collected through various methods such as interviewing, mailing, observation, etc. Secondary sources contain data that have been collected and compiled for another purpose. The secondary sources consist of readily available compendia and already compiled statistical statements and reports whose data may be used by researchers for their studies. E.g., census reports, annual reports, and financial reports. Secondary sources consist of not only published records and reports but also unpublished works (Varghese, 2017). Data collection is critical to any research study to be undertaken (Mkandawire, 2019). Instruments can be used for both qualitative and quantitative studies.

The choice of the instrument chosen for any study is based on the research question, types of instruments are survey, test, questionnaire, is the course of action (the process of developing, testing, and using the device). Researchers make use of instruments for the measurement of a study, and it involves the process of designing, collecting, and analysing data (Youngshin, 2015).

Under the quantitative data collection process, instruments are required to measure the variables under consideration. Creswell (2012) describes an instrument as a tool that is required in the measurement and the collection of quantitative data. The instrument will detail the questions to be asked and the possible responses that could occur. Different data collection tools can be deployed in collecting data; these are tests, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observation, and constructed or existing secondary data (Bhandari, 2020). Each of these tools has its strengths and weaknesses. The test is often used in quantitative research to measure the attitude, personality, and aptitude of respondents. The questionnaire is a report data collection instrument that can be completed individually or in groups. In the data collection process, the use of the questionnaire is

said to be the most efficient method, in circumstances where the researcher is fully informed on what needs to be asked (Zikmund, 2000).

In the case of the study under review, the choice of research instrument is the questionnaire. The questionnaire is used to get relevant information most reliably and validly, hence necessitating the need for accuracy and consistency of the survey forms. (Taherdoost, 2016). The questionnaire is valuable in measuring a wide range of characteristics for gathering information from respondents on their attitudes, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, values, perceptions, and personalities. Due to the research problem and the objectives set for this study, the questionnaire is best suited to deliver the data required to answer the research question.

In designing a questionnaire, it is important to follow certain guidelines. The questions and the number of questions should cover the variables under study and the topics; ensuring that the questions are not too bogus to discourage respondents from completing the questionnaires, and questions should not be repeated. The logical flow of the arrangement of questions is important as it allows for a continuous flow of thoughts. Questions should be clear and not ambiguous in their construction, this allows for meaningful responses and prevents differing understanding by respondents, where necessary notes that explain a question should be provided. The researchers must ensure that the questions that are leading would affect the output of the study, which may introduce the researcher's bias into the study (Igwenagu, 2016).

The administration of questionnaires differs, and some methods are one-on-one administration, postal mail, telephone, and web or online administration. Many studies nowadays deploy multiple methods to ensure better results like getting high response rates and accuracy (Rasinski, 2005). Though there are various options to deploy the questionnaire, the chosen method is to do telephone deployment. One fundamental reason for the choice of a telephone questionnaire

is to ensure the quality of data is preserved and to ensure a higher response rate from the respondents. In certain circumstances, when contact information is being provided, some email addresses are likely to be incorrect, some individuals do not have the habit of checking their emails regularly, and some messages go to the spam or junk folder, which collectively reduces the response rate and potential bias (Lefever et al., 2007).

The online administration offers various platforms by which it can be deployed, like Survey Monkey, google forms, and Question Pro amongst others, and it is inexpensive to set up and easy to administer. However, there are some downsides to the use, as the response rate may be low, or there may be non-response, it may often require following up and may take a long time to get sufficient responses from the respondents and the issue of potential bias may arise (Sukamolson, n.d.; Youngshin et al., 2015). The mail-in questionnaire typically has a low response rate of 10-40% and may have a longer return period.

For the calibre of respondents that are being sampled within the MSME enterprises, the telephone administration of the questionnaire offers value as it offers responses from literate and non-literate respondents and offers an opportunity for clarification of ambiguity. Young-shin et al. (2015) state that it is best to adopt a method that will collect the right information, from the right population, using the right method. Questionnaires are presented to the respondents by telephone, leveraging technology, using the computer-assisted Telephone Interview systems program; (in this case SurveyToGo). The approved questionnaire is loaded to the SurveyToGo platform, responses are entered directly into the backend cloud server, this prevents the loss of documents that could affect the result of the study. This method offers flexibility and accuracy in the responses received and it can be administered using a phone or tablet by the interviewer, with the responses being real-time. Data analysis is almost instantaneous (Sukamolson, n.d.).

While an existing questionnaire is desired to be used, due to the pre-validity done on them which could qualify them to be replicable (Youngshin et al., 2015)) however, an extensive search of the scholarly database could not produce any instrument that could either be used in their original format or amended as what was found could not deliver on the research objectives already set up for this study. Though using already existing instruments offers value from the view of cost-effectiveness and timesaving, however, it is believed that an instrument should be used to fit the situation relevant to the research purpose and objectives (Youngshin et al., 2015). As a result of this, the researcher undertook to develop a unique questionnaire that had consideration for the research questions and the research objectives. Given that the research objectives were focused on four sub-areas of (i) identifying the level of brand awareness amongst business owners (ii) understanding the motivation and derived benefits for adopting brand building strategies by MSME business owners (iii) knowing the attitude of business owners in the process of adoption of brand building strategies and (iv) knowing the challenges faced by business owners in adopting brand building strategies in their business operations, it was imperative that questions developed had to follow in these areas.

While developing the questionnaire, the fundamental consideration was the research questions and how these can be answered. The questionnaire was developed to achieve the research objectives. Critical considerations and guidelines were put in place in the development of the questionnaire. (Chinelo, 2016). There was consideration given to the need to make the language of the questionnaire easy to understand, given the understanding that the respondents cut across a diverse group of people with varying educational backgrounds (Chinelo, 2016). The use of common vocabulary was considered for ease of comprehension of the respondents, to make the questionnaire easily understandable for the respondents to aid completion (Rahi et al., 2017).

The ordering of the questions was done progressively with a logical flow of thoughts starting from understanding the respondents' background and building up their awareness and involvement with brand-building activities, before terminating on the challenges they have faced in adopting brand-building strategies. The structure and format of the questionnaire are simple and are not presented ambiguously, as it is important to make the questionnaire easy to respond to (Oluwatayo, 2012; Rahi et al., 2019; Rahi and Ghani, 2016).

The questionnaire was set up in 8 different sections for ease of administration. The introductory section detailed the study under investigation and the need for the study, the objectives were called out for the respondents, while their anonymity and confidentiality were assured. The buy-in of the respondents was sought for the completion of the questionnaire.

The next 2 sections of the questionnaire focus on getting the basic demographic information on the business owner around their biodata and company/business background. The 5 other sections focused on variables affecting the research objectives. The questionnaire then dives into sections on the topics of awareness, attitude, motivation, perceived benefits of brand building, and challenges of business owners around adopting brand building strategies.

The questions were designed in a way that will allow the respondents the flexibility to pick their responses; the questions varied based on various formats (i) using multiple-choice questions where respondents could select the singular applicable answer, (ii) multiple-choice questions which offered the option to select more than one answer, flexibility that does not impose a limit on the respondent, (iii) the scaled responses where respondents have to rate based on their acceptance of certain statements on a scale of 1-5 and (iv) the Likert scale which progressively grades the level of agreement with certain statements. Adequate options were provided where there

was a scaled response or Likert rating. There was a provision made for mid-point scale responses to allow for neutral responses like ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

It was important not to make the questionnaire too long, in order not to discourage respondents from participating in the study. The questionnaire was concise and straight to the focus of answering the research questions.

The choice of using either open-ended or close-ended questions was considered. While open-ended questions offer a wide answer range, they are difficult to code, while closed-ended questions may seem limited in options, there are many alternatives to how this can be applied in a way that prevents a forced adoption of choice (Greener, 2008). The questionnaire was open-ended in two areas of the questionnaire, specific to the age of the respondent and the number of years the business has been in operation; this was based on feedback from the UREC team to have the actual age and the number of years the company has been in operation, not the range, to have a more detailed statistical analysis. Based on the data feedback received, at the data analysis point, there will be the flexibility to group these into parameters that are usable and will not warrant a need to go back to the respondents for more details. Every other part of the questionnaire is closed-ended questions to ensure that responses are definite and not too wide to make for clear data analysis and this prevents a situation of having responses that are difficult to classify (Rahi et al., 2019). Questions leading to definite answers are to be preferred to those that call for many possible answers which cannot be classified easily. Using close-ended questions helps the respondents to respond in a logical format with minimal effort required to answer, keeps the context of the question the same for all respondents, and eliminates the chance of the researcher making assumptions, thereby removing bias (Hair, 2010; Alnaser et al., 2018).

Validity and Reliability

The task of measuring the accuracy and consistency of research instruments, in this case, a questionnaire is called validity and reliability as defined by different studies (Bolarinwa, 2015; Singh and Masuku, 2012),

To check for the validity and reliability of this instrument, it is important to conduct a pilot study with a small sample of individuals with the same characteristics as the respondents for whom the instrument was designed; constructing a validity and reliability test may identify any limitation of the study (Mustafa et al., 2018).

Though in some cases, researchers overlook pilot testing, it is a crucial aspect of the research process. Possible issues in the design of the instrument may be detected through a pilot test, for instance, comprehension of certain questions which may infer another meaning. A pilot also checks for the validity and reliability of the instrument. In the instance of conducting a pilot test, a small sample from the population is used (Nayak & Singh, 2015).

The validity of the research instrument is crucial, especially from previous uses (Creswell, 2012). In a situation where there may be subjectivity of the research instruments, it becomes imperative to check for the validation of the instrument when a new instrument is being developed and used (Mulhollan, 2016; Ramsay et al., 2020; Yong-Mi Kim, 2009). When the research instrument's validity is not tested, it will not produce research findings that are relevant, and which can be replicated and admitted generally. As such, it puts a dent in the findings of such a study (Kim, 2009). With reliability, instruments are tested for consistency and the ability to be repeated, as research should be able to instil confidence, be transparent, and be audited (Greener, 2008). Testing of reliability is based on the commonly accepted Cronbach's alpha test (Singh, 2017) and is the score to ascertain that an instrument is stable and consistent (Creswell, 2005).

The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot study comprising 25 business owners in Lagos, using the same criteria of the business to be based in Lagos State and has been in business for a minimum of 2 years and with a staff strength of between 1-10 employees. The reliability test returned a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.746, which is a good score; as 0.60 is an acceptable alpha in the social sciences (Ghazali, 2008).

Operational Definition of Variables

An essential component of an operational definition is measurement. In research, when a word is to be used, it is important to depict the correct meaning, clearly and unmistakably. This clarity in the meaning is attained by operational definitions of variables or constructs (Lammers & Badia, 2013)

To define the operational definition involves the processes designated to ascertain its measurement (Shoemaker et al., 2004). When construct definitions and their measures are inappropriately defined, it can result in questionable results that can call into question the credibility of the study (Aguinis et al., 2020; Cortina, 2020; Latan et al., 2021). It is important to articulate appropriately the conceptual definitions of the constructs under study and to align them with the operational definitions identified to measure them (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2020).

This section provides the variables in the study, their types, measures, and how they are operationalised. It also identifies each of the primary constructs associated with the research question(s), and hypotheses.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study is the adoption of brand building strategies. This is measured as a nominal variable by simply asking if MSME business owners have adopted or are adopting brand-building strategies in their business.

Independent Variables

It is important to define the independent variable precisely, and how the measurement will be implemented (Lelaurin & Wolery, 1992). The independent variables in this study are:

1. Level of awareness of brand-building strategies
2. Motivation for brand-building strategies
3. Perceived benefit of brand-building strategies
4. Attitude toward brand-building strategies
5. Challenges of adopting brand-building strategies.

Construct/Variable 1: Adoption of brand-building strategies

Adoption of brand-building strategies refers to the use of any of the methods and processes involved in creating brand awareness by MSME business owners. The variable is measured by asking MSME business owners if they have adopted brand-building strategies in their business or not. This variable is measured on a nominal scale. The response to the question being yes or no is coded as 1 (for yes) and 2 (for No). The adoption of brand building strategy is the dependent variable of the study.

Construct/Variable 2: Level of awareness of brand-building strategies

This construct/variable measures the extent to which MSME business owners are aware of brand-building strategies with a question asked to measure the level of awareness of brand-building strategies among MSME business owners who have adopted brand-building. The question under this construct measures how knowledgeable MSME business owners are about brand-building strategies, considering that they have undertaken brand-building initiatives in their

business before. The level of measurement of the variable of the level of awareness as measured under the level of awareness construct is ordinal. That is, the question was set in the Likert scale measuring the variable by asking for the level of awareness of what brand building is from least knowledgeable to very knowledgeable.

Construct/Variable 3: Attitude toward brand-building strategies

This construct/variable measures the perception of MSME business owners toward brand-building strategies. The construct is developed with a 5-point Likert scale of ten questions. The variables are measured on an ordinal scale. The 5-point scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Construct/Variable 4: Motivation for adopting brand-building strategies.

The construct of Motivation for brand-building strategies measures the reason why MSME business owners adopt brand-building strategies. Seven questions on a 5-point Likert scale were asked to probe the degree of motivation MSME business owners have for brand-building strategies. Some of the motivations the questions probed for adopting brand-building strategies are increasing sales, increasing in customer base, and business growth.

Construct/Variable 5: Perceived Benefits of Adopting brand building strategies.

Perceived Benefit refers to the perception of the positive consequences of adopting brand-building strategies. The construct of perceived benefit is designed using a 5-point Likert scale of 14 questions. Some of the perceived benefits the construct probed were influencing customers'

decisions, improving the company's image, an increase of business sales and profitability, enhancement of the credibility of the company, and building customer trust.

Construct/Variable 6: Challenges of adopting brand building

The construct of the challenges faced by business owners in adopting brand-building strategies is captured in 10 questions in the design by 10 questions asked on a Likert scale of 1-5. This ranged from the least severe to the most severe of the challenges referenced. The questions asked ranged from the challenge of lack of support, lack of knowledge of what brand building is, high cost of execution, brand building being a time-consuming process and inability to focus due to business pressure.

Study Procedures and Ethical Assurances

Ethical consideration is a key factor in the study as approval of the UREC board was sought at two levels of the research. A provisional approval detailing forms like the Research Ethics application form (REAF), informed consent form, gatekeepers' letter, and risk assessment form; all to ensure that the researcher is aware of the implications of researching humans and how the management of such should be done ethically. Final approval by the UREC board was given before the commencement of fieldwork.

Based on these approvals, before the commencement, respondents were required to give their approval for participation in the study, through their informed consent they offered their voluntary participation. One critical ethical issue was how to engage with the respondents. This was done through the presentation of the gatekeeper's form to the National Bureau of Statistics, and they subsequently approved participation in the study. This approval involves access to the respondents to undertake the current study alone. Ethics in data collection and analysis is crucial in research (Creswell, 2012) and this was considered while developing the questionnaire,

confidentiality of the respondents is of utmost importance as there was no personal identifier on the questionnaire (Lee, 2018). Their personal and business names were not featured on the questionnaire and there is no coding to identify where the responses came from (Breed et al., 2020; Wolff-Michael and Von Unger, 2018). The respondents are made aware that they are at liberty to disengage at any point during the study as participation is not by compulsion. (Turner, 2015). Respondents are not burdened by intrusive communications to convince them to participate in the study once they decline at the first point of contact.

Ethical Assurances

In the course of conducting this study, several issues may arise which has ethical implications thereby requiring proper handling according to ethical standards; some of which are ensuring the confidentiality of the data collected, the anonymity of the respondents which protects them from divulging their details of participation in the reporting, how to get access to the appropriate people to serve as respondents which may become frustrating and lead to corners being cut, time constraint on the researcher due to the late response of respondents thereby putting pressure on deadlines, inability to provide adequate information to the respondents about the study, how their data collected will be used, the tendency by the researcher to deploy people known by them as respondents, a situation that might affect responses collected, leading to bias on the part of the respondents to play to the tune of the researcher.

Other issues that may arise are cheating at the point of analysis when the results are at variance with expectation, and the tendency of the researcher to recycle the data collected other than for the purpose stipulated to the respondents. Another critical issue that may arise is the role of the researcher in the process, ensuring that the researcher is aware of the possibility of his/her bias affecting the validity of the study.

Certain steps have been put in place to address these issues and ensure that they do not interfere with the research process. At the beginning of this study, critical stakeholders were identified as the UREC, the supervising professor, the gatekeeper, the respondents, and the researcher. Understanding the role of each of these people has helped in identifying the impact of the research on each of them and how this can be managed. A possible risk situation was envisaged, and, in this case, it was judged to be below as there is no risk to human life or the entities involved. While designing the questionnaire, there was no need to add individual names or personal identifiers. There is no way to determine who sent any response, thereby conferring anonymity on the respondents.

A basic consideration of ethical research requires that respondents be able to make informed decisions on their consent to participate in any study (Roberts & Allen, 2015). Providing sufficient information to enable informed consent has been identified. Full information about the study is provided to the respondents ahead of the completion of the questionnaire, including the purpose, and objectives of the study, their role in the study, demonstrating respect to the respondents and their right to refuse to participate through the freedom and flexibility that they can disengage at any point through the process. As already necessitated and approved by the UREC, gaining their consent to progress on the study is sought at the preliminary stage. While setting up this study, the chosen path was to deploy the informed consent ahead of the survey completion. The form was sent via email and their consent was sought. It is only after this that the survey progressed (Turner, 2015).

Without this acknowledgement, it will be impossible to participate in the study. Participating in this survey was voluntary and there was no incentive offered to the respondents, no undue pressure was placed on the respondents as it would impact the research, which eventually

would be seen as unethical and invalidate the results (Greener, 2008). The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents are assured.

The role of the researcher is clearly outlined as a researcher in this study. As a researcher, it is important to maintain objectivity throughout the process of data collection, analysis, and reporting. Keeping an accurate record of all received responses to the survey is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the database is well protected from hacking or the possibility of having these data in the wrong hands. The researcher undertakes to maintain the confidentiality of all data in her possession. The objectivity of the researcher is maintained as there is no relationship with the respondents, hence removing bias in that area. A high level of awareness is required on the part of the researcher on the possibility of biases to forestall such occurrences. Given the professional background and experience of the researcher in brand-building strategies, it is important to suspend all judgment and to have an open mind in the treatment of the data. The researcher undertakes to be willing to participate in the audit trail for data collection and analysis. In the case of an unexpected happening during the research that might cause problems with the data which may impact the researcher's objectivity, the researcher will escalate this to the ethics committee for guidance and advice. The researcher will adopt a situational ethics approach where on an ongoing basis have ethical considerations as events and issues come up (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004; Simons and Usher, 2000).

Data Collection and Analysis

The process of data collection involves the gathering of observations or measurements. Data collection provides first-hand knowledge and insights into the research problem. In collecting data, it is necessary to consider the objectives of the study, the required data to be collected and the method that will be deployed, analysed and reported (Bhandari, 2020). To answer the research

questions under this study, a structured questionnaire survey was deployed as an instrument of data collection. The construction of the questionnaire was driven by the need to answer the research question and to achieve each of the research objectives.

A pilot study was carried out to determine the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The reliability of an instrument is the degree of consistency or precision to which an instrument measures what it was designed to measure (Taherdoost, 2016). This implies that the instrument must be able to produce the same result whenever it is used, given similar conditions. This pilot test was done using twenty-five respondents. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha to ascertain its internal consistency. Before the commencement of fieldwork, a test-retest was carried out wherein 5 respondents were made to give responses to the items on the questionnaire a second time, to reinforce the construct validity. Previously on the questionnaire, business sectors were categorised into 6 sectors, however, the population data received from the National Bureau of Statistics listed 14 sectors. These sectors were incorporated into the instrument to ensure synergy and alignment. Another change that occurred on the questionnaire was rewording the statement under the motivation section; *"How will you rank the statements below on the degree of motivating you to adopt brand building"*. To make for a better understanding. This was changed into *"How will you rank the statements below on the degree of how you which will be motivated to adopt brand building?"*

Operational definition of constructs

The primary constructs that are associated with the research problem and research questions are awareness, attitude, motivation, perceived benefits, challenges and adoption. While awareness, attitude, motivation, perceived benefits and challenges are predictor variables

(independent), the adoption of brand strategies is a criterion variable (dependent). The researcher has detailed the operationalisation of the variables below:

Awareness

A structured questionnaire to understand how many of the respondents are aware of brand building as a practice. The awareness section was subdivided into 6 parts, with a part using a nominal scale of yes and no focused on knowing their awareness of brand building as a concept. a nominal response of yes answer requests for what type of touchpoint has been adopted, with an opportunity to select multiple answers, while a no answer requires knowing what will drive them to adopt. A part of the section on an ordinal, 5-point Likert scale has a statement on their level of awareness to know the depth. Another part aims to know the scope of their understanding of all that brand building entails through agreement of various statements such as “*Brand building is having a logo*”; business owners are expected to choose from a 5-point scale of “least agree” to “strongly agree”.

Attitude

Ten statements are listed to understand the present attitude of business owners towards brand building. A choice of selection on a 5-point Likert ordinal scale is aimed at demonstrating the attitude of business owners. Respondents must select their position against these ranking between “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”.

Motivation

This section contains 7 statements aimed to check agreement or disagreement with each of the statements that capture what will motivate them to adopt brand-building strategies in their businesses. This uses a 5-point Likert ordinal scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

Perceived benefit

14 statements in this section show the degree of importance attributed to the benefits derivable from adopting brand-building strategies. An example of this statement is “*increases sales and profitability*”. Business owners are to select their acceptance of an item on the ranking from “not important” to “very important”.

Brand building adoption

To know whether business owners have adopted brand building in their operations, a nominal scale of yes or no was used to ascertain their response.

Challenges

The last section of the questionnaire measures the challenges faced by business owners in building brand strategies. Ten questions on a Likert scale of 1-5 were asked to ascertain the various challenges faced by business owners in brand building adoption. Overall, the data collected provides useful information and was structured to answer the research questions and in testing the hypothesis.

Data Collection process

Data was collected from the identified sample size using the Dooblo SurveyToGo platform. This is an online real-time platform that captures the responses of respondents as they are made. This platform is a computer-assisted telephone interviewing method in which the questionnaire is administered in a guided way to the respondents. It allows for data entry into the database in a real-time and structured manner. As stipulated previously, sample selection was done through a random sampling of respondents, from the list generated. Each of the sample respondents was contacted, intimating them of the survey to get their buy-in.

The informed consent form was then sent to them to complete. It was after this that the questionnaire was administered at an average of 30 minutes per respondent, which was uploaded immediately to the cloud. To administer the questionnaire, 5 skilled enumerators were engaged and trained on the objectives of the study and their roles. The researcher retained control of data at the back end of the platform. There were a few cases in which the phone numbers could not be reached, the calls were repeated, and, in some cases, the respondent was substituted.

Mapping of the construct to research questions

The researcher ensured that the construct of the instrument was mapped to each of the research questions to ensure that this information is valuable for answering each of the research questions. The construction of the instrument put the information required on each variable in separate sections. This is to provide clarity on the elements that are aggregated to answer each research question. Below is the alignment between the questionnaire and the research questions:

1. What is the association of the level of awareness on the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners?

Section 4 of the questionnaire has a variety of questions to demonstrate how awareness of brand building influences how business owners adopt it. This covers the awareness of the business owners to the concept of brand building, with them choosing between a Yes, No, or maybe answer, whether they have undertaken any brand-building activity in their businesses – a Yes or no required, their level of awareness of what brand building involves, using a ranked ordinal scale of 1-5, ranging from “*least knowledgeable*” to “*very knowledgeable*”. A range of statements detailing a description of what brand building involves is stated, of which they are to demonstrate their level of agreement, from “*least agree*” to “*strongly agree*”. Further questions. Respondents were further asked to indicate which aspects of brand building strategies or tactics they have used as well as advertising channels, with options for

multiple selections.

2. How does the attitude of business owners influence their adoption of brand-building strategies?

The attitude of business owners was captured in section 5 of the questionnaire with statements that depict different attitudes that business owners have towards brand building. Respondents are required to choose from a 5-point Likert scale of “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

3. What is the association of motivation and perceived benefits with the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners?

Sections 6 and 7 of the questionnaire focus on the motivation and perceived benefits of adopting brand-building strategies, and they are captured through many questions on a 5-point Likert scale. Questions on motivation – *“How will you rank the statements below on the degree of motivating you to adopt brand building?”* Respondents choose their acceptance of the statements by choosing a point that ranges from “*strongly disagree*” to “*strongly agree*”. Statements on the benefits of adopting brand building are listed, with respondents required to choose from a 5-point Likert scale of “not important” to “very important”.

4. What challenges are business owners facing in adopting brand-building strategies in their business operations?

Section 8 of the questionnaire sought the response of the business owners on what has hindered them in adopting brand-building strategies in their operations. The responses were scaled from the minor challenges to the most severe. Using a 5-point Likert scale, they were to choose from “least severe” to “most severe”.

Data Coding:

The closed-ended questions are entered into SurveyToGo in real-time and as such require no coding. However, open-ended questions, like age are aggregated according to their responses and recorded as continuous, where the mode is collated.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) and MS Excel. Leveraging the capability of SPSS which enables the researchers to obtain statistics ranging from simple descriptive numbers to complex analyses. The SPSS has provided a platform for researchers to undertake massive research that requires several calculations and charts (Bala, 2016). Data from SurveyToGo was transferred to SPSS. Study data were interpreted using tables, figures, and charts.

It is important to select appropriate statistical tools to analyse data, as the wrong choice of tools will create problems during the evaluation of findings as well as in the conclusion of the study. (Mishra et al., 2019). To identify the right statistical tool to be adopted, it is necessary to know the assumptions and the conditions of that tool, to ensure the right application; of significant importance are the aim and objectives of the study, the research design and the nature of the data gathered.

There are options for statistical tools that can be chosen from the two components of descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. The descriptive analysis gives a summary of data such as the use of numbers, tables, and graphs while inferential analysis involves the testing of a hypothesis where inferences can be extracted to conclude data for further generalisation (Flores-Ruiz, 2017).

To analyse the data, different statistical tools were deployed for the analysis; descriptive statistics - simple percentage analysis, frequency, cross-tabulation, Chi-square Test, factor

analysis, correlation, and regression techniques were used. These will be discussed in more detail below:

Frequencies

The frequency distribution is used to create the first analytical survey data and is used to organise and summarise data in a tabular format, it is a descriptive statistical method that shows how many occurrences of the answers were chosen by each respondent (Lavrakas, 2008). The frequency distribution was used to count the responses that were identified with each construct, and these are expressed in percentage terms. Frequency distribution has been represented through a tabular format and in charts. This helped to simplify the data into meaningful structures of tables and charts.

Cross Tabulation

Cross-tabulation is used to analyse the relationship between two or more variables at the same time. This method allows for analysing and comparing the results for one or more variables with the results of another on a single table. Cross-tabulation helps the researcher to identify opportunities through trends, patterns, and the relationship between variables, to make informed decisions. Cross-tabulation makes it easy to correlate variables and makes data representation simpler. In this study, various constructs were cross tabulated against each other to give deeper perspectives into the findings of the results and how they interact with each other.

Chi-Square

A chi-square test is a statistical test used to compare with and know the difference between observed results and expected results, between two categorical variables (Ugoni & Walker, 1995). It checks if a difference between observed data and expected data is due to chance, or if it is due to a relationship between the variables that are under study. The chi-square statistic is used when

the variable is measured at the nominal (also called categorical) level (Connelly, 2019). The value of using the Chi-square analysis is that it offers a lot of details from the data, and this allows for further extrapolation. The Chi-square test is easy to compute, information is detailed, and the distribution of data is rich. The chi-square test is flexible in handling data from multiple group studies (McHugh, 2013).

Spearman's rank-order correlation

Generally, correlation analysis gives a quantification of the relationship between two continuous variables, which can be between an independent and a dependent variable or between two independent variables, expressed as Pearson product-moment correlation. (Boston University, 2013; Schober et al., 2018). Spearman's rank-order correlation is the nonparametric version of the Pearson product-moment correlation. It measures the strength and direction of association between two ranked variables. This works with two variables that are either ordinal, interval or ratio. The use of the Spearman correlation occurs when there is non-compliance with the Pearson correlation conditions. Spearman's correlation determines the strength and direction of the monotonic relationship between your two variables rather than the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables, which is what Pearson's correlation determines (Schober, 2018; Thirumalai et al., 2017). The Spearman rank correlation was utilised to know the relationship between different variables such as awareness, attitude, motivation and, perceived benefit of select SMEs towards the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners.

Binary Logistics Regressions Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical technique that shows the relationship between one variable (dependent or outcome variable) and one or more other variables (independent or predictor). Regression assesses the strength of the relationship between variables. Regression analysis is used for modelling the future relationship between variables. For this study, the use of binary logistics regression was used. Logistic regression measures the relationship between the categorical target variable and one or more independent variables; logistic regression is useful when testing hypotheses about relationships between a categorical outcome variable and one or more categorical or continuous predictor variables (Patel, 2021; Tukur and Usman, 2018). Binary logistics regression determines how multiple independent variables impact when they are presented at the same time in predicting the membership of one or other dependent variable categories. In the case under study, motivation and perceived benefits as two independent variables are being tested to know their impact on the adoption of brand-building strategies.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is useful to extract a few factors from a large number of connected variables to a more manageable number, ahead of being used to conduct other analyses like multiple regression or multivariate analysis of variance, Factor Analysis is a multivariate statistical technique that is used on a single set of variables by a researcher in knowing the variables in the set which form logical subsets that are independent of each other (Shrestha, 2021). This study has followed three major steps for factor analysis: a) assessment of the suitability of the data, b) factor extraction, and c) factor rotation and interpretation.

Summary

This chapter dealt with the methodology of the study. It was imperative to articulate the milestones in the research process and how the research would be designed to achieve answers to

the research questions earlier articulated in Chapter 1 of the study. In this chapter, the research problem earlier identified in Chapter 1 of this study was brought to the fore again. It is important to define the research problem at hand adequately as this sets the direction of the study. The research problem is to ascertain the challenges faced by business owners that prevent them from adopting brand-building strategies in their operations. It is imperative to identify the challenges faced by business owners and bring them to a point of deriving value from the adoption of branding. Literature has supported the position that having a robust brand-building orientation by a business owner has its benefits and drives growth for the business.

The MSME industry in Nigeria has been identified as a growth engine for the economy, and with the right support and attention, would drive the GDP. In the literature covered for Nigeria, though the MSME sector has grown in the past few years, it is still being dogged by several challenges – access to funds, manpower, and technological know-how. Another key challenge they face is the adoption or knowledge of brand-building strategy as a tool to drive growth for their businesses. Understanding the challenges that MSME business owners face that limit their adoption of brand-building strategies is what this study is challenged with.

Overall, to commence this study, it was important to ensure that the right criteria have been set up to deliver on the purpose of the study. This study undertook to study various aspects of the business owner, how they are motivated, the attitudes they have and demonstrate towards brand building, their perception of brand building, their level of awareness, and the knowledge they have about brand building; all towards knowing how these drives their relationship towards brand building adoption. The key focus is to ascertain how they currently execute brand-building strategies, their awareness and knowledge of brand building, their attitudes, and motivations and

to ascertain the challenges being faced in adopting brand-building strategies, as it relates to their business operations.

The chapter requirement necessitates building the research purpose into the structure of how these objectives and aims will be achieved. In designing the research, the two most common research approaches that were examined were quantitative and qualitative approaches. Also reviewed was the mixed method through triangulation to be able to know which of these approaches will be ideal for the current study. Given that the choice of approach is dependent on the phenomena under consideration, the same lens was deployed in this study. While considering the merits and demerits of each of these approaches, it was concluded that the quantitative approach is the most ideal for this study.

The quantitative method is objective, unbiased, and quantifiable. It establishes theories through the review of relationships between variables. With the set of variables captured under the research purpose, the necessity of checking their relationship is important, hence the choice of the quantitative method. It is not without its flaws, which are related to its disconnection from emotion and experiences. However, the researcher's decision is hinged on its strong ability to answer the research question and because it allows for generalisation.

The research design adopts descriptive research that allows for identifying the characters of the sample. Data was sourced through a combination of primary and secondary data. The purpose of the study necessitates the need to conduct original research, however, supported by secondary sources from peer-reviewed journals, and publications from various databases.

Since the emphasis of this research is on MSMEs in Lagos, a verifiable database needed to be used as the population. Given the fragmented nature of MSME businesses, identifying those that align with the inclusion criteria would have been a challenge. The decision to approach the

National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) was borne out of the knowledge that they usually conduct studies across MSME businesses in Nigeria, having had previous editions. Distilling Lagos State out of the national database gave a total number of 564 business owners across 14 sectors of the economy. This population base is heterogeneous and requires that to choose a sample that will be representative, the population had to be clustered into an identical stratum of businesses with similarities, this was done through stratification. Having achieved this stratified sampling allowed us to select some number of units within each cluster in a mutually exclusive way, reducing sampling error. The adoption of probability sampling of simple random sampling, allowed for units within each cluster to have the chance of being selected. To know the number of samples that the researcher will go to the field with, a scientific approach was adopted using the power analysis method. This is to ensure that an adequate sample size is chosen that doesn't allow for underpowering or overpowering of the sample. A total of 234 businesses were selected out of the 564 from the population database.

Working from the understanding of what quantitative research entails, the chosen instrument is the questionnaire. The choice of using the questionnaire as an instrument stem from the research questions to be answered, as such the constructs deliver on that. In selecting the instrument, the researcher had to develop it from scratch as no readily available one could answer all the research questions. The researcher took time to ensure that the constructs of the questionnaire were clear and easy to comprehend. The questions were framed logically and sequentially to allow for easy flow. The layout is easy on the eyes and an introductory section provides the respondents with information on what the study aims to achieve. To be sure the questionnaire constructs will deliver on answering the research questions, it was subjected to a test within 25 business owners in Lagos to test for validity and reliability. This test checks for the

accuracy and consistency of the research instrument; in this case, a Cronbach alpha score of 0.746 was scored. This validated that the instrument could be used for the research study.

Under this study, six (6) variables were identified, 5 independent variables and 1 dependent variable. These variables were operationalised to know the constructs that are identified with the research questions and hypothesis.

The research instrument was administered to 234 business owners in a guided way through computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) using the Dooblo SurveyToGo platform for data capture. The administration of an average respondent took 30 minutes to complete. This platform allows for data to be entered directly in a structured way as they were being given by the respondents. This ensures data processing online in real-time and limits the risk of errors. In very few situations, some respondents who qualified to be sampled after being randomly selected couldn't be reached via telephone, in such situations, they were replaced. Once the data is entered into the Dooblo SurveyToGo platform, it automatically is transmitted into SPSS, removing the necessity to code the responses.

Ethical consideration was important while this study was underway, and approval was given by the UREC board before the commencement of fieldwork. This included the gatekeepers form which was sent to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) which enabled them to provide access to the database of the MSME businesses in Lagos State. Of utmost importance during this study was the confidentiality of the respondents. The researcher ensured that the research instrument did not in any way, capture their name or the name of their business. Hence there is no way that their responses could be traced back to them. This aspect of the ethical consideration was communicated to the respondents at the beginning of the research. Every respondent also gave assurances that they voluntarily participated in the study and that they were not forced to

participate. This was confirmed in the informed consent form. Even after the commencement of engagement with them, they were made aware that they could decline to continue with their participation at any time, should they choose to. Even though, every one of the respondents engaged completed the process.

During this study, the researcher was aware of the role required to be played and therefore mitigated against bias that could arise from personal thoughts and perspectives. The objectivity of the researcher was kept, preventing bias; the respondents were not known personally by the researcher, and as such, they were not under any influence or pressure from the researcher. Ahead of the commencement of the study, while working on the risk assessment, it was concluded that this study did not expose the respondents to any personal risk and this position was maintained throughout the study.

The integrity of the raw data has been preserved and will be done in line with the approvals given by UREC to use the data only for the intended purpose and to keep it safe in a database. The researcher limited the analysis and the evaluation of this study only to the information gathered during this research exercise.

Subsequently, the research process moved to the data analysis stage. The choice of statistical tools used was dependent on their appropriateness to answer the research questions. The study aims to test the relationships that exist between the six variables in the study, using 4 hypotheses.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

According to the researcher, the purpose of this study is to evaluate whether an MSME business owner's level of awareness, motivation, attitude, and perception of brand-building influences his or her decision to implement brand-building methods in the company. Furthermore, this research focuses on the difficulties they have when developing their brands, to find and offer ways and procedures for overcoming these difficulties.

The study was conducted in Lagos, Nigeria, with 234 MSME business entrepreneurs taking part. An MSME business in Lagos State, Nigeria, that has been in existence for at least two years and employs an average of one to ten individuals is the subject of the study.

The respondents were drawn from the database of the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) MSMEs research conducted in 2017 in partnership with the Nigerian Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN).

This chapter opens with a narrative on the trustworthiness of the data collected. It is important to document this specifically, to demonstrate the authenticity and credibility of the data gathered. This is followed by the reliability and validity of the research instrument, which demonstrates that the instrument measured what it was to measure in a way that allows for achieving the same result when tried over again.

Descriptive statistics are important components of analysis as they enable a good background for comparing variables. Descriptive statistics logically summarises data by comparing relationships between the variables that exist in each population. It is a pivotal first step when conducting research. Variables involved in descriptive statistics could be nominal, ordinal,

interval, and ratio; an appropriate descriptive statistic ensures accurate reporting of results and eliminates ambiguity (Yellapu, 2018).

This chapter will report the findings from the fieldwork conducted with these respondents, and it will detail a descriptive analysis of the result. A description of the data statistics will be provided based on the structure of the questionnaire, using tables and charts. To present this chapter, the data analysed will be described in line with the questionnaire, starting with the biodata and demographic responses related to the business owners regarding their gender, educational qualifications, age profile, years in operation, the business sector that the business owners belong to are enumerated in the report, amongst others. These are depicted with frequency and simple percentage analysis.

Subsequently, the responses of the business owners relating to the various variables are described one after the other starting with the awareness questions (total of 6 questions), attitude responses (10 questions), motivation towards brand building (7 questions), perceived benefits of brand building (14 questions) and challenges faced by business owners in adopting brand building strategies (10 questions).

4 hypotheses were tested sequentially using different statistical tools, like Chi-square, Spearman rank correlation, and binary logical regression analysis to test for the level of significance between the variables.

Trustworthiness of Data

Trustworthiness is determined in this study by the extent to which internal validity threats have been controlled, as well as the validity of the instruments and measurements utilised in the study.

Internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity are all strategies used to establish trustworthiness. Internal validity refers to the degree to which a study establishes a credible causal relationship between its dependent and independent variables. Internal validity also refers to the fact that the study enables the rejection of alternate explanations for the findings to be possible. This refers to what extent an instrument accurately performs the intended measurement, represented as a percentage. In this study, there are three variations of validity to consider: content validity, construct validity, and criteria validity.

The degree to which items can sufficiently depict or indicate the substance of the feature or trait that the researcher seeks to test is referred to as content validity. To confirm the instrument's content validity, it was given to specialists in the field of branding for review. Additionally, the study project supervisor assessed the research enclosure, while sending it to UREC for review and final approval for its use for data collection.

When it comes to measuring a construct, construct validity is the extent to which a calculating method accurately reflects the construct and creates an observation that differs from the observation supplied by another construct's measure. This study established five constructs. The constructs are awareness, motivation, perceived benefit, attitude and challenges. To verify the validity and credibility of the variables utilised in this study, composite variables were created for each of the study's independent variables.

The study examines five independent variables: brand-building awareness, brand-building perceived benefit, brand-building motivation, brand-building attitude and challenges. To ascertain the level of awareness and knowledge of brand building when developing the level of awareness construct, a question to gauge the level of brand awareness was structured on a 5-point Likert scale

that ranged from least knowledgeable to very knowledgeable. With 1 depicting least knowledgeable and 5 depicting most knowledgeable.

Ten questions were used to assess business owners' attitudes toward brand building for the construct on attitude towards brand building. Each of the five questions used a five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree. Other alternatives included disagree, neither agree nor disagree, and agree as numbers 2, 3, and 4. From the ten questions, a composite variable with an attitude score ranging from 10 to 50 was created. Before generating the composite variable, the coding of several items was flipped to coincide with the options that reflect business owners' attitudes about brand building, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Following that, the attitude score was classified into four tiers (low, average, high, and very high) as recommended by Dillman et. al. (2009). The formula for the category interval was adopted from Lamidi-Sarumoh et. al. (2023). The formula is given below.

$$\text{Category Interval} = \frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{Lowest Score}}{\text{Number of Categories}}$$

Highest score= 50

Lowest score= 10

Number of Categories= 4

$$\text{Category Interval} = \frac{50-10}{4}$$

Category Interval = 10

Using the derived category interval, the low attitude score varied from 10 to 20, the average attitude score grouped from 21 to 30, the high attitude score grouped from 31 to 40, and the very high attitude score grouped from 41 to 50.

The perceived benefit construct was built by surveying 14 questions about the primary benefits of brand building. Each of the fourteen questions was evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale grouped from not important to very important. Other alternatives included quite significant, not certain, and significant as 2,3, and 4, respectively. From the fourteen questions, a composite variable with a perceived benefit score ranging from 14 to 70 was created. Following that, the Perceived Benefit score was classified into four categories (Low, Average, High, and Very High), in line with the recommendation by Dillman et. al. (2009). The formula for the category interval was adopted from Lamidi-Sarumoh et. al. (2023). The formula is given below.

$$\text{Category Interval} = \frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{Lowest Score}}{\text{Number of Categories}}$$

Highest score= 70

Lowest score= 14

Number of Categories= 4

$$\text{Category Interval} = \frac{70-14}{4}$$

Category Interval = 14

Using the derived category interval, the Low Perceived Benefit score was 14-28, the average perceived benefit score was 29-42, the high perceived benefit score was 43-56, and the very high Perceived Benefit score was 57-70.

Seven questions were asked of business owners to ascertain respondents' motivation for brand building when constructing the concept of motivation for adoption of brand building. Each of the seven questions was scored on a five-point Likert scale (Dillman et. al., 2009) ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Other alternatives included Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, and Agree as numbers 2,3, and 4. From the seven questions, a composite variable with a motivation score ranging from 5 to 35 was created.

The formula for the category interval of the Motivation score was adopted from Lamidi-Sarumoh et al. (2023). The formula is given below.

$$\text{Category Interval} = \frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{Lowest Score}}{\text{Number of Categories}}$$

Highest score= 35

Lowest score= 7

Number of Categories= 4

$$\text{Category Interval} = \frac{35-7}{4}$$

Category Interval = 7

Using the derived category interval, the Low Motivation score was 7-14, the Average Motivation score was 15-21, the high Motivation score was 22-28, and the very high Motivation Score was 28-35

On the challenges faced by business owners, ten questions were used to for the construct on attitude towards brand building. Each of the ten questions used a five-point Likert scale (Dillman et al., 2009), with 1 representing least severe and 5 representing most severe. Other alternatives included somewhat severe, severe, and more severe on 2,3, and 4 scores. From the ten questions, a composite variable with a challenge score ranging from 10 to 50 was created. The formula for the category interval of the Challenge Score was adopted from Lamidi-Sarumoh et al. (2023). The formula is given below.

$$\text{Category Interval} = \frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{Lowest Score}}{\text{Number of Categories}}$$

Highest score= 50

Lowest score= 10

Number of Categories= 4

$$\text{Category Interval} = \frac{50-10}{4}$$

Category Interval = 10

Using the derived category interval, the Low Challenge score was 10-20, the Average Challenge score was 21-30, the high challenge score was 31-40, and the very high challenge score was 41-50.

Data Reliability

Incredibly reliable tests are those that can be utilised by multiple researchers under the same conditions while producing consistent results and that do not modify their results over time. Consistency and replicability across time are used to determine reliability in a system. Moreover, the degree to which a test is error-free is characterised by the number of measurement mistakes;

the greater the number of measurement errors, the less trustworthy the test (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

It is the degree to which the same test gives the same findings when administered to a similar group of people under identical conditions that are referred to as "reliability." This enables the researcher to perform accurate comparisons between the two groups. The greater the number of errors that are detected in an evaluation, the less reliable it is, and vice versa. It is an important part of the assessment, and it is depicted as a trait that adds to validity rather than as a factor that is in opposition to validity in the assessment process.

Messick (1989) shifted the old concept of validity - which placed reliability as opposed to validity - to one in which reliability became synonymous with validity. As a result, Messick (1989) adopted a unified view of validity that includes reliability as a sort of validity, thereby contributing to the overall construct validity. The outcome is that concept validity is a necessary but insufficient condition for validating not only test interpretation but also test usage, in the sense that the relevance, value, and appropriateness of test use are (or should be) reliant on the meaning of test results. Not only for test interpretation but also for test use, construct validity is critical. The test must be appropriate and dependable in its application.

The test-retest reliability of the research instrument as a whole and the individual components within the research instrument were determined in this study. The total research instrument utilised in the study received a Cronbach Alpha score of .746. The Level of Awareness Construct has a reliability value of .874, while the Attitude toward Brand Building Construct has a reliability level of .572. The reliability score for the "Motivation for Adopting Brand Building Construct" construct was .952. The reliability score for perceived benefit was .979, while the dependability score for Challenges of Adopting Brand Building' was .940.

Results of Findings Including Graphical Illustrations

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the data that were gathered from the fieldwork. This section will primarily cover part 1 of the questionnaire which details the biodata of the respondents – gender, age, educational qualifications, and company information.

Table 3

The gender split of Business Owners

Age	Frequency	Per cent
Male	168	71.8
Female	66	28.2
Total	234	100.0

Table 3 shows the split across the gender of the respondents of the research.

Figure 5

The split by gender of the respondents

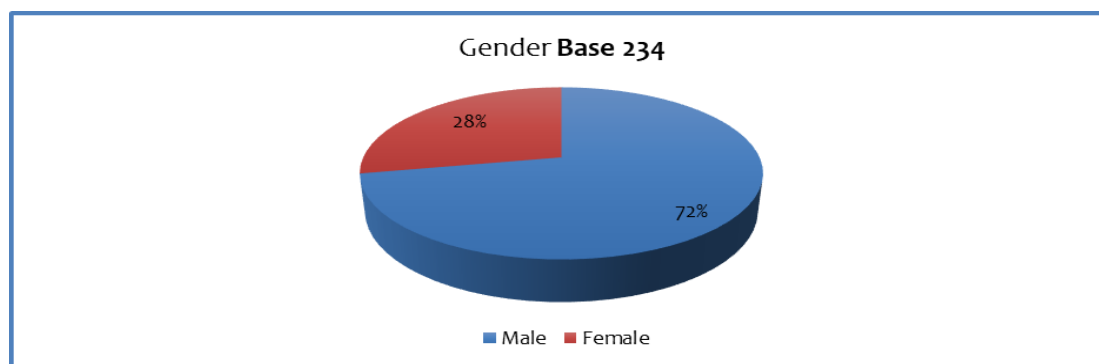
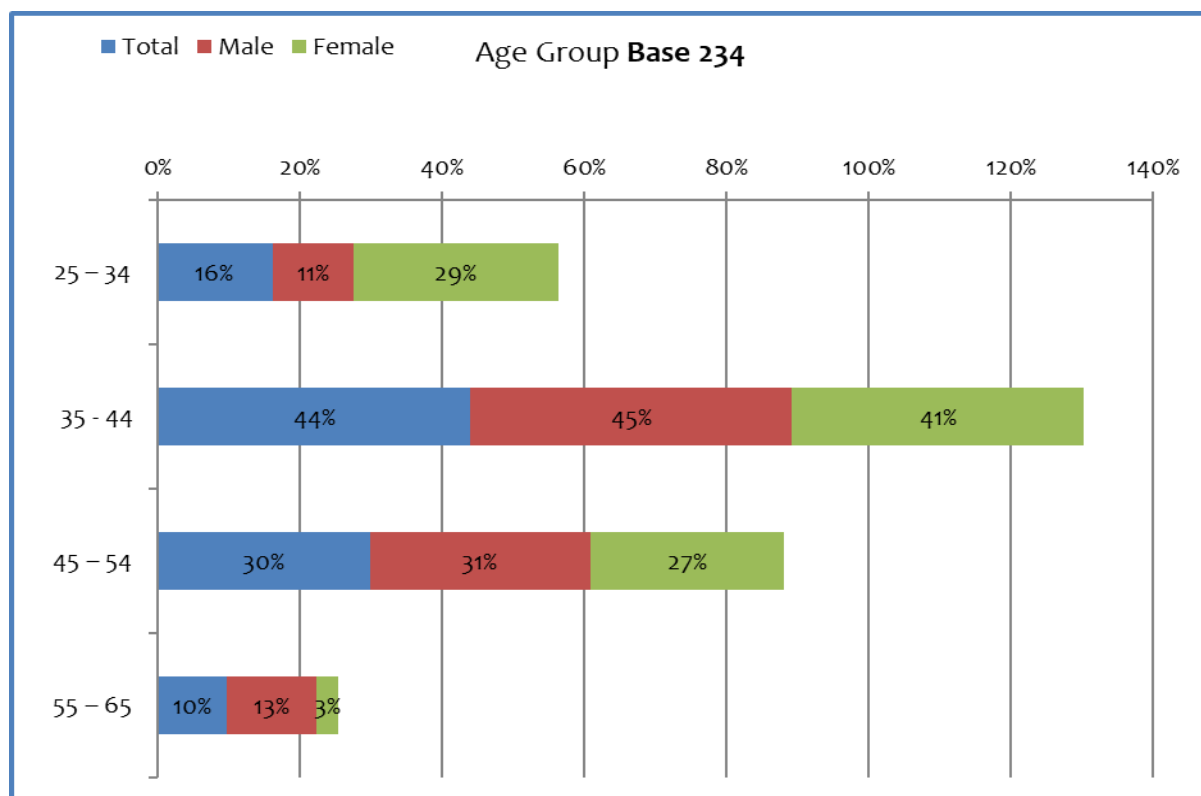


Figure 5 presents the gender split of business owners. This shows that 71.8% of respondents are male while 28.2% are female.

Figure 6

The split of respondents by age and gender



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Table 4

The split of respondents by age the business owners.

Age	Frequency	Per cent
25 – 34	39	16.7
35 – 44	103	44.0
45 – 54	67	28.6
55 – 65	25	10.7
Total	234	100.0

Table 4 and Figure 6 detail the age of respondents, 16.7% are 25-34 years old, 44.0% are 35-44 years, 28.6% are 45 – 54 years, and 10.7% are 55 – 65 years. Overall, 35-44 years has the highest score at 44% followed by 45 -54 years (30%), 25-34 years (16%) and 55-65% (10%).

Table 5

Educational qualification of the business owners

Highest level of education	Frequency	Per cent
O Levels	27	11.5
Diploma	54	23.1
Degree	131	56.0
Postgraduate	22	9.4
Total	234	100.0

In terms of the level of education, 11.5% of the respondents have an O level, 23.1% have a diploma, 56.0% have a degree and 9.4% have a postgraduate education.

Table 6

Number of years in business operations of respondents

Number of years in business operation	Frequency	Per cent
3-4 years	34	14.5
Above 5 years	200	85.5
Total	234	100.0

Figure 7

The number of years of business owners' operation in business

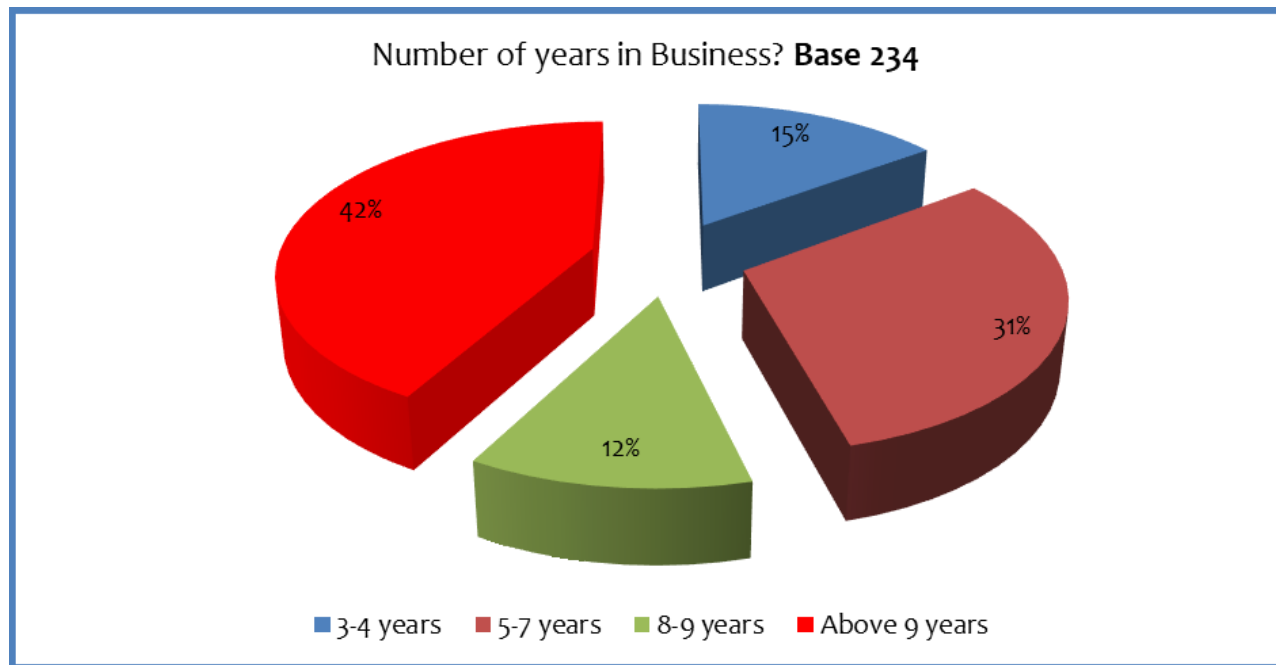


Table 6 and figure 7 shows the split of the number of years in business operations. 14.5% of the respondents have spent 3-4 years in business operation while 85.5% have spent over 5 years. The majority @ 42% has been in business for more than 9 years, followed by 5-7 years (31%), 3-4 (15%) and 8-9 years (12%).

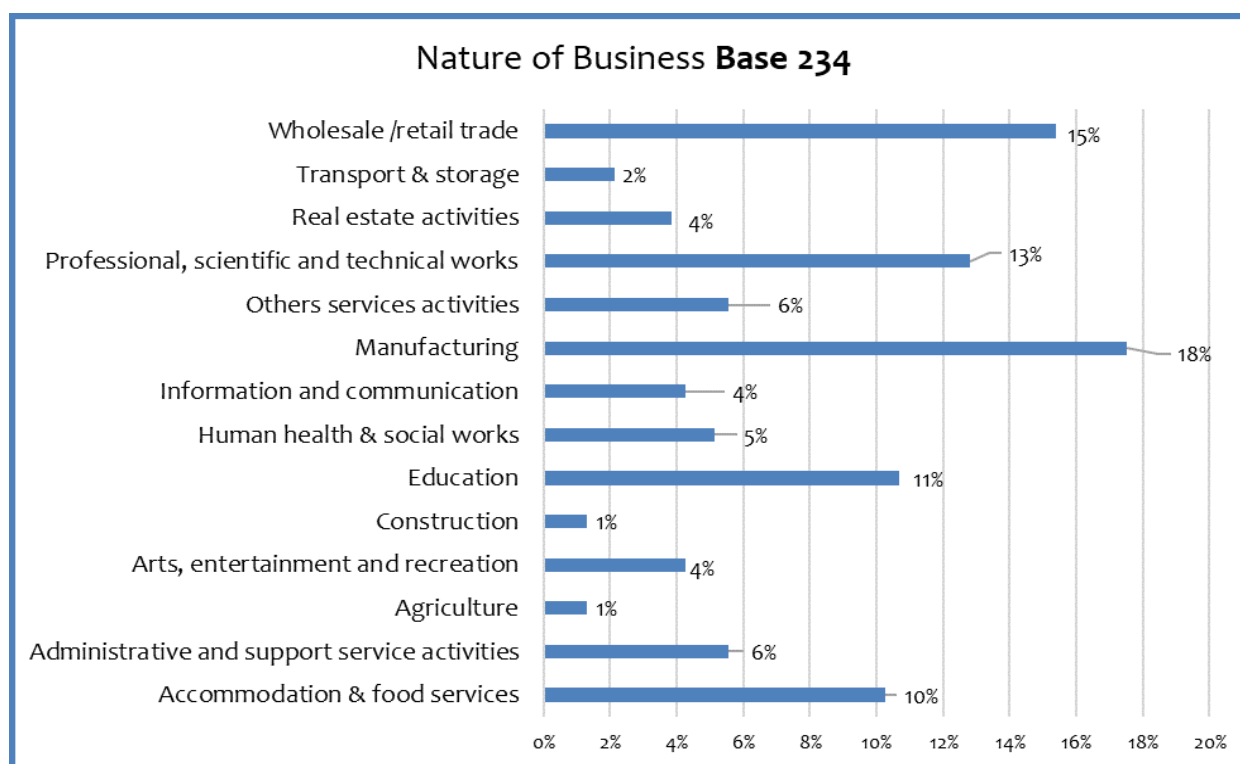
Table 7*Nature of business - Company Information by sector*

Nature of Business	Frequency	Per cent
Accommodation and food services	24	10.3
Administrative and support service activities	13	5.6
Agriculture	3	1.3
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	10	4.3
Construction	3	1.3
Education	25	10.7
Human health and social works	12	5.1
Information and communication	10	4.3
Manufacturing	41	17.5
Other services activities	13	5.6
Professional, scientific, and technical works	30	12.8
Real estate activities	9	3.8
Transport and storage	5	2.1
Wholesale /retail trade	36	15.4
Total	234	100.0

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Figure 8

Nature of company information by sector



According to Table 7 and figure 8, the top three nature of businesses are manufacturing (18%), wholesale and retail trade (15%) and professional, scientific, and technical works (13%).

Table 8

Registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)

Is your business registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)?	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	167	71.4
No	67	28.6
Total	234	100.0

Concerning business registration, 71% of the respondents have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) while 28.6% have not.

Table 9*Number of employees in business*

How many employees do you have in your business operation?	Frequency	Per cent
1-5 employees	79	33.8
6-10 employees	62	26.5
11-15 employees	38	16.2
Above 15 employees	55	23.5
Total	234	100.0

Table 9 shows that 33.8% of the business owners have 1-5 employees, 26.5% have 6-10 employees, 16.2% have 11-15 employees and 23.5% have above 15 employees.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was performed on them to determine if the test items corresponded to and accurately represented each of the study's constructs (variables). After conducting a factor analysis on each of the constructs, the researcher was able to demonstrate that the items in the study are legitimate measures of each of the variables (constructs) in the study (Watson, 2017). As a first step, the researcher conducted the Kaiser–Meyer–Olki (KMO) test, which measures the degree to which items that make up each construct (variable) in the study are associated with one another (i.e., they are related). As previously stated, KMO values greater than 0.60, in the opinion of Tabachnick & Fidell (2013), imply that the factors serve as sufficient measures of the construct (variable) being reviewed.

The researcher determined the extent to which the elements contained inside a construct (variable) interacted with one another using Bartlett's sphericity test. The results of Bartlett's test

must be less than .05 to justify the use of Factor Analysis and the extraction of important factors, according to Watson (2017). Table 10 displays the outcome of the KMO and Bartlett's tests, which were done in the study to ensure that the sampling sufficiency and suitability of the study data were confirmed.

Table 10

KMO and Bartlett's Tests

	Awareness Scale	Motivation Scale	Perceived Benefit Scale	Attitude Scale	Challenges Scale
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.859	.921	.943	.711	.820
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	767.518	1833.717	2695.443	210.155	443.430
Df	10	15	91	10	6
Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Data for Analysis

When the correlation matrix for each of the variables for each variable was examined, it was found that the data was adequate for factor analysis. All in all, a high level of sampling adequacy was demonstrated by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (0.893), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($X^2 = 6602.953$, $df = 591$, Significance = 0.000), showing that the data is suitable for factor analysis. The conclusion reached because of this research was the fact that data factor analysis could be performed on data.

Extraction Method

Principal Component Analysis was applied to extract factors. The number of components that are required to be extracted, i.e., the selection of Eigenvalues larger than one was determined using the Latent Root Criterion.

Rotation Method

On this occasion, the Varimax Orthogonal Rotation technique was employed. Having gone through 18 cycles, the rotation has reached a level of convergence. As a result of rotating the axis of rotation in an orthogonal direction to the axis of rotation, all the other components are transformed into orthogonal or independent components. There is no association between the factors, which have been determined through experimentation.

Any components having a loading larger than .30 (while considering indicators) were considered for further investigation.

Number of Factors Extracted

Five components were identified, and these eight factors collectively explained 67.974 per cent of the variance. Principal Component Analysis using Varimax Rotation yielded the following findings, which are displayed in Table 11. The table shows that five components have been extracted. The ending column in the table displays the Cronbach Alpha of each of the constructs of the study.

Among the factors 1 to 5, the eigenvalues are 11.035, 4.510, 3.213, 2.746 and 1.608 respectively. Those factors account for 32.456 per cent, 13.265%, 9.449%, 8.076 per cent, and 4.729 per cent of the variance explained by the factors. The factor solution accounts for 67.974 per cent of the total variance, according to the data. Using the rotated component matrix, it can now determine the constituent variables of the factors in more detail (Variables belong to that factor with which they show a maximum absolute value in the component score).

Table 11*Rotated Component Matrix^a*

Factor Number	Name of Dimension (% of variance)	Label	Statement (Factor Loading)					Cronbach's Alpha
1	The benefit of branding dimension (32.456 %)	Positions the business to understand the needs of the customer/consumers better	.845					.952
		Gives the company an edge over their competitors	.827					
		It builds the trust of the customers/consumers	.825					
		Branding increases the value of the company	.822					
		It makes the business more focused and gives the business a sense of direction	.816					
		Enhances the credibility of the company	.814					
		Makes the business stronger	.785					
		It makes your business more recognizable	.776					
		It inspires employees and makes them more motivated	.763					
		Increases sales and business profitability	.752					
		It drives a better customer/consumer engagement and relationship	.746					
		Improves the company's public image	.711					
		Influences customer's buying decisions	.622					
		It makes new customer acquisition better	.589					
2	Motivation for branding dimension (13.265%)	As a means to attract more customers		.936				.969
		Brand building can lead to an increase in profits		.934				
		Brand building builds the trust of the customers		.920				
		I will adopt brand building because it will promote my corporate image		.918				
		It will give my company a competitive advantage		.916				
		Brand building increases consumer satisfaction		.872				

3	Awareness of branding (9.449%)	Brand building involves strategic thinking			.858			.897
		Brand building involves a brand proposition and identity			.854			
		Brand building is an advertisement			.853			
		Brand building is having a logo			.806			
		Brand building is necessary for MSME businesses			.731			
4	The challenge of branding dimension (8.076%)	It is a time-consuming process				.883		.868
		Challenges from external factors				.863		
		Inability to focus due to business pressure				.788		
		High cost of execution				.787		
5	Attitude towards the branding dimension (4.729 %)	Brand building can lead to an increase in profit					.774	.577
		The most important thing to me is to increase my customer base					.667	
		Brand building can help a business grow					.627	
		I adopt brand building because it will increase my sales					.536	
		Brand building is limited to your company logo					.298	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.^a

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Naming of Factors

Depending on the variables that were represented in each scenario, each of the five components that were extracted had a name that was acceptable to the researcher. The names of these factors, as well as the statement tags and factor loadings, are put together in Table 11. The five factors stated in the table are discussed in further depth further down the page.

Factor 1 (Perceived Benefit Dimension)

Factors 1 constitute variables that measure the benefit of branding dimension. Fourteen statements load in this factor.

Factor 2: (Motivation dimension)

Factor 2 constitutes variables that measure the Motivation for the branding dimension. Six statements load in this factor.

Factor 3: (Awareness)

Factor 3 constitutes variables that measure the Awareness dimension. Five statements load in this factor.

Factor 4: (Challenge)

Factor 4 constitutes variables that measure the Challenge of branding dimension. Four statements load in this factor.

Factor 5 (Attitude)

Factor 5 constitutes statements on the Attitude Dimension. Five statements load in this factor.

Test of hypotheses

This study has 4 hypotheses to be tested. Each of the hypotheses was reported and tested statistically. This involves the testing of our research results to see if there is a correlation or relationship between the hypothesis that was set at the beginning of the study and the results from the study. The process of testing a hypothesis involves a statistical inference that leverages the data that is gathered from a study to conclude the population parameter. The test of the 4 hypotheses under this study will be conducted.

When the dependent variable is nominally assessed, the Chi-square statistic can be used to examine differences across groups in a non-parametric manner using nominal measurements. The Chi-square test, like all non-parametric statistics, is impervious to the distribution of values in the sample. The absence of homoscedasticity in the data or identical variances amongst research groups, for example, are not required. It allows for the evaluation of both dichotomous independent

variables as well as multi-group studies to be performed. In contrast to some other non-parametric and other parametric statistics, it is observed that the Chi-square computations provide a large deal of information about the performance of each of the groups in the study. In addition, this extent of detail allows the researcher to have a better understanding of the data and, as a result, to derive more information from this statistic than from many other statistics. The Chi-square test has several advantages, including the robustness of data distribution, how easy it is to compute, the size of information generated by the test, its use in the study when parametric assumptions are not achieved, and the ability to process data from two and multiple group investigations with greater flexibility.

There are several limitations to Cramer's V. These include the requirements related to sample size, the complexity in explaining when the independent or dependent variables have a significant number of groups (20 or more), and the tendency of Cramer's V to produce low correlation measures, even when the results are highly significant, among other things. The chi-square test is used to determine the presence of a relationship between groups, populations, or criteria (i.e., to determine the existence or otherwise of independence of two variables), as well as to determine how closely the observed data distribution aligns with the predicted data distribution (i.e., to test the goodness of fit). Unlike parametric or continuous data analysis, categorical data analysis is the primary purpose of this program.

It is necessary to meet several assumptions before the Chi-square test may be utilised in any statistical investigation. To begin, data is selected at random from a large population of data. Second, when the predicted counts are greater than 5 and there are no cells with a zero count, the values in the cells are regarded as adequate. Finally, the sample size is considered sufficient in this

case. It is possible to encounter Type II errors while performing the Chi-square test on a lower sample size (i.e., acceptance of the null hypothesis when it is false).

However, even though the sample size is not intended to be fixed, the minimum sample size ranges between 20 and 50 participants. Finally, all variables must be mutually exclusive of one another. This indicates that each variable should only be counted once in each category and should not be permitted to exist in more than one category at the same time. In other words, no object can be counted more than once in a single operation.

These assumptions were verified during the test of the hypothesis. Additionally, the assumptions behind the cross-tabulations in tables 12 to 14 were met. To test these assumptions, data were randomly selected from the population of business owners. To satisfy the second assumption, the values in all cells must be adequate, as there are no expected counts less than and no cells with a count of zero. The assumption of a suitable enough sample size is met in this study, as the sample size is 234, which is deemed adequate for conducting a Chi-Square analysis. Finally, the variables utilised in the Chi-square analysis are categorical, which is a necessary condition for the Chi-square statistical test to be valid.

Beyond the Chi-Square analysis, the Spearman Rank correlation analysis was also employed in carrying out further analysis. The nonparametric Spearman coefficient of rank correlation is a measure of rank correlation that is not dependent on the sample size (the dependence of statistical measure between the rankings of two variables). It measures the extent a monotonic function can explain a two-variable connection when a monotonic function is used. Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to study linear relationships, whereas Spearman's correlation coefficient is used to analyse monotonic correlations (whether linear or not).

If there are no repeated data values, a perfect Spearman correlation of +1 or 1 indicates that each variable is a perfect monotone function of the other, and vice versa.

The Spearman correlation is greatest when the observations have a similar (or identical, for a correlation of 1) rank (i.e., relative position label of the observations within the variable: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) between the two variables; the Spearman correlation is lowest when the observations have a dissimilar (or completely opposed, for a correlation of -1) rank between the two variables; the Spearman correlation is greatest when the observations have a dissimilar (or completely opposed, for Spearman's coefficient, is ideal for ordinal variables that are either continuous or discontinuous, depending on their nature. Spearman's coefficients are subsets of a more general correlation coefficient, which is the Pearson correlation coefficient. When two ranking factors are compared, Spearman's coefficient measures the strength and direction of the relationship between them.

To perform a Spearman Rank correlation, two ordinal, interval, or ratio variables must be used together. It is preferable to utilise the Pearson product-moment correlation when dealing with interval or ratio data; nevertheless, when the Pearson correlation's assumptions are significantly violated, the Spearman correlation may be used. While Pearson's correlation measures how strong and the direction of a linear correlation between two variables is, Spearman's correlation detects the power and direction of a monotonic connection between two variables, in contrast to Pearson's correlation.

Responses to the constructs and Hypothesis testing

The following sections provide the respondents' feedback on the key constructs of the questionnaire. This will be depicted with tables and charts in descriptive analysis. There will subsequently be a test of the hypothesis related to the specific construct.

Construct 1: Awareness of Key Brand Building Practices

Table 12

Awareness of brand building as a practice

Are you aware of brand building as a practice in business operations?	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	126	53.8
No	96	41.0
Maybe	12	5.1
Total	234	100.0

Figure 9

Awareness of brand building by business owners

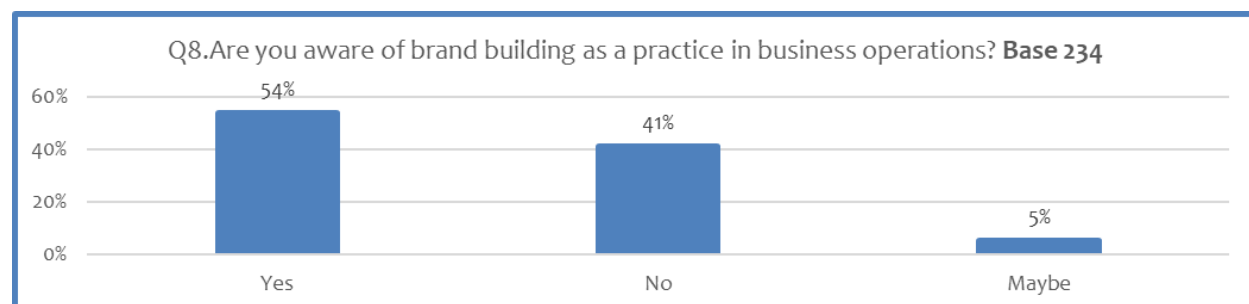
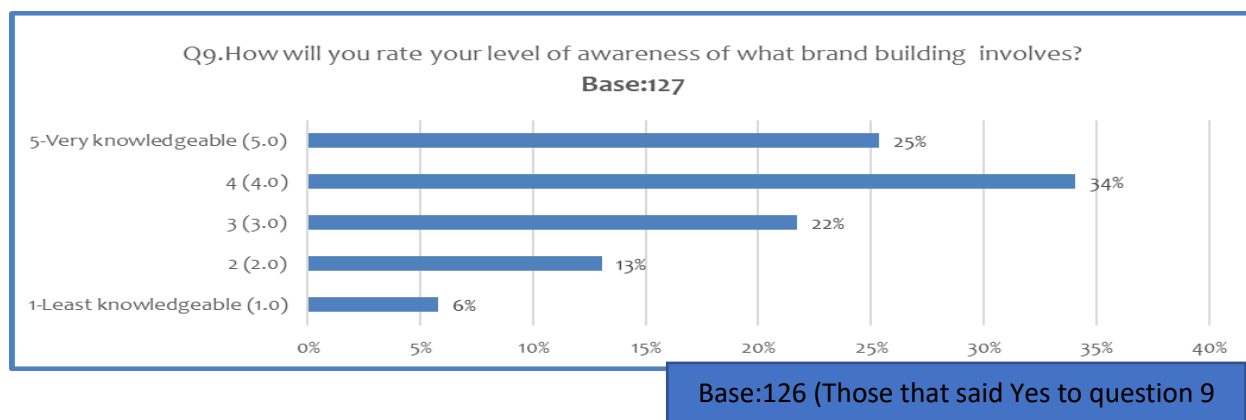


Table 12 and figure 9 presents data on awareness of key branding practices. The table shows that 53.8% of the respondents are aware of brand-building as a practice in business operations, 41.0% are not and 5.1% are unsure.

Figure 10

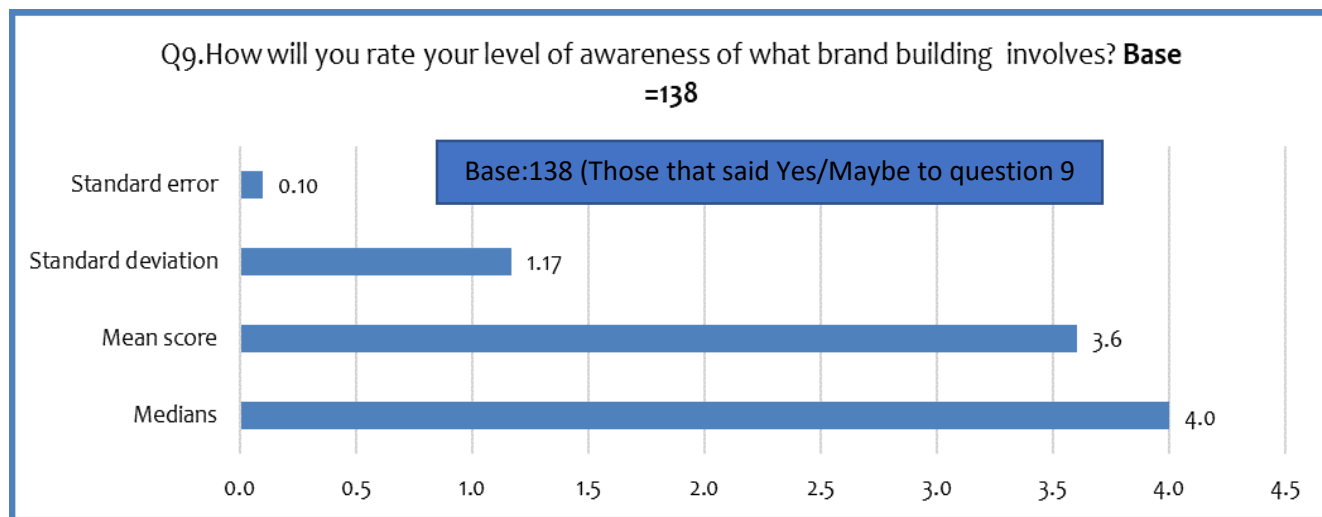
Rate of the level of awareness of brand building (Those that said Yes)



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Figure 11

Rate of the level of awareness of brand building (those that said Yes and Maybe)



In Figure 11, the standard error shows it is an accurate representation of the mean of our sample size of 234 while the standard deviation of the mean score shows the data is well distributed.

Table 13*Awareness of brand building by having a logo*

Brand building is having a logo	Frequency	Per cent
Least Agree	11	4.7
Somewhat Agree	27	11.5
Agree	79	33.8
Mostly Agree	41	17.5
Strongly Agree	76	32.5
Total	234	100.0

Table 13, concerning brand building having a logo, 4.7% least agree with the statement, 11.5% somewhat agree, 33.8% agree, 17.5% mostly agree and 32.5% strongly agree.

Table 14*Awareness relating to brand proposition*

Brand building involves a brand proposition and identity	Frequency	Per cent
Least Agree	9	3.8
Somewhat Agree	25	10.7
Agree	68	29.1
Mostly Agree	63	26.9
Strongly Agree	69	29.5
Total	234	100.0

Table 14, on brand building involving a brand proposition and identity, 3.8% least agree with the statement, 10.7% somewhat agree, 29.1% agree, 26.9% mostly agree and 29.5% strongly agree.

Table 15

Level of the agreement to brand building as an advertisement

Brand building is an advertisement	Frequency	Per cent
Least Agree	5	2.1
Somewhat Agree	20	8.5
Agree	60	25.6
Mostly Agree	61	26.1
Strongly Agree	88	37.6
Total	234	100.0

Table 15, concerning brand building being an advertisement, 2.1% least agree, 5.1% somewhat agree, 26.1% agree, 27.4% mostly agree and 39.3% strongly agree.

Table 16

Agreement that brand building involves strategic thinking

Brand building involves strategic thinking	Frequency	Per cent
Least Agree	3	1.3
Somewhat Agree	25	10.7
Agree	72	30.8
Mostly Agree	59	25.2
Strongly Agree	75	32.1
Total	234	100.0

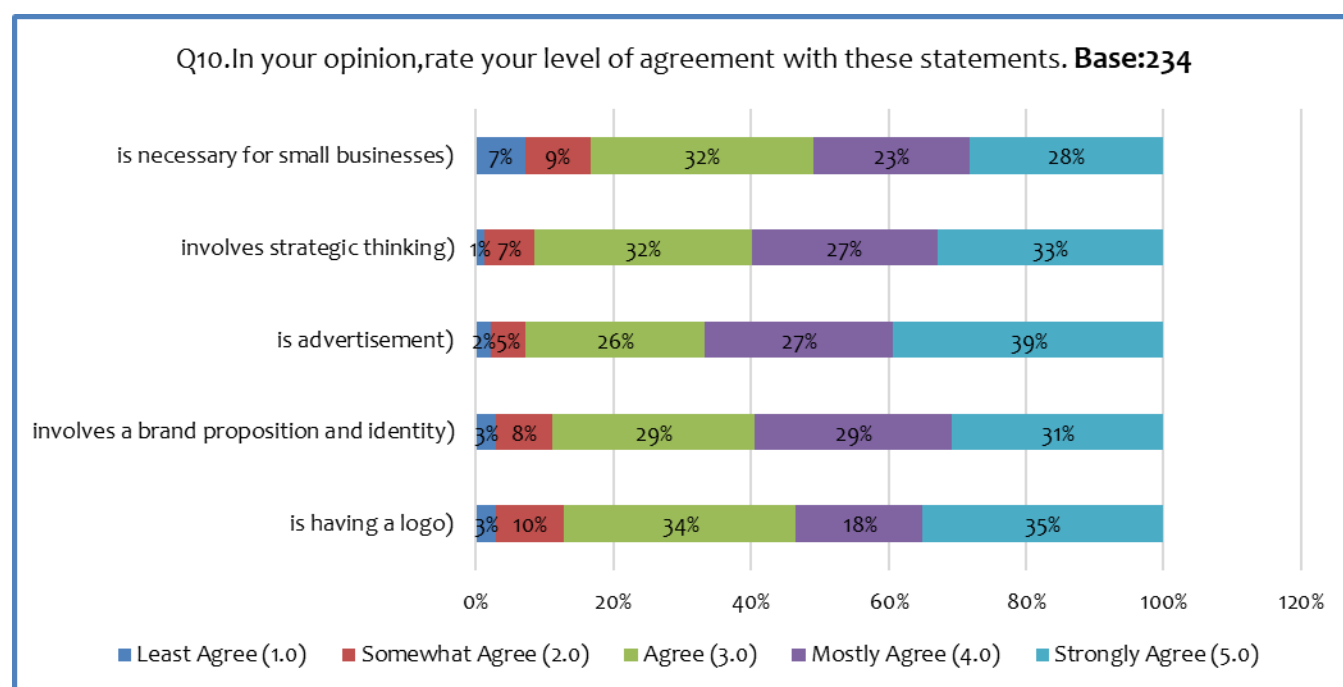
From the data in Table 16, 1.3% of the respondents least agree that brand building involves strategic thinking, 10.7% somewhat agree, 30.8% agree, 25.2% mostly agree and 32.1% strongly agree.

Table 17

Necessity of brand building to MSME businesses

Brand building is necessary for MSME businesses	Frequency	Per cent
Least Agree	17	7.3
Somewhat Agree	30	12.8
Agree	74	31.6
Mostly Agree	50	21.4
Strongly Agree	63	26.9
Total	234	100.0

Table 17, on whether brand building is necessary for MSME businesses, 7.3% least agree, 12.8% somewhat agree, 31.6% agree, 21.4% mostly agree and 26.9% strongly agree.

Figure 12*Level of agreement awareness of brand building*

In tables 13 to 17 and in Figure 12 above, 92% each agreed that brand building involves strategic thinking, and it is about advertisement. 89% agreed it involves brand positioning and identity, 87% agreed it is having a logo and 83% agreed it is necessary for MSME businesses.

Figure 13

The standard deviation of the level of agreement awareness of brand building

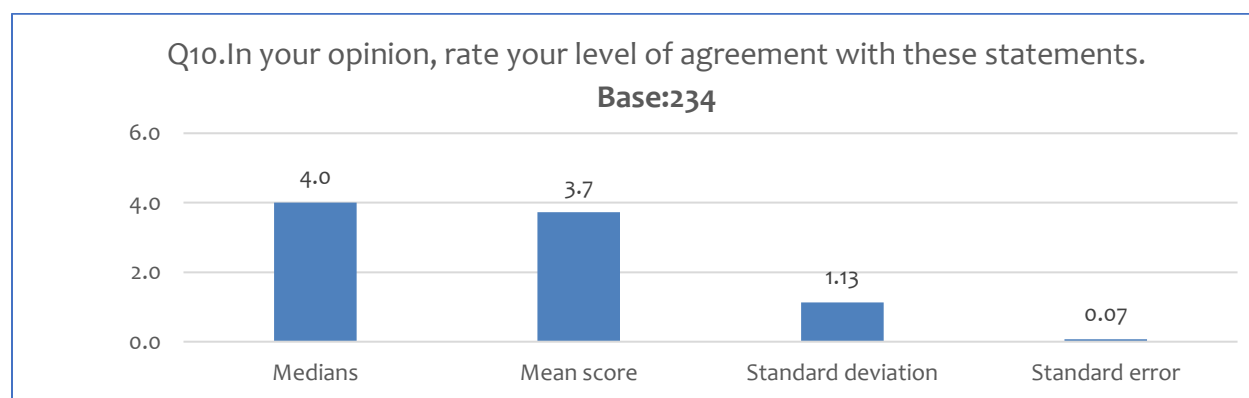


Figure 14

Response to those who have undertaken brand-building initiatives

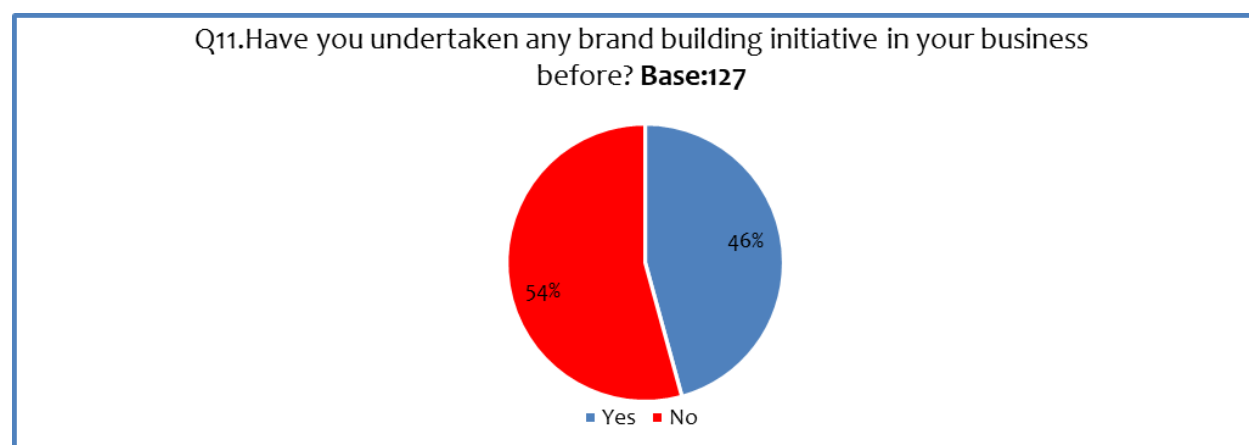


Figure 15

Those who have not undertaken, a response on what it will take to adopt brand-building initiatives

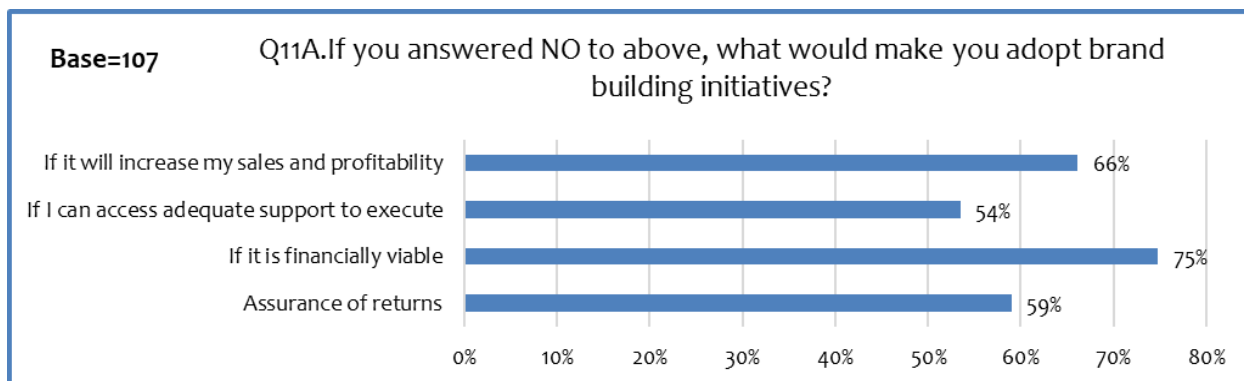
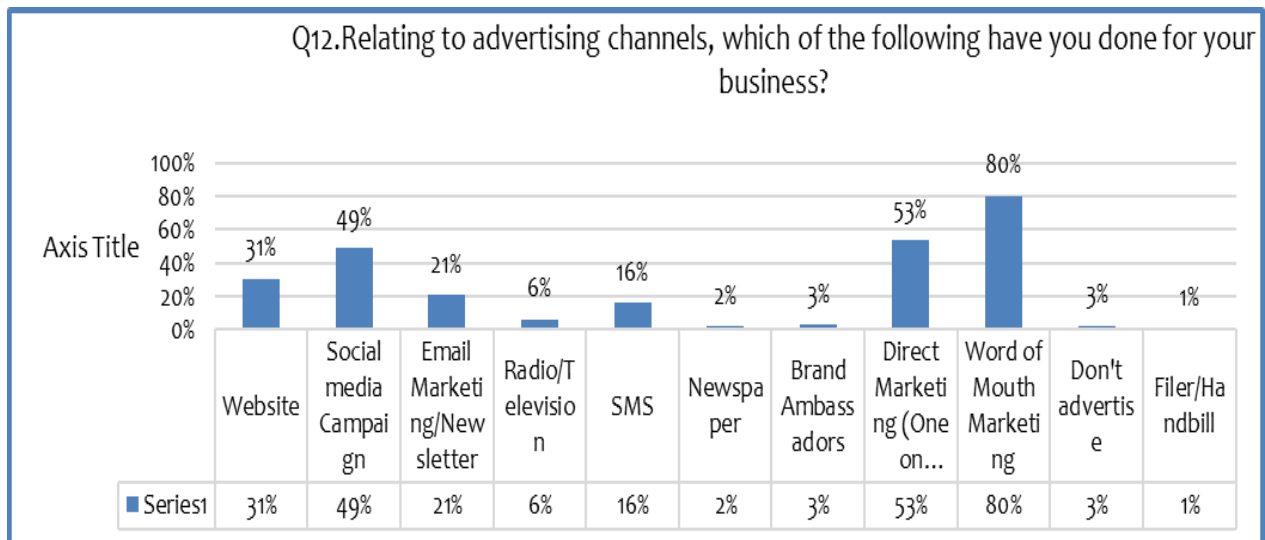


Figure 15 shows that 54% mentioned they have undertaken brand-building initiatives for their business before now, while 46% have not. From Figure 11, the top mention of what would make the 46% who have not undertaken brand-building initiatives to adopt it are; if it is financially viable (75%), increases sales and profitability (66%), assurance of returns (59%) and accessibility to adequate support (54%). Amazingly, amongst those who have undertaken brand-building initiatives, the top four mentions are logo creation (84%), advertisement (63%), brand identity/positioning (56%) and setting up customer service (52%).

Figure 16

Marketing channels adopted by business owners



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Figure 16 shows advertisement channels, where respondents mentioned, three top-of-minds which are word-of-mouth marketing (80%), direct marketing (53%) and social media campaign (49%). Other key mentions are website (31%), email marketing/newsletter (21%) and SMS (16%).

Test Of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One:

H_{1_0} : There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand-building strategy by business owners.

H_{1_1} : There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand building strategy by business owners.

Table 18*Relationship between Awareness of Brand Building and Adoption of Brand Building Strategy*

Adoption of Brand Building Initiative	Level of Awareness of brand building					Total
	1-Least knowledgeable	2	3	4	5-Very knowledgeable	
Yes	3 3.10%	8 8.30%	18.8%	40 41.70%	27 28.10%	96 100.00%
No	5 11.60%	10 23.30%	12 27.90%	7 16.30%	9 20.90%	43 100.00%
Total	8 5.80%	18 12.90%	30 21.60%	47 33.80%	36 25.90%	139 100.00%
$\chi^2 = 16.246$; df = 4; p-value = .003; Cramer's V=.342						

Table 18 reveals that the chi-square value (χ^2) is 16.246 and the 'p-value is 0.003, which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. Hence, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This implies that there is a relationship between the level of awareness and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners. In other words, business owners' level of awareness of branding-building strategies influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives. The percentage analysis of the Table reveals that a higher percentage of business owners who have adopted brand-building initiatives have a very high level of awareness of brand-building compared to those who have not adopted brand-building initiatives.

The table shows that on an awareness scale of 1-5 (with 1 being least knowledgeable and 5 being very knowledgeable), among respondents who have adopted brand-building initiatives, 3.10% have a score of 1, 8.3% have a score of 2, 18.8% have a score of 3, 41.7% have a score of 4 and 28.1% have a score of 5. However, among respondents who have not adopted brand-building

initiatives, 11.6% have a score of 1, 23.3% have a score of 2, 27.9% have a score of 3, 16.30% have a score of 4 and 20.90% have a score of 5.

The Cramer's V value, which is a measure of the association between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand-building strategy, is also present in Table 18. The Cramer V's value is .342, which denotes a strong positive association between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand-building strategy.

Table 19

Cross-tabulation of Gender and Level of Awareness of Brand Building

Gender	How will you rate your level of awareness of what brand building involves?					Total
	1-Least knowledgeable	2	3	4	5-Very knowledgeable	
Male	5 4.90%	11 10.80%	21 20.60%	38 37.30%	27 26.50%	102 100.00%
Female	3 8.10%	7 18.90%	9 24.30%	9 24.30%	9 24.30%	37 100.00%
Total	8 5.80%	18 12.90%	30 21.60%	47 33.80%	36 25.90%	139 100.00%
$\chi^2 = 3.439$; df = 4; p-value = .487						

The results of the cross-tabulation of gender and awareness of brand building are presented in Table 19. The table shows that among the male business owners, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being least knowledgeable and 5 being very knowledgeable), 4.9% had a score of 1, 10.8% had a score of 2, 20.6% had a score of 3, 37.3% had a score of 4 and 26.5% had a score of 5. However, among the female business owners, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being least knowledgeable and 5 being very knowledgeable), 8.10% had a score of 1, 18.9% had a score of 2, 24.3% had a score of 3, another 24.3% had a score of 4 and yet a last 24.3% had a score of 5.

The table further reveals that the chi-square value (χ^2) is 3.439 and the 'p-value is 0.489, which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Hence, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is rejected. This implies that there is no relationship between the gender of business owners and their adoption of brand-building strategies. In other words, the gender of business owners does not influence their level of awareness of brand building.

Table 20

Cross-tabulation of Business registration and level of Awareness of Brand Building

Registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)	How will you rate your level of awareness of what brand building involves?					Total
	1-Least knowledgeable	2	3	4	5-Very knowledgeable	
Registered	4 3.50%	12 10.50%	24 21.10%	39 34.20%	35 30.70%	114 100.00%
Not Registered	4 16.00%	6 24.00%	6 24.00%	8 32.00%	1 4.00%	25 100.00%
Total	8 5.80%	18 12.90%	30 21.60%	47 33.80%	36 25.90%	139 100.00%
$\chi^2 = 14.190 = 4$; p-value = .007; Cramer's V=.320						

The results of the cross-tabulation of Business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and awareness of brand building are presented in Table 20. The table shows that among the business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being least knowledgeable and 5 being very knowledgeable), 3.5% had a score of 1, 10.50% had a score of 2, 21.10% had a score of 3, 34.70% had a score of 4 and 30.70% had a score of 5. However, among the business owners who have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being least knowledgeable and 5 being very knowledgeable), 16.0% had a score of 1, 24% had a score of 2, another 24.0% had a score of 3, 32.0% had a score of 4 and 4.0% had a score of 5.

The Table further shows that the chi-square value is 14.190 and the "p-value" is 0.007, which is less than the threshold of 0.05 for statistical significance. Because of this, the H_{10} hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_{11}) is accepted. Therefore, there exists a relationship between the registration of a business with the Corporate Affairs Commission and the level of awareness of brand-building strategies.

From the percentage analysis of the cross-tabulation, business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission have a higher level of awareness of brand building strategy compared to those who have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

Table 21

Cross-tabulation of Adoption of Brand building and Number of years in Business Operation

Adoption of Brand Building Initiative	Number of years in business operation		Total
	3-4 years	Above 5 years	
Yes	17 15.7%	91 84.3%	108 100.0%
No	17 13.5%	109 86.5%	126 100.0%
Total	34 14.5%	200 85.5%	234 100.0%
$\chi^2 = .237$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = .627$			

The results of the cross-tabulation of the adoption of brand-building initiatives and the number of years in business operation are presented in Table 21. The table shows that among the business owners who adopted brand-building initiatives, 15.7% have been in business for 3-4 years while 84.3% have been in business for over 5 years. However, out of the business owners who have not adopted brand-building initiatives, 13.5% have been in business for 3-4 years while 86.5% have been in business for over 5 years.

As seen in Table 21, the Chi-square value (.237) and the "p-value" are both more than the level of significance of 0.05, suggesting a statistically significant difference. As a result, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, while the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is rejected, as shown in the diagram. In other words, there is no correlation between the number of years a company has been in operation and the adoption of brand-building strategies. In other words, the number of years of business operation does not influence the adoption of brand-building strategies among business owners.

Table 22

Correlation of Level of Awareness of Brand Building with Number of Years in Business

Correlations				
			Level of Awareness of Brand Building	Number of years in business operation
Spearman's rho	Level of Awareness of Brand Building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.080
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.349
		N	139	139
	Number of years in business operation	Correlation Coefficient	-.080	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.349	.
		N	139	234

As shown in Table 22, the association between the level of awareness of brand building and the number of years a business has been in existence was tested using Spearman Rank Correlation. The Spearman Rank Correlation value is -.080 in the table, which indicates a weak negative correlation, and one that is not statistically significant at a p-value of .349 because of the small sample size. There is no relationship between the number of years in business operation and

the level of awareness of brand building, as demonstrated by the findings of this study. In other words, the number of years a company has been in operation does not have an impact on the awareness of brand-building tactics among its owners.

Table 23

Correlation of Level of Awareness of Brand Building with Level of Education

			Level of Awareness of Brand Building	Level of education
Spearman's rho	Level of Awareness of Brand Building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.044
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.611
		N	139	139
	Level of education	Correlation Coefficient	.044	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.611	.
		N	139	234

As shown in Table 23, the result of the Spearman Rank Correlation reveals that there is no statistically significant correlation between the level of awareness of brand building and the level of education of business owners. It can be seen in the table that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is .044. This is a weak positive correlation, and it is not statistically significant because the p-value for this correlation is .611. The finding from the analysis shows that there is no relationship between the level of education and the level of awareness of the importance of brand building among business owners.

To put it another way, the level of education of business owners has no impact on their awareness of brand-building tactics. It follows from this finding that an understanding of brand-building strategy by business owners is not dependent on their level of education. Therefore, business owners who have higher educational levels are not more likely to be aware of the

importance of brand building than business owners who have lower educational levels, according to the study.

Table 24

Correlation of Level of Awareness of Brand Building with Age Group

Correlations			Level of Awareness of Brand Building	Age group
Spearman's rho	Level of Awareness of Brand Building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.031
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.717
		N	139	139
Age group		Correlation Coefficient	.031	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.717	.
		N	139	234

Table 24 presents the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between the age group of business owners and their level of awareness of brand building. The table shows that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is .031 which is an almost non-existence correlation with no statistically significant at a p-value of 0.556. The result shows that there is no relationship between the age group of business owners and their level of awareness of brand building. That is, the age group of business owners does not influence their awareness of brand-building strategies.

Table 25*Correlation of Level of Awareness of Brand Building with Number of Employees*

			Level of Awareness of Brand Building	Number of Employees
Spearman's rho	Level of Awareness of Brand Building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.177*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.037
		N	139	139
	Number of Employees	Correlation Coefficient	.177*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.
		N	139	234

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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Table 25 reveals the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between the level of awareness of brand building and the number of employees. The Table shows that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is .177 which is a weak but positive correlation which is statistically significant at a p-value of 0.037. The result shows that there is a relationship between the number of employees and their level of awareness of brand building. That is, the number of employees business owners have does influence their awareness of brand-building strategies.

Table 26

ANOVA result on the relationship between the sector of business and awareness of branding

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P-Value	Remark
Accommodation and food services	11	3.73	0.647	9.64	.490	Not significant
Administrative and support service activities	10	3.9	1.37			
Agriculture	1	4	.			
Arts, entertainment and recreation	7	2.86	0.69			
Construction	1	4	.			
Education	10	3.3	0.823			
Human health and social works	5	3	0.707			
Information and communication	7	3.57	1.134			
Manufacturing	20	3.65	1.226			
Other services activities	12	3.33	1.497			
Professional, scientific and technical works	24	3.5	1.532			
Real estate activities	8	4.38	0.744			
Transport and storage	2	3	1.414			
Wholesale /retail trade	21	3.95	0.973			
Total	139	3.61	1.17			

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Table 26 presents the ANOVA result on the relationship between sector of business and awareness of branding. The Table shows that the P-value is .490, which is greater than 0.05. This implies that there is no statistical evidence that the associated population means of the different sectors of business are significantly different. Thus, it can be inferred that there is no statistically

significant relationship between the sector of business and awareness of branding among business owners.

Construct 2: Attitude towards Brand Building

Table 27

Attitude Towards Brand Building

Brand building is limited to your company logo	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	33	14.1
Disagree	79	33.8
Neither agree nor disagree	42	17.9
Agree	60	25.6
Strongly agree	20	8.5
Total	234	100.0

Table 28

Brand Building is done by multinationals

Brand building is only done by multinationals/big companies	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	45	19.2
Disagree	80	34.2
Neither agree nor disagree	42	17.9
Agree	34	14.5
Strongly agree	33	14.1
Total	234	100.0

Table 29*Brand building can grow a business*

Brand building can help a business grow	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	2	0.9
Disagree	2	0.9
Neither agree nor disagree	21	9.0
Agree	96	41.0
Strongly agree	113	48.3
Total	234	100.0

Table 30*Only business owners can execute brand-building*

Only business owners can execute brand-building initiatives	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	11	4.7
Disagree	55	23.5
Neither agree nor disagree	75	32.1
Agree	54	23.1
Strongly agree	39	16.7
Total	234	100.0

Table 31*Brand building can lead to profit*

Brand building can lead to an increase in profit	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	2	0.9
Disagree	6	2.6
Neither agree nor disagree	49	20.9
Agree	90	38.5
Strongly agree	87	37.2
Total	234	100.0

Table 32*Business owners have limited knowledge*

Business owners have limited knowledge of brand-building	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	9	3.8
Disagree	46	19.7
Neither agree nor disagree	61	26.1
Agree	74	31.6
Strongly agree	44	18.8
Total	234	100.0

Table 33*I adopt brand-building*

I adopt brand building because it will increase my sales	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	9	3.8
Disagree	9	3.8
Neither agree nor disagree	37	15.8
Agree	81	34.6
Strongly agree	98	41.9
Total	234	100.0

Table 34*Perception to increase in customer base*

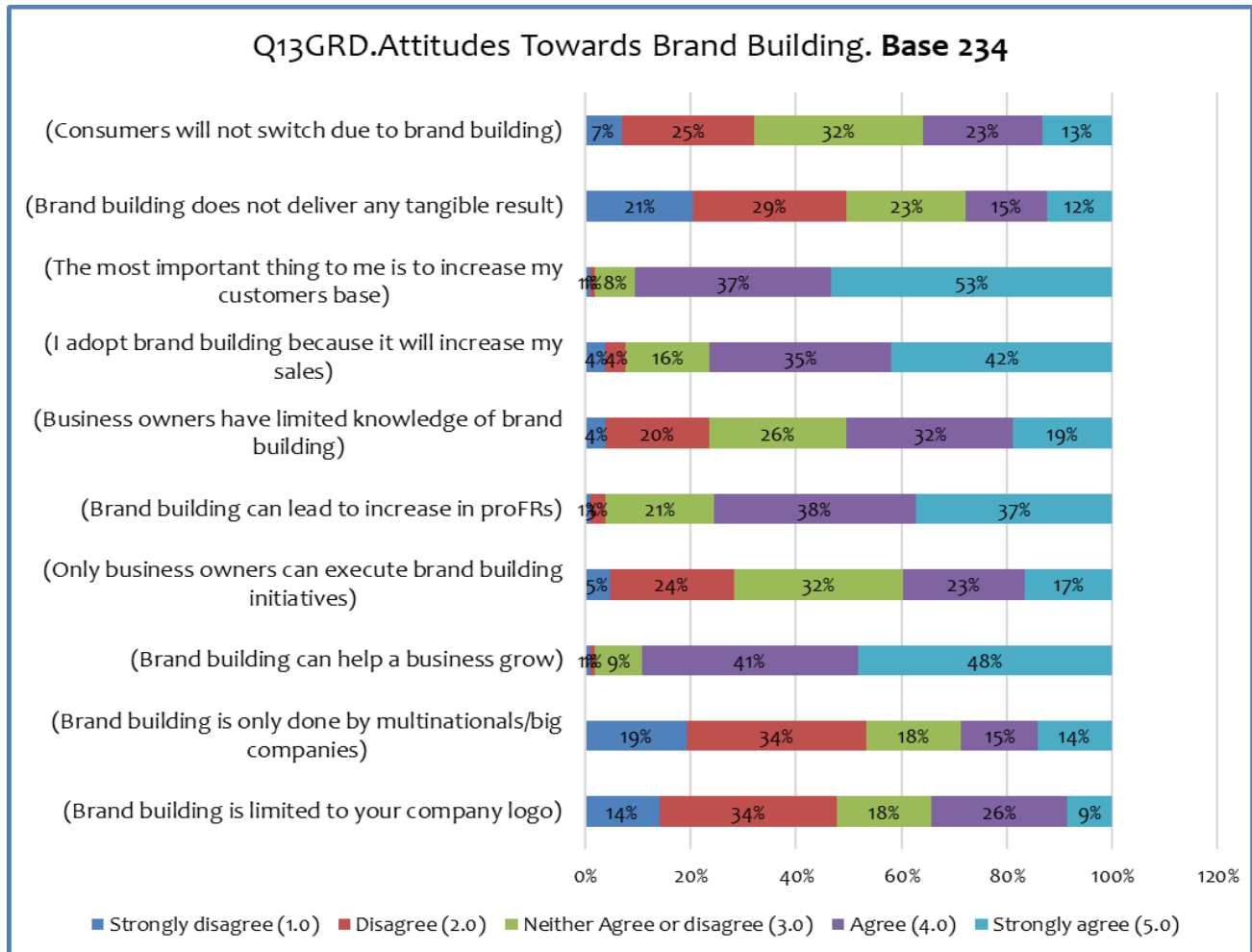
The most important thing to me is to increase my customer base	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	2	0.9
Disagree	2	0.9
Neither agree nor disagree	18	7.7
Agree	87	37.2
Strongly agree	125	53.4
Total	234	100.0

Table 35*Impact of brand building on results*

Brand Building does not deliver any tangible result	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	48	20.5
Disagree	68	29.1
Neither agree nor disagree	53	22.6
Agree	36	15.4
Strongly agree	29	12.4
Total	234	100.0

Table 36*Attitude towards switching*

Consumers will not switch due to brand-building	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	16	6.8
Disagree	59	25.2
Neither agree nor disagree	75	32.1
Agree	53	22.6
Strongly agree	31	13.2
Total	234	100.0

Figure 17*Attitudes towards brand building*

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In Figure 17, 90% agreed that the most important thing to respondents is increasing the customer base, helping businesses grow 89%, increasing sales 77%, and increasing profits 75% topped the list. Tables 27 to 36 detail respondents' attitudes towards brand building. On brand building being limited to having just a logo, this statement is strongly agreed with by 14.1% of respondents, whereas 33.8 per cent strongly disagree, 17.9% neither agree nor disagree, 25.6 per cent agree, and

8.5 per cent strongly agree. Brand building is not confined to the company logo, according to the data in the table. Concerning the question of whether brand building is only the responsibility of multinational corporations or large corporations, 19.2 per cent strongly disagree, 34.2 per cent disagree; 17 per cent neither agree nor disagree; 25 per cent agree, and 8.5 per cent highly agree. According to the data in the tables, 19.2 per cent strongly disagree that brand building is solely the responsibility of multinational corporations/large corporations, 34.2 per cent disagree, 17.9 per cent neither agree nor disagree, 14.5 per cent agree, and 14.1 per cent agree.

Concerning the question of whether brand building may assist a company in its growth, 0.9 per cent strongly disagreed, 0.9 per cent disagreed, 9.0 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed per cent, 41.0 per cent agreed, and 48.3% highly agreed. 4.7 per cent disagree, 23.5 per cent disagree, 32 per cent neither agree nor disagree, 23.1 per cent agree and 16.7 per cent strongly agree that only firm owners can undertake brand-building projects.

On the question of whether brand building can lead to an increase in profit, 0.9 per cent of respondents strongly disagree that brand building can lead to an increase in profit, 2.6 per cent disagree, 20.9 per cent neither agree nor disagree, 38.5 per cent agree, and 37.2 per cent strongly agree. In terms of whether brand building can lead to an increase in profit, 9 per cent of respondents strongly disagree that brand building can lead to an increase in profit. The respondents strongly disagree that business owners have limited expertise in brand building, with per cent disagreeing, 19.7 disagreeing, 26.1 per cent neither agreeing nor disagreeing, 31.6 per cent stating they agree, and 18.8 per cent saying they firmly agree. According to the data in the table, 3.8 per cent of respondents strongly disagreed that they should invest in brand building since it will enhance their sales, 3.8 per cent disagree, 15.8 per cent neither agree nor disagree, 34.6 per cent agree, and 41.9 per cent highly agree with this.

According to the data in the table, 9 per cent of respondents strongly disagree that increasing their customer base is the most essential thing for them, 9 per cent disagree, 7.7 per cent neither agree nor disagree, 37.2 per cent agree, and 53.4 per cent agree on the question of whether or not brand building produces tangible results, 20.5 per cent of respondents strongly disagree that brand building does not produce any tangible results, 29.1% disagree, 22.6 per cent neither agree nor disagree, 15.4% agree, and 12.4 per cent strongly agree.

Concerning the question of whether brand building produces tangible results, 20.5 per cent strongly disagree that brand building does not produce any tangible results. On the question of whether consumers will switch because of brand building, 6.8 per cent of respondents strongly disagreed that consumers will not switch because of brand building, 25.2 per cent disagreed, 32.1 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed, 22.6 per cent agreed, and 13.2 per cent strongly disagreed.

Test Of Hypothesis

Hypothesis Two:

H_{20} : The attitude of business owners does not influence their adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

H_{21} : The attitude of business owners influences their adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

Table 37

Relationship between Attitude Towards Brand Building and Adoption of Brand Building Strategy by Business Owners

Adoption of Brand Building Initiative	Attitude Towards Brand Building			Total
	Average	High	Very High	
Yes	13 12.0%	63 58.3%	32 29.6%	108 100.0%
No	47 37.3%	66 52.4%	13 10.3%	126 100.0%
Total	60 25.6%	129 55.1%	45 19.2%	234 100.0%
$\chi^2 = 26.129$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = .000$ Cramer's $V = .334$				

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As shown in Table 37, The mean of the chi-square values (2) is 26.129, and the p-value is 0.00, which is less than the threshold of 0.05 for statistical significance. So, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is disproved, resulting in the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1). The implication of this is that there is a relationship between the mindset of business owners and their decision to implement brand-building initiatives.

In other words, business owners' attitude toward branding-building strategies influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives. The percentage analysis of the table reveals that a higher percentage of business owners who have adopted brand-building initiatives have a very high score concerning their attitude towards brand-building compared to those who have not adopted brand-building initiatives.

The table shows that out of respondents who have adopted brand-building initiatives, 12.0% have an average attitude score, 58.3% have a high attitude score and 29.6% have a very high-level attitude score. However, out of the respondents who have not adopted any brand-building initiative, 37.3% have an average attitude score, 52.4% have a high attitude score and 10.3% have a very high attitude score.

The Cramer's V value, which is a measure of the association between attitude towards brand building and the adoption of brand-building strategy, is also present in Table 37. The Cramer V's value is .334, which denotes a strong association between the attitude of business owners and the adoption of brand-building strategy.

Table 38

Cross-Tabulation of Gender and Attitude Towards Brand Building

Gender	Attitude Towards Brand Building			Total
	Average	High	Very High	
Male	45 26.8%	85 50.6%	38 22.6%	168 100.0%
Female	15 22.7%	44 66.7%	7 10.6%	66 100.0%
Total	60 25.6%	129 55.1%	45 19.2%	234 100.0%
$\chi^2 = 6.080$; df = 2; p-value = .048				

The results of the cross-tabulation of gender and attitude toward brand building are presented in Table 38. The table shows that among the male business owners, 26.8% have an average attitude score, 50.6% have a high attitude score and 22.6% have a very high-level attitude score. However, out of the female business owners, 22.7% have an average attitude score, 66.7% have a high attitude score and 10.6% have a very high attitude score.

Additionally, the table reveals that the chi-square value is 6.080 and the 'p-value is 0.048, both of which are less than the threshold for statistical significance of 0.05. So, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is disproved, resulting in the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1). In other words, there appears to be a relationship between the gender of business owners and their attitude toward brand-building strategies.

In other words, the gender of business owners influences their attitude towards brand-building strategy. From the percentage analysis of Table 38, the data shows that among the male business owners, of very high attitude was 22.6%. However, only 10.6% of the female business owners had a very high attitude score.

Table 39

Cross-tabulation of Business registration and Attitude Towards Brand Building

Business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)	Attitude Towards Brand Building			Total
	Average	High	Very High	
Yes	28 16.8%	100 59.9%	39 23.4%	167 100.0%
No	32 47.8%	29 43.3%	6 9.0%	67 100.0%
Total	60 25.6%	129 55.1%	45 19.2%	234 100.0%
$\chi^2 = 25.459$; df = 2; p-value = .000				

The results of the cross-tabulation of business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and attitude towards brand building are presented in Table 39. The table shows that among the business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission, 16.8% had an average attitude score, 59.9% had a high attitude score and

23.4% had a very high attitude score. However, out of the business owners who have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission, 47.8% had an average attitude score, 43.3% had a high attitude score and 9.0% had a very high attitude score.

A look at the data in the table indicates that the chi-square value (2) is 25.459 and that the "p-value" is 0.000, which is less than the threshold for statistical significance (0.05). Because of this, H_0 is rejected while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Thus, there exists a relationship between the registration of business with the Corporate Affairs Commission and one's attitude toward a branding plan. From the percentage analysis of the cross-tabulation, business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission had a higher attitude score compared to those who have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

Table 40

Correlation of Attitude Towards Brand Building with Number of Years in Business Operation

			Attitude Towards Brand Building	Number of years in business operation
Spearman's rho	Attitude Towards Brand Building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.185**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
		N	234	234
	Number of years in business operation	Correlation Coefficient	-.185**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
		N	234	234

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

A Spearman Rank Correlation test was used to determine the relationship between attitudes toward brand building and the number of years in business operation, as shown in Table 40. It can be seen in the table that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is $-.185$. This is a weak negative correlation, but it is statistically significant because the p-value is 0.004 (which indicates statistical significance).

The findings indicate that there is a negative association between the number of years a business has been in operation and the attitude toward brand building. Thus, the longer a company has been in operation, the lower its attitude toward brand-building strategy and how it is rated by its owners.

Table 41

Correlation of Attitude Towards Brand Building with Level of Education

			Attitude Towards Brand Building	Level of Education
Spearman's rho	Attitude Towards Brand Building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.062
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.347
		N	234	234
	Level of Education	Correlation Coefficient	-.062	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.347	.
		N	234	234

Table 41 shows the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between attitude towards brand building and level of education. The Table shows that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is $-.062$ which is a weak negative correlation, and this is not statistically significant at a p-value of 0.347 .

The result shows that there is no relationship between the level of education and attitude towards brand building. That is, the level of education of business owners does not influence their attitude towards brand-building strategies.

The negative correlation implies that the higher the level of education of business owners, the lower their attitude score towards brand building strategy. In other words, business owners with higher educational levels are more likely to have a lower attitude score towards brand building compared to those who have a lower level of education. However, this is not statistically significant.

Table 42

Correlation of Attitude Towards Brand Building with Age Group of Business Owners

			Attitude Towards Brand Building	Age Group
Spearman's rho	Attitude Towards Brand Building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.038
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.562
		N	234	234
	Age Group	Correlation Coefficient	.038	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.562	.
		N	234	234

Table 42 presents the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between the age group of business owners and their attitude towards brand building. The table shows that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is .038 which is an almost non-existence correlation with no statistically significant at a p-value of 0.562. The result shows that there is no relationship between

the age group of business owners and their attitude towards brand building. That is, the age group of business owners does not influence their attitude towards brand-building strategies.

Table 43

Correlation of Attitude Towards Brand Building with Number of Employees

			Attitude Towards Brand Building	Number of Employees
Spearman's rho	Attitude Towards Brand Building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.102
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.121
		N	234	234
	Number of Employees	Correlation Coefficient	-.102	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	.
		N	234	234

Table 43 reveals the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between attitude towards brand building strategy and the number of employees. The table shows that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is -.102 which is a very weak correlation with no statistical significance at a p-value of .121. The result shows that there is no relationship between the number of employees and attitude towards brand building. That is, the number of employees business owners have does not influence business owners' attitudes toward brand building.

Construct 3: Motivation for Adopting Brand Building

Table 44

Motivation to promote corporate image

I will adopt brand building because it will promote my corporate image	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	27	11.5
Disagree	23	9.8
Neither agree nor disagree	17	7.3
Agree	71	30.3
Strongly agree	96	41.0
Total	234	100.0

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Table 45

Motivation to drive competitive advantage

It will give my company a competitive advantage	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	26	11.1
Disagree	20	8.5
Neither agree nor disagree	40	17.1
Agree	56	23.9
Strongly agree	92	39.3
Total	234	100.0

Table 46*Motivation to attract more customers*

As a means to attract more customers	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	27	11.5
Disagree	13	5.6
Neither agree nor disagree	25	10.7
Agree	79	33.8
Strongly agree	90	38.5
Total	234	100.0

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Table 47*Motivation to increase profits*

Brand building can lead to an increase in profits	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly Disagree	24	10.3
Disagree	11	4.7
Neither agree nor disagree	33	14.1
Agree	74	31.6
Strongly agree	92	39.3
Total	234	100.0

Table 48*Motivation to drive business survival*

The practice of brand building leads to long-term business survival	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	26	11.1
Disagree	19	8.1
Neither agree nor disagree	42	17.9
Agree	67	28.6
Strongly agree	80	34.2
Total	234	100.0

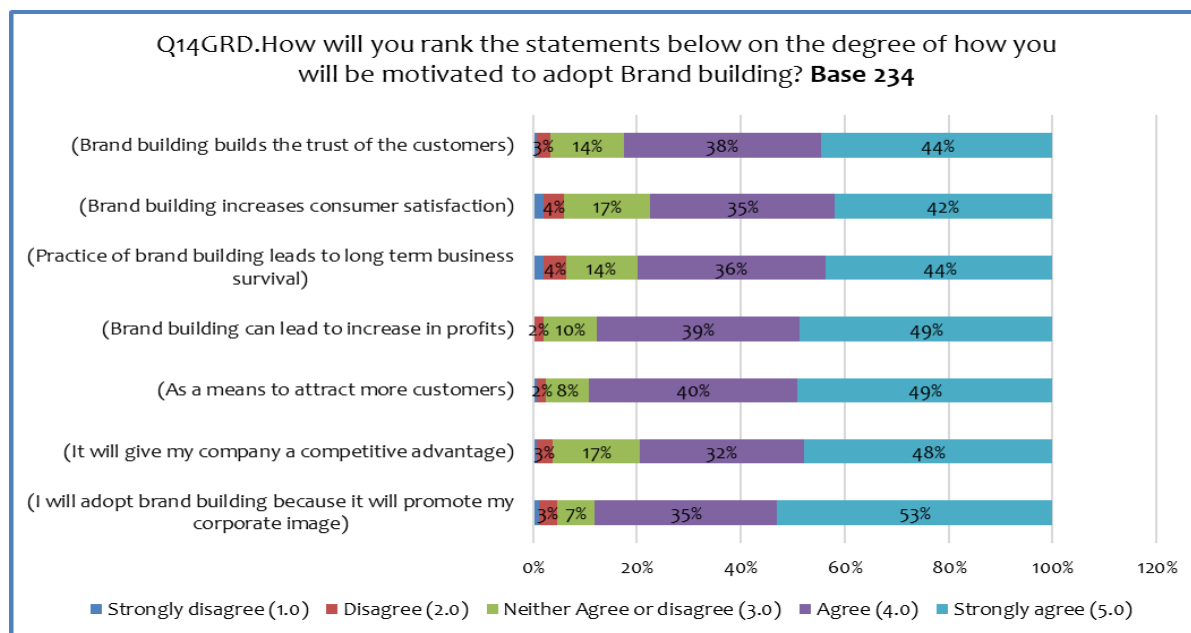
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Table 49*Motivation to increase customer satisfaction*

Brand building increases consumer satisfaction	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	26	11.1
Disagree	18	7.7
Neither agree nor disagree	47	20.1
Agree	65	27.8
Strongly agree	78	33.3
Total	234	100.0

Figure 18

Ranking of statements relating to motivation for adopting brand building strategies

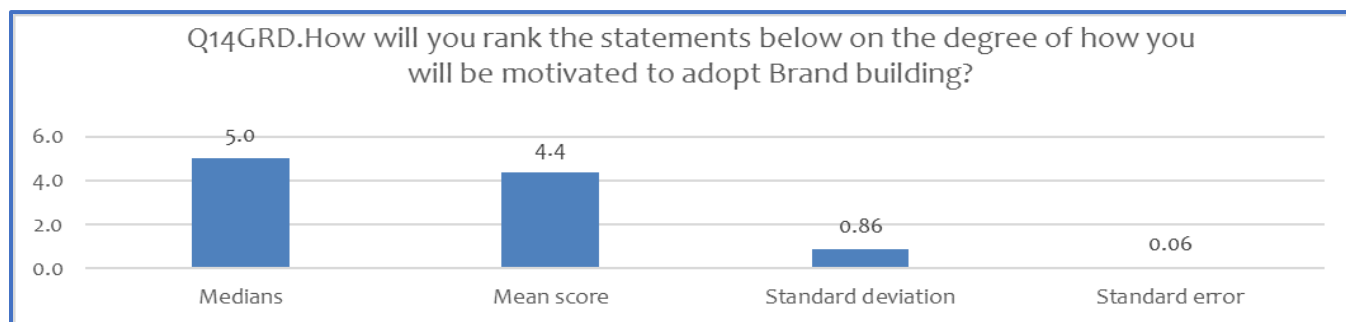


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Figure 18 refers to respondents claim they would be motivated to adopt brand building as a means of attracting more customers (89%), promoting corporate image and increasing profits respectively (88%), build customers' trust (82%), gives company a competitive advantage and leads to long term business survival respectively (80%), increase customers' satisfaction (77%).

Figure 19

Standard deviation relating to motivation for adopting brand building



In Figure 19, the standard error shows it is an accurate representation of the mean of our sample size of 234 while the standard deviation of the mean score shows the data is well distributed.

Table 50

Motivation to build trust

Brand building builds the trust of the customers	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly disagree	24	10.3
Disagree	16	6.8
Neither agree nor disagree	40	17.1
Agree	68	29.1
Strongly agree	86	36.8
Total	234	100.0

Tables 44 to 50, and figure 18 contains information on the factors that influenced the decision to use brand building. According to the data in the table, 11.5 per cent of respondents strongly disagree that they will engage in brand creation because it will help them promote their company image. In response to this remark, 9.8 percent disagree, 7.3 percent neither agree nor disagree with it, 30.3 percent agree, and 41.0 percent highly agree with it. Specifically, 11.1 percent of respondents strongly disagree that it will provide their organisation with a competitive edge, 8.5 percent disagree, 17.1 percent neither agree nor disagree, 23.9 percent agree, and 39.3 percent strongly agree on the topic of competitive advantage. 11.5 percent of respondents strongly disagree with the opinion that brand building is a means of attracting more customers; 5.6 percent disagree with this perspective; 10.7% are neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this view; 33.8 percent agree, and 38.5 percent strongly agree with this view.

Concerning the relationship between brand building and profits, 10.3 percent of those who answered the survey strongly disagree that brand building can lead to an increase in profits. 4.7 percent disagree, 14.1 percent are neither agreeing nor disagreeing, 31.6 percent agree, and 39.3 percent strongly agree with the statement.

According to the results of the survey on brand building and long-term business survival, 11.1 percent of respondents strongly disagree that the practice of brand building leads to long-term business survival, 8.1 percent disagree, 17.9 percent neither agree nor disagree, 28.6 percent agree, and 34.2 percent strongly agree. According to the results of the survey, 11.2 percent of respondents strongly disagree that brand building promotes consumer pleasure, 7.7 percent disagree with this perspective, 20.1 percent are neither agreeing nor disagreeing, 27.8 percent agree, and 33.3 percent highly agree with this opinion.

Finally, 10.3 per cent of respondents strongly disagree that brand building increases client trust, 6.8 per cent disagree with this opinion, 17.1 per cent neither agree nor disagree, 29.1 per cent agree, and 36.8 per cent strongly agree with this view.

Construct 4: Benefits of adopting brand building

Table 51

Influences of buying decisions

Influences customer's buying decisions	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	24	10.3
Quite important	45	19.2
Not Sure	28	12.0
Important	87	37.2
Very important	50	21.4
Total	234	100.0

Table 52*Benefit of improving company's image*

Improves the company's public image	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	15	6.4
Quite important	48	20.5
Not Sure	16	6.8
Important	77	32.9
Very important	78	33.3
Total	234	100.0

Table 53*Benefit of customer acquisition*

It makes new customer acquisition better	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	19	8.1
Quite important	44	18.8
Not Sure	39	16.7
Important	83	35.5
Very important	49	20.9
Total	234	100.0

Table 54*Benefit of business profitability*

Increases sales and business profitability	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	21	9.0
Quite important	34	14.5
Not Sure	26	11.1
Important	85	36.3
Very important	68	29.1
Total	234	100.0

Table 55*Benefit of making business stronger*

Makes the business stronger	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	27	11.5
Quite important	18	7.7
Not Sure	45	19.2
Important	69	29.5
Very important	75	32.1
Total	234	100.0

Table 56*Benefit of competitive edge*

Gives the company an edge over their competitors	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	30	12.8
Quite important	19	8.1
Not Sure	41	17.5
Important	68	29.1
Very important	76	32.5
Total	234	100.0

Table 57*Benefit of company credibility*

Enhances the credibility of the company	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	36	15.4
Quite important	7	3.0
Not Sure	47	20.1
Important	71	30.3
Very important	73	31.2
Total	234	100.0

Table 58*Benefit of understanding customer needs better*

Positions the business to understand the needs of the customer/consumers better	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	38	16.2
Quite important	10	4.3
Not Sure	43	18.4
Important	80	34.2
Very important	63	26.9
Total	234	100.0

Table 59*Benefit of customer engagement*

It drives better customer/consumer engagement and relationship	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	37	15.8
Quite important	12	5.1
Not Sure	51	21.8
Important	73	31.2
Very important	61	26.1
Total	234	100.0

Table 60*Benefit of building trust*

It builds the trust of the customers/consumers	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	36	15.4
Quite important	15	6.4
Not Sure	43	18.4
Important	78	33.3
Very important	62	26.5
Total	234	100.0

Table 61*Benefit of business direction*

It makes the business more focused and gives the business a sense of direction	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	32	13.7
Quite important	12	5.1
Not Sure	48	20.5
Important	72	30.8
Very important	70	29.9
Total	234	100.0

Table 62*Benefit of the value of the company*

Branding increases the value of the company	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	31	13.2
Quite important	12	5.1
Not Sure	38	16.2
Important	79	33.8
Very important	74	31.6
Total	234	100.0

Table 63*Benefit of inspiring employees*

It inspires employees and makes them more motivated	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	34	14.5
Quite important	17	7.3
Not Sure	49	20.9
Important	74	31.6
Very important	60	25.6
Total	234	100.0

Table 64*Benefit of business recognition*

It makes your business more recognizable	Frequency	Per cent
Not important	31	13.2
Quite important	8	3.4
Not Sure	37	15.8
Important	69	29.5
Very important	89	38.0
Total	234	100.0

Respondents' feedback on the benefits of adopting brand building is presented in tables 51 to 64 concerning branding building influencing customers buying decisions, 10.3% stated that this is not important, 19.2% said it is quite important, 12.0% are not sure, 37.2% said it is important and 21.4% stated that it is very important. On the importance of brand-building to the improvement of the company's public image, 6.4% are of the view that it is not important, 20.5% said it is quite important, 6.8% are not sure, 32.9% said it is important and 33.3% said it is very important. On the importance of brand building in the acquisition of new customers, 8.1% of the respondents stated that this is not important, 18.8% are of the view that this is quite important, 16.7% said they are not sure, 35.5% said it is important and 20.9% stated that it is very important.

On the importance of brand building in increasing sales and business profitability, 9.0% said it is not important, 14.5% are of the view that this is quite important, 11.1% said they are not sure, 36.3% said it is important and 29.1% stated that it is very important. In terms of the importance of brand building in making the business stronger, 11.5% of the respondents said it is not important, 7.7% said it is quite important, 19.2% said they are not sure, 29.5% said it is important and 32.1% said it is very important. Concerning the importance of brand building in

giving the company an edge over its competitors, 12.8% of the respondents stated that it is not important, 8.1% said it is quite important, 17.5% are unsure, 29.1% are of the view that it is important and 32.5% said it is very important.

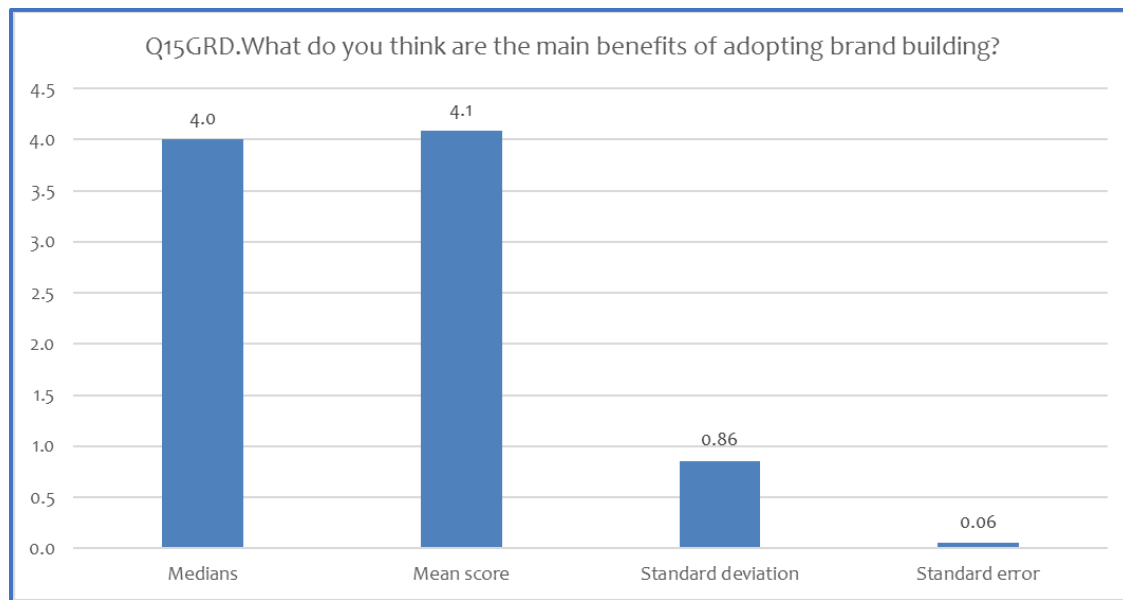
Concerning the importance of brand building in enhancing the credibility of the company, 15.4% said it is not important, 3.0% said it is quite important, 20.1% are unsure, 30.3% are of the view that it is important and 31.2% said it is very important. In terms of the importance of brand building in positioning the business to understand the needs of the customer/consumers better, 16.2% said it is not important, 4.3% said it is quite important, 18.4% said they are unsure, 34.2% said it is important and 26.9% said it is very important. On how important brand building is in driving a better customer/consumer engagement and relationship, 15.8% stated that it is not important, 5.1% said it is quite important, 21.8% said they are not sure, 31.2% said it is important and 26.1% said it is very important. Concerning the importance of brand building in building the trust of the customers/consumers, 15.4% of the respondents said it is not important, 6.4% said it is quite important, 18.4% said they are not sure, 33.3% said it is important and 26.5% said it is very important. Response on the importance of brand building in making business more focused and giving business a sense of direction shows that 13.7% of the respondents are of the view that it is not important, 5.1% said it is important, 20.5% are unsure, 30.8% said it is important while 29.9% said it is very important.

In terms of the importance of branding in increasing the value of a company, the Table shows that 13.2% of the respondents are of the view that it is not important, 5.1% are of the view that it is quite important, 16.2% are unsure, 33.8% stated that it is important and 31.6% are of the view that it is very important. In terms of the importance of branding in inspiring employees and making them more motivated, 14.5% of the respondents stated that it is not important, 7.3% said

it is quite important, 20.9% are unsure, 31.6% said it is important and 25.6% said it is very important. On the importance of branding in making business more recognizable, 13.2% said it is not important, 3.4% said it is quite important, 15.8% said they are not sure, 29.5% said it is important and 38.0% are of the view that it is very important.

Figure 20

Figure Standard deviation relating to motivation for adopting brand building



In Figure 20, the standard error shows it is an accurate representation of the mean of our sample size of 234 while the standard deviation of the mean score shows the data is well distributed.

Test Of Hypothesis

Hypothesis Three:

H_{3_0} : Motivation and perceived benefits do not influence the adoption of brand building strategy

by business owners.

H_{3_1} : Motivation and perceived benefits influence the adoption of brand-building strategies by

business owners.

Table 65*Model Summary*

Step	-2 Log-likelihood	Cox and Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	277.086 ^a	.178	.238

The explained variation in the dependent variable based on the model ranges from 17.8% to 23.8%.

Table 66*Classification Table^a*

		Predicted			
		Q11.Have you undertaken any brand-building initiative in your business before?		Percentage Correct	
		Yes	No		
Step 1	Observed				
	Q11.Have you undertaken any brand-building initiative in your business before?	Yes	No		
		58	50	53.7	
		21	105	83.3	
	Overall Percentage			69.7	

a. The cut value is .500

Table 67*Variables in the Equation*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Low Perceived Benefit (RC)			9.934	3	0.019	1		
Average Perceived Benefit	1.494	0.494	9.148	1	0.002	4.454	1.692	11.725
High Perceived Benefit	0.741	0.465	2.542	1	0.111	2.098	0.844	5.216
Very High Perceived Benefit	0.361	0.377	0.92	1	0.337	1.435	0.686	3.002
Low Motivation			25.315	3	0	1		
Average Motivation	1.461	0.495	8.724	1	0.003	4.308	1.635	11.356
High Motivation	2.424	0.606	16.018	1	0	11.292	3.445	37.009
Very High Motivation	1.288	0.345	13.962	1	0	3.626	1.845	7.127
Constant	-1.22	0.307	15.753	1	0	0.295		
Model χ^2 (p)								
Hosmer and Lemeshow's Test (p)	6.985 (3.22)							

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Table 65 shows the binary logistic regression analysis performed to ascertain the influence of motivation and perceived benefit on the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners. The model explained 23.8% (NagelkerkeR²) of the variance in the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners and correctly classified 69.7% of cases.

The binary logistics regression results reveal that business owners with average perceived benefit of brand building are more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to business owners with low perceived benefit of brand building. The analysis reveals that the odds of business owners with the average perceived benefit of brand building adopting brand building strategy is 4.454. That is, business owners with the average perceived benefit of brand building are over four times more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to those with low perceived benefits of brand building. The analysis further revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between business owners with average perceived benefit of branding and the adoption of branding strategies.

The relationship was significant at a p-value of 0.002. Similarly, the analysis revealed that business owners with high perceived benefits of brand building are more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to business owners with low perceived benefits of brand building. The analysis reveals that the odds of business owners with a high perceived benefit of brand building adopting brand building strategy is 2.098. That is, business owners with high perceived benefits of brand building are two times more likely to adopt brand building strategies compared to those with low perceived benefits of brand building. However, this was not statistically significant at a p-value of 0.111. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that business owners with very high perceived benefits of brand building are more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to business owners with low perceived benefits of brand building. The analysis reveals that the odds of business owners with very high perceived benefit of brand building adopting brand building strategy is 1.435. That is, business owners with very high perceived benefits of brand building are almost one and a half times more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared

to those with low perceived benefits of brand building. However, this was not statistically significant at a p-value of 0.337.

Concerning motivation, the binary regression result reveals that business owners with average motivation for adopting brand building are more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to business owners with low motivation for adopting brand building. The analysis reveals that the odds of business owners with average motivation adopting brand building strategy compared to those with low motivation is 4.308.

That is business owners with average motivation for adopting brand building are over four times more likely to adopt brand building strategies compared to those with low motivation. The relationship between business owners with average motivation for adoption and adoption of branding was found to be statistically significant at a p-value of 0.003. Similarly, the analysis revealed that business owners with high motivation for adopting brand building are more likely to adopt brand building strategies compared to business owners with low motivation for adopting brand building. The analysis reveals that the odds of business owners with high motivation adopting brand building strategy is 11.929. That is, business owners with high motivation are almost twelve times more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to those with low motivation and this was also statistically significant at a p-value of 0.000.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that business owners with very high motivation to adopt brand building are more likely to adopt brand building strategies compared to business owners with low motivation. The analysis reveals that the odds of business owners with very high motivation adopting brand building strategy is 3.363. That is, business owners with very high motivation for adopting brand build are almost three times more likely to adopt brand building strategies compared to those with low motivation. The relationship between business owners with

very high motivation for adopting brand-building strategies and adoption of brand-building strategies was statistically significant at 0.000.

Overall, the analysis revealed motivation and perceived benefit branding influence the adoption of brand-building strategies. Specifically, there is a statistically significant relationship between business owners with low and average perceived benefits and the adoption of brand-build strategies. The analysis also revealed there is a statistically significant relationship between business owners with motivation at all levels (low, average, high and very high) and adoption of brand-building strategies.

Construct 5: Challenges Facing Business Owners

Table 68

Challenge on brand building knowledge

Incompetence/Lack of knowledge on brand building	Frequency	Per cent
Least Severe	65	27.8
Somewhat Severe	40	17.1
Severe	52	22.2
More Severe	42	17.9
Most Severe	35	15.0
Total	234	100.0

Table 69*Challenge on cost of execution*

High cost of execution	Frequency	Per cent
Least Severe	17	7.3
Somewhat Severe	41	17.5
Severe	52	22.2
More Severe	56	23.9
Most Severe	68	29.1
Total	234	100.0

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Table 70*Challenge on benefits*

Business benefits are not immediate	Frequency	Per cent
Least Severe	29	12.4
Somewhat Severe	70	29.9
Severe	62	26.5
More Severe	39	16.7
Most Severe	34	14.5
Total	234	100.0

Table 71*Challenge on business impact*

Has less impact on business	Frequency	Per cent
Least Severe	58	24.8
Somewhat Severe	65	27.8
Severe	51	21.8
More Severe	36	15.4
Most Severe	24	10.3
Total	234	100.0

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Table 72*Challenge on branding inconsistency*

Inability to be consistent with branding tactics	Frequency	Per cent
Least Severe	30	12.8
Somewhat Severe	64	27.4
Severe	72	30.8
More Severe	41	17.5
Most Severe	27	11.5
Total	234	100.0

Table 73*Challenge on time*

It is a time-consuming process	Frequency	Per cent
Least Severe	15	6.4
Somewhat Severe	61	26.1
Severe	65	27.8
More Severe	60	25.6
Most Severe	33	14.1
Total	234	100.0

Table 74*Challenge of business pressure*

Inability to focus due to business pressure	Frequency	Per cent
Least Severe	29	12.4
Somewhat Severe	58	24.8
Severe	71	30.3
More Severe	43	18.4
Most Severe	33	14.1
Total	234	100.0

Table 75*Challenge on customer clarity*

Lack of clarity on the target customers	Frequency	Per cent
Least Severe	44	18.8
Somewhat Severe	66	28.2
Severe	48	20.5
More Severe	54	23.1
Most Severe	22	9.4
Total	234	100.0

Table 76*Challenge of external factors*

Challenges from external factors	Frequency	Per cent
Least Severe	24	10.3
Somewhat Severe	52	22.2
Severe	55	23.5
More Severe	45	19.2
Most Severe	58	24.8
Total	234	100.0

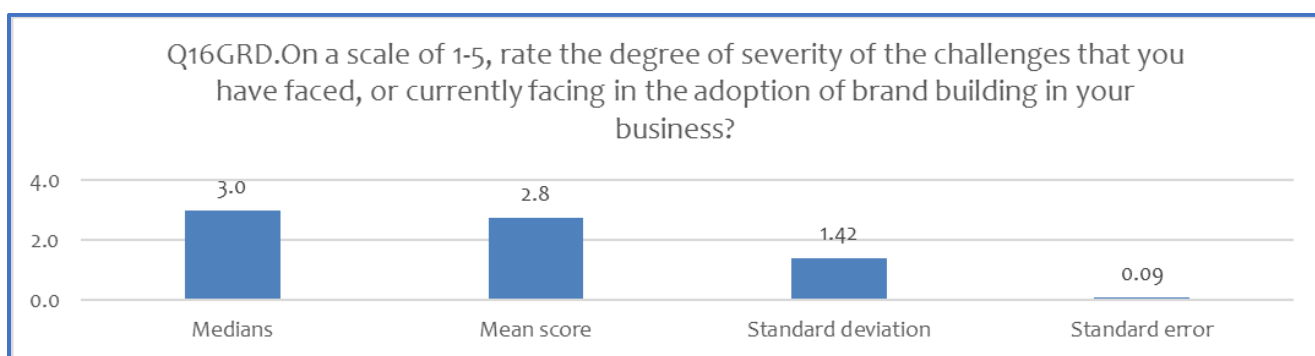
Tables 68 to 76 present data on the challenges facing business owners concerning branding. Concerning incompetence/ lack of knowledge on branding, 27.8% of the respondents stated that such a challenge is least severe, 17.1% said it is somewhat severe, 22.2% view it as severe, 17.9% said it is more severe, and 15.0% stated that it is most severe. The table shows that 7.3% of the respondents consider the challenge of the high cost of execution of branding as least severe, 17.5% said it is somewhat severe, 22.2% view it as severe, and 23.9% consider it more severe while 29.1% say it is most severe. Concerning the challenge of business benefits not being immediate, 12.4% of the respondents see this challenge as least severe, 29.9% view it as somewhat severe, 26.5% said it is severe, 16.7% view this challenge as more severe while 14.5% stated that it is most severe. In terms of the challenge of branding having less impact on business, 24.8% of the respondents stated that it is least severe, 27.8% said it is somewhat severe, 21.8% said it is severe, 15.4% said it is more severe and 10.3% stated that it is most severe. Concerning the challenge of branding having less impact on business, 24.8% of the respondents stated that the challenge is least severe, 27.8% said it is somewhat severe, 21.8% said it is severe, 15.4% stated that it is more severe and 10.3% said it is most severe. The challenge of the inability to be consistent with

branding tactics is least severe by 12.8% of the respondents, 27.4% view it as somewhat severe, 30.8% consider it severe, 17.5% said it is more severe and 11.5% see it as most severe.

The challenge of branding being a time-consuming process is viewed as least severe by 6.4% of the respondents, 26.1% consider it somewhat severe, 27.8% said it is severe, 25.6% consider it to be more severe and 14.1% view it as most severe. The Table displays a score of 12.4% of the respondents see the branding challenge of inability to focus due to business pressure as least severe, 24.8% see it as somewhat severe, 30.3% consider it as severe, 18.4% said it is more severe while 14.1% view it as most severe. The branding challenge of lack of clarity on target customers is seen as least severe by 18.8% of the respondents, 28.2% consider it as somewhat severe, 20.5% said it is severe, 23.2% view it as more severe and 9.4% consider it as most severe. The external challenge of branding is considered as least severe by 10.3% of the respondents, 22.2% consider it as somewhat severe, 23.5% view it as severe, 19.2% said it is more severe and 24.8% said it is most severe.

Figure 21

Standard deviation degree of severity of challenges faced by business owners



In Figure 21, the standard error shows it is an accurate representation of the mean of our sample size of 234 while the standard deviation of the mean score shows the data is well distributed.

Figure 22

Ranking of the degree of severity of challenges faced by business owners

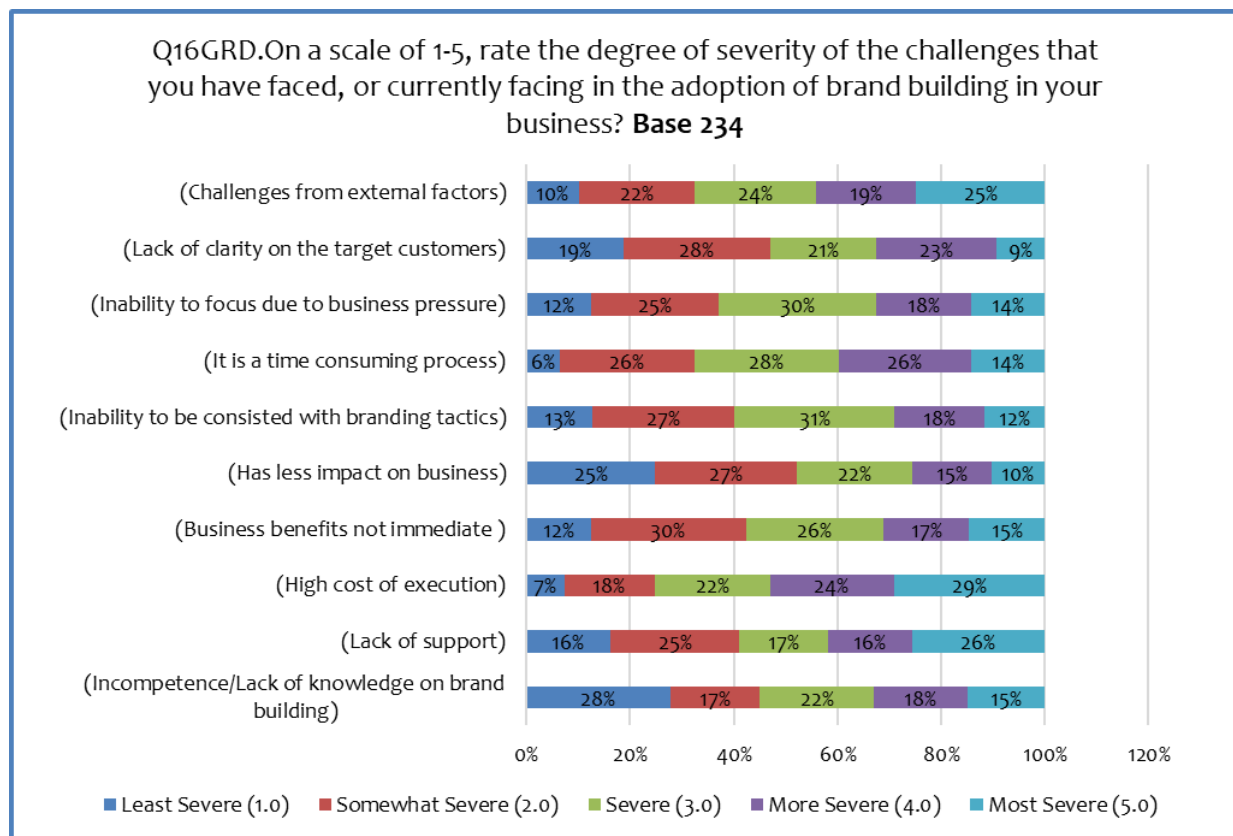


Figure 22 depicts the top four severity of the challenges that respondents have faced, or currently facing in the adoption of brand building are inability to focus due to business pressure (75%), business benefits not being immediate and incompetence/lack of knowledge on brand building (68%) respectively and less impact on business (61%).

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis Four

H_{4_0} : There is no significant relationship between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

H_{4_1} : There is a significant relationship between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

Table 77

Relationship between the level of challenges experienced and adoption of brand-building

Adoption of Brand Building Initiative	Level of Challenges of Brand Building				Total
	Low	Average	High	Very High	
Yes	43 39.80%	26 24.10%	30 27.80%	9 8.30%	108 100.00%
No	23 18.30%	33 26.20%	43 34.10%	27 21.40%	126 100.00%
Total	66 28.20%	59 25.20%	73 31.20%	36 15.40%	234 100.00%
$\chi^2 = 16.922$; df = 3; p-value = .001; Cramer' V=.269					

Table 77 reveals that the chi-square value (χ^2) is 16.922 and the 'p-value is 0.001, which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. Hence, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This implies that there is a relationship between the level of challenges and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners. In other words, business owners' level of challenges in branding building influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives. The percentage analysis of the table reveals that a higher percentage of business owners who have adopted brand-building initiatives have a low level of challenge compared to those who have not adopted brand-building initiatives.

The table shows that out of respondents who have adopted brand-building initiatives, 39.80% have a low level of challenges in brand building, 24.10% have an average level, 27.80% have a high level and 8.3% have a very high level of challenges with brand building. However, out of respondents who have not adopted any brand-building initiative, 18.30% have a low level of challenge in brand building, 26.20% have an average level, 34.1% have a high level and 21.4% have a very high level of challenge with brand building.

The Cramer's V value, which shows the degree of association between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategy, is also present in Table 77. The Cramer V's value is .269, which implies that there is a moderate association between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategy.

Table 78

Cross-Tabulation of Gender and Level of Challenges with Brand Building

Gender	Level of Challenges of Brand Building				Total
	Low	Average	High	Very High	
Male	50 29.8%	37 22.0%	57 33.9%	24 14.3%	168 100.0%
Female	16 24.2%	22 33.3%	16 24.2%	12 18.2%	66 100.0%
Total	66 28.2%	59 25.2%	73 31.2%	36 15.4%	234 100.0%
$\chi^2 = 4.808$; df = 3; p-value = .186					

The results of the cross-tabulation of gender and level of challenge with the brand building are presented in table 78. The table shows that among the male business owners, 29.8% have a low level of challenge with brand building, 22% have an average level, 33.9% have a high level and 14.3% have a very high level of challenge with brand building. However, out of the female business owners, 24.2% have a low level of challenge with brand building, 33.3% have an average level, 24.2% have a high level and 18.2% have a very high level of challenge with brand building.

The table further reveals that the chi-square value (χ^2) is 4.808 and the 'p-value is 0.186, which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Hence, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is rejected. This implies that there is no relationship between the gender of business owners and the level of challenge they have with brand-building strategy.

In other words, the gender of business owners does not influence their level of challenge with brand building.

Table 79

Cross-tabulation of Business registration and Level of Challenges with Brand Building

Business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)	Level of Challenges of Brand Building				Total
	Low	Average	High	Very High	
Yes	59 35.30%	40 24.00%	48 28.70%	20 12.00%	167 100.00%
No	7 10.40%	19 28.40%	25 37.30%	16 23.90%	67 100.00%
Total	66 28.20%	59 25.20%	73 31.20%	36 15.40%	234 100.00%
$\chi^2 = 16.394$; $df = 3$; $p\text{-value} = .001$					

The results of the cross-tabulation of Business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and the level of challenge with the brand building are presented in Table 79. The table shows that among the business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission, 35.30% have a low level of challenge with brand building, 24.00% have an average level, 28.7% have a high level and 12.0% have a very high level of challenge with brand building.

However, among the business owners who have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission, 10.40% have a low level of challenge with brand building, 28.40% have an average level, 37.3% have a high level and 23.9% have a very high level of challenge with brand building.

According to the data in the table, the chi-square value (2) is 16.3094, and the p-value is 0.001, both of which are less than the threshold level of significance of 0.05. Because of this, the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. The implication is that there is a connection between the

registration of a firm with the Corporate Affairs Commission and the problems associated with the implementation of a brand-building strategy from the percentage analysis of the cross-tabulation, business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission have a lower level of challenge with brand building compared to those that have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

Table 80

Correlation of Challenges of Brand Building with Number of Employees

			Number of Employees	Level of Challenges of Brand Building
Number of Employees	Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.233**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	234	234
Level of Challenges of Brand Building		Correlation Coefficient	.233**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	234	234

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

Table 80 reveals the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between the level of challenge with brand building and the number of employees. The table shows that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is .223 which is a weak but positive correlation and is statistically significant at a p-value of 0.001. The result shows that there is a relationship between the number of employees and the level of challenges experienced by business owners with brand building. That is the number of employees business owners influence the level of challenges they have with brand-building strategies.

Table 81

Correlation of Level of Challenges of Brand Building with Level of Education

			Level of Challenges	Level of Education
Spearman's rho	Level of Challenges	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.143*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.029
		N	234	234
	Level of Education	Correlation Coefficient	.143*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.029	.
		N	234	234

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 81 displays the results of a Spearman Rank Correlation test conducted to determine the relationship between the level of problems associated with brand building and the level of education. The Spearman Rank Correlation value is .143, which indicates a weak but positive correlation, but it is statistically significant at a p-value of 0.029, according to the data in the following table.

In the end, the findings reveal that there is a relationship between the level of education and the level of difficulty associated with brand development. In other words, the level of education of business owners has an impact on the level of difficulty they have when it comes to brand building. It follows from this positive association that business owners who have received more education have more challenges when it comes to implementing a brand-building plan, as indicated by the data. To put it another way, business owners with higher educational levels are more likely than those with lower educational levels to face greater difficulties in brand building.

Table 82

Correlation of age group and level of challenges of business Owners with brand building

			Level of Challenges	Age Group
Spearman's rho	Level of Challenges	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.022
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.739
		N	234	234
	Age Group	Correlation Coefficient	-.022	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.739	.
		N	234	234

Table 82 presents the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between the age group of business owners and their level of challenge with brand building. The table shows that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is -.022, which is an almost non-existence correlation with no statistical significance at a p-value of 0.739.

The result shows that there is no relationship between the age group of business owners and their level of challenge with brand building. That is, the age group of business owners does not influence their challenge with brand-building strategies.

Table 83

Correlation of level of challenges and number of years in operation with brand building

			Level of Challenges	Number of years in business operation
Spearman's rho	Level of Challenges	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.334**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	234	234
	Number of years in business operation	Correlation Coefficient	.334**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	234	234

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

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The table above displays the results of the Spearman Rank Correlation analysis of the relationship between challenges in brand building and the number of years in business operation. This is statistically significant because the Spearman Rank Correlation value is .334, which indicates a positive correlation. The p-value is 0.000, which indicates that the correlation is statistically significant.

The findings indicate that there is a relationship between the number of years a company has been in operation and the level of difficulty associated with brand development. That is, the number of years a business owner has been in operation has an impact on the difficulty they have in implementing brand-building tactics. The positive association suggests that the greater the number of years a company has been in operation, the greater the level of difficulty they have in implementing a brand-building plan.

Figure 23

Percentage distribution of Brand Building Challenges

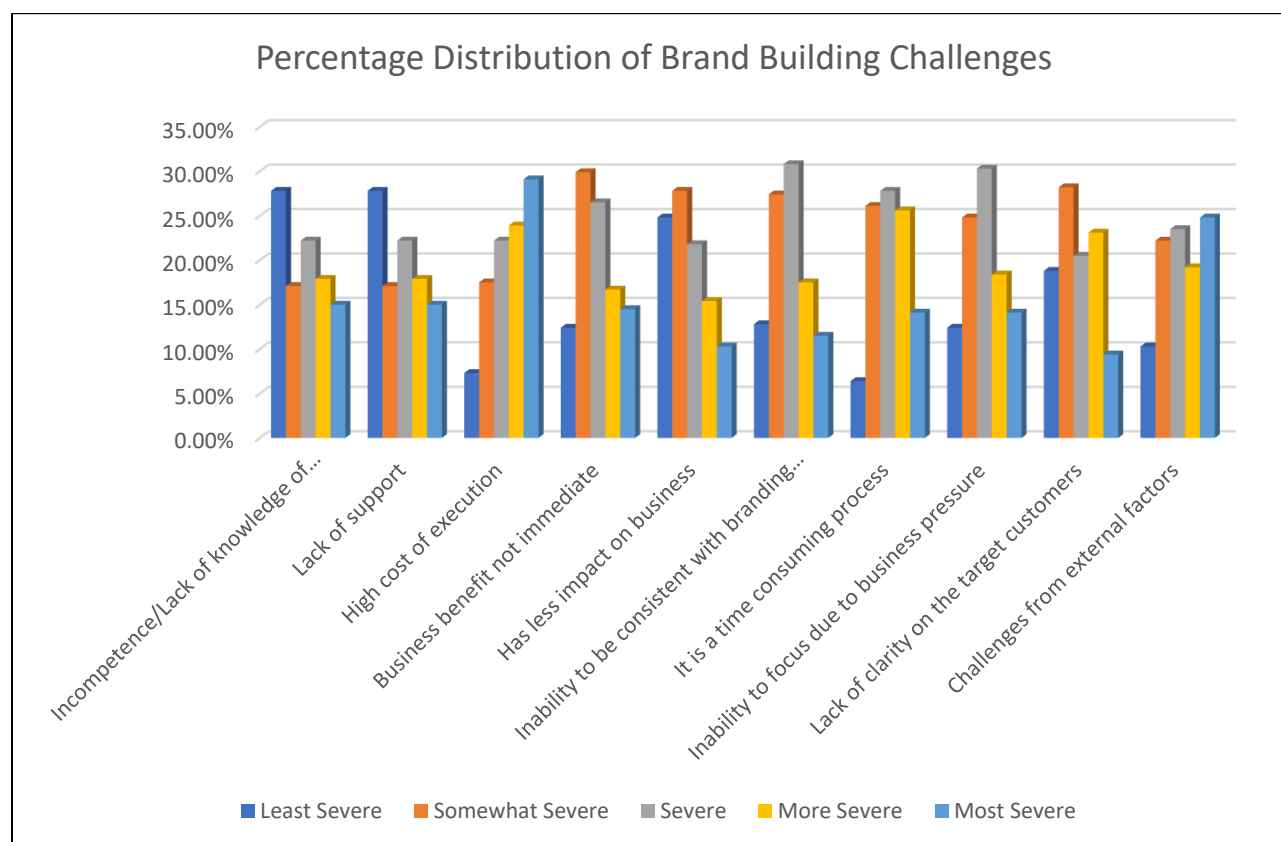


Figure 23 shows that the most severe brand-building challenge faced by business owners is the high cost of execution. Other prominent challenges are challenges from external factors, incompetence/lack of knowledge of brand building, lack of support, and business benefits not being immediate.

It is important to establish the presence or otherwise of a relationship or to check for peculiarity across business sectors and the variables tested. Given the diversity of MSME businesses, it is good to ascertain if there is any relationship between the independent variables across the 14 sectors of the business areas.

Table 84*Relationship between the adoption of brand building and the business sector*

Nature of Business	Adoption of brand-building initiative		Total
	Adopted	Not Adopted	
Accommodation and food services	12 50.00%	12 50.00%	24 100%
Administrative and support service activities	8 61.50%	5 38.50%	13 100%
Agriculture	1 33.30%	2 66.70%	3 100%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	6 60.00%	4 40.00%	10 100%
Construction	0 0.00%	3 100.00%	3 100%
Education	10 40.00%	15 60.00%	25 100%
Human health and social works	2 16.70%	10 83.30%	12 100%
Information and communication	5 50.00%	5 50.00%	10 100%
Manufacturing	12 29.30%	29 70.70%	41 100%
Professional, scientific and technical works	17 56.70%	13 43.30%	30 100%
Real estate activities	5 55.60%	4 44.40%	9 100%
Transport and storage	1 20.00%	4 80.00%	5 100%
Wholesale /retail trade	20 55.60%	16 44.40%	36 100%
Other services activities	9 69.20%	4 30.80%	13 100%
Total	108 46.20%	126 53.80%	234 100%
$\chi^2 = 21.362$; df = 13; p-value = .066			

Table 84 reveals that the chi-square value (χ^2) is 21.362 and the ‘p-value is 0.066, which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Hence, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is rejected. This implies that there is no statistically significant relationship between the business sector and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business

owners. In other words, the business sector does not determine if business owners adopt brand building initiatives or not.

The percentage analysis of the table reveals that among respondents who operate in the accommodation and food service sector, 50% had undertaken brand-building initiatives in their business while 50% had not. For respondents involved in administrative and support service activities, 61.50% had undertaken brand-building initiatives in their business while 38.50% had not. In Agriculture, 33.3% of business owners undertook brand-building initiatives while 66.70% did not. Concerning the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector, 60% of business owners there had undertaken brand-building initiatives in their business while 40% had not. All the respondents in the Construction sector had undertaken brand-building initiatives in their business. In the education sector, 40% of the respondents had undertaken brand-building initiatives in their business while 60% had not. For the Human Health and Social Works sector, 16.70% of the respondents undertook brand-building initiatives in their business while 83.3% had not. The Tables show that 50% of the respondents who operate in the Information and Communication sector had undertaken brand-building initiatives in their business while the other 50% had not. Concerning manufacturing, 29.3% of respondents who operate in this sector had undertaken brand-building initiatives in their business while 70.7% had not. For respondents who operate in the professional, scientific and technical works sector, 56.70% had undertaken brand-building initiatives while 43.30% had not. In the Real Estate sector, 55.60% of the respondents had undertaken brand-building initiatives while 44.40%. For respondents in the Transport and Storage sector, 20% of the respondents had undertaken brand-building initiatives while 80% had not. In the Wholesale/Retail trade sector, 55.6% of the respondents had undertaken brand-building initiatives while 44.4% had

not. Lastly, for respondents who operate in other service activities, 69.20% had undertaken brand-building initiatives while 30.80% had not.

The top three sectors that adopted brand-building are Other Services, Administrative and Support Services, and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation. Sectors with the least adoption are Construction Sector, Human Health and Social Works sector and Transport and Storage sector.

Table 85*Cross-tabulation of Awareness and Business Sector*

Nature of your business?	Level of Awareness of Brand Building				Total
	Low	Average	High	Very High	
Accommodation and food services	1 4.20%	6 25.00%	8 33.30%	9 37.50%	24 100.00%
Administrative and support service activities	0 0.00%	8 61.50%	2 15.40%	3 23.10%	13 100.00%
Agriculture	0 0.00%	1 33.30%	1 33.30%	1 33.30%	3 100.00%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0 0.00%	2 20.00%	3 30.00%	5 50.00%	10 100.00%
Construction	0 0.00%	2 66.70%	0 0.00%	1 33.30%	3 100.00%
Education	5 20.00%	3 12.00%	7 28.00%	10 40.00%	25 100.00%
Human health and social works	1 8.30%	9 75.00%	0 0.00%	2 16.70%	12 100.00%
Information and communication	0 0.00%	4 40.00%	0 0.00%	6 60.00%	10 100.00%
Manufacturing	1 2.40%	11 26.80%	15 36.60%	14 34.10%	41 100.00%
Other services activities	2 15.40%	3 23.10%	5 38.50%	3 23.10%	13 100.00%
Professional, scientific and technical works	2 6.70%	9 30.00%	14 46.70%	5 16.70%	30 100.00%
Real estate activities	1 11.10%	1 11.10%	2 22.20%	5 55.60%	9 100.00%
Transport and storage	0 0.00%	1 20.00%	1 20.00%	3 60.00%	5 100.00%
Wholesale /retail trade	1 2.80%	8 22.20%	11 30.60%	16 44.40%	36 100.00%
Total	14 6.00%	68 29.10%	69 29.50%	83 35.50%	234 100.00%
$\chi^2 = 58.392$; df = 39; p-value = .024					

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Table 86*Cross Tabulation of Attitude and Business Sector*

Nature of Business	Attitude towards Brand Building			Total
	Average	High	Very High	
Accommodation and food services	7 29.20%	12 50.00%	5 20.80%	24 100.00%
Administrative and support service activities	2 15.40%	8 61.50%	3 23.10%	13 100.00%
Agriculture	1 33.30%	2 66.70%	0 0.00%	3 100.00%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4 40.00%	5 50.00%	1 10.00%	10 100.00%
Construction	0 0.00%	3 100.00%	0 0.00%	3 100.00%
Education	10 40.00%	13 52.00%	2 8.00%	25 100.00%
Human health and social works	4 33.30%	7 58.30%	1 8.30%	12 100.00%
Information and communication	1 10.00%	6 60.00%	3 30.00%	10 100.00%
Manufacturing	21 51.20%	19 46.30%	1 2.40%	41 100.00%
Other services activities	2 15.40%	6 46.20%	5 38.50%	13 100.00%
Professional, scientific and technical works	3 10.00%	24 80.00%	3 10.00%	30 100.00%
Real estate activities	0 0.00%	4 44.40%	5 55.60%	9 100.00%
Transport and storage	1 20.00%	2 40.00%	2 40.00%	5 100.00%
Wholesale /retail trade	4 11.10%	18 50.00%	14 38.90%	36 100.00%
Total	60 25.60%	129 55.10%	45 19.20%	234 100.00%
$\chi^2 = 60.042$; $df = 26$; $p\text{-value} = .000$				

Table 87*Cross-tabulation of Perceived Benefits and Business Sector*

Nature of business	Level of Perceived Benefit of Brand Building				Total
	Low	Average	High	Very High	
Accommodation and food services	9	5	4	6	24
	37.50%	20.80%	16.70%	25.00%	100.00%
Administrative and support service activities	1	5	3	4	13
	7.70%	38.50%	23.10%	30.80%	100.00%
Agriculture	0	1	0	2	3
	0.00%	33.30%	0.00%	66.70%	100.00%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4	0	1	5	10
	40.00%	0.00%	10.00%	50.00%	100.00%
Construction	0	2	0	1	3
	0.00%	66.70%	0.00%	33.30%	100.00%
Education	4	7	6	8	25
	16.00%	28.00%	24.00%	32.00%	100.00%
Human health and social works	2	5	3	2	12
	16.70%	41.70%	25.00%	16.70%	100.00%
Information and communication	1	0	4	5	10
	10.00%	0.00%	40.00%	50.00%	100.00%
Manufacturing	6	3	12	20	41
	14.60%	7.30%	29.30%	48.80%	100.00%
Other services activities	0	3	4	6	13
	0.00%	23.10%	30.80%	46.20%	100.00%
Professional, scientific and technical works	3	4	11	12	30
	10.00%	13.30%	36.70%	40.00%	100.00%
Real estate activities	0	0	0	9	9
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transport and storage	0	1	2	2	5
	0.00%	20.00%	40.00%	40.00%	100.00%
Wholesale /retail trade	7	0	11	18	36
	19.40%	0.00%	30.60%	50.00%	100.00%
Total	37	36	61	100	234
	15.80%	15.40%	26.10%	42.70%	100.00%
$\chi^2 = 70.934$; df = 39; p-value = .001					

Table 88*Cross Tabulation of Motivation and Business Sector*

Nature of business	Level of Motivation for Brand Building				Total
	Low	Average	High	Very High	
Accommodation and food services	7	1	8	8	24
	29.20%	4.20%	33.30%	33.30%	100.00%
Administrative and support service activities	0	0	4	9	13
	0.00%	0.00%	30.80%	69.20%	100.00%
Agriculture	0	0	1	2	3
	0.00%	0.00%	33.30%	66.70%	100.00%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0	0	2	8	10
	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%	100.00%
Construction	0	0	0	3	3
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Education	8	5	3	9	25
	32.00%	20.00%	12.00%	36.00%	100.00%
Human health and social works	1	3	4	4	12
	8.30%	25.00%	33.30%	33.30%	100.00%
Information and communication	5	0	3	2	10
	50.00%	0.00%	30.00%	20.00%	100.00%
Manufacturing	3	6	17	15	41
	7.30%	14.60%	41.50%	36.60%	100.00%
Other services activities	0	3	2	8	13
	0.00%	23.10%	15.40%	61.50%	100.00%
Professional, scientific and technical works	1	2	11	16	30
	3.30%	6.70%	36.70%	53.30%	100.00%
Real estate activities	1	1	1	6	9
	11.10%	11.10%	11.10%	66.70%	100.00%
Transport and storage	1	3	1	0	5
	20.00%	60.00%	20.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Wholesale /retail trade	5	2	11	18	36
	13.90%	5.60%	30.60%	50.00%	100.00%
Total	32	26	68	108	234
	13.70%	11.10%	29.10%	46.20%	100.00%
$\chi^2 = 76.612$; df = 39; p-value = .000					

Table 89*Cross Tabulation of Challenge and Business Sector*

Nature of Business	Level of Challenge of Brand Building				Total
	Low	Average	High	Very High	
Accommodation and food services	4	10	7	3	24
	16.70%	41.70%	29.20%	12.50%	100.00%
Administrative and support service activities	8	4	1	0	13
	61.50%	30.80%	7.70%	0.00%	100.00%
Agriculture	2	0	1	0	3
	66.70%	0.00%	33.30%	0.00%	100.00%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0	3	5	2	10
	0.00%	30.00%	50.00%	20.00%	100.00%
Construction	1	2	0	0	3
	33.30%	66.70%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Education	0	2	11	12	25
	0.00%	8.00%	44.00%	48.00%	100.00%
Human health and social works	3	7	2	0	12
	25.00%	58.30%	16.70%	0.00%	100.00%
Information and communication	8	1	0	1	10
	80.00%	10.00%	0.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Manufacturing	4	5	22	10	41
	9.80%	12.20%	53.70%	24.40%	100.00%
Other services activities	5	6	2	0	13
	38.50%	46.20%	15.40%	0.00%	100.00%
Professional, scientific and technical works	13	3	12	2	30
	43.30%	10.00%	40.00%	6.70%	100.00%
Real estate activities	3	3	3	0	9
	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	0.00%	100.00%
Transport and storage	1	0	2	2	5
	20.00%	0.00%	40.00%	40.00%	100.00%
Wholesale /retail trade	14	13	5	4	36
	38.90%	36.10%	13.90%	11.10%	100.00%
	66	59	73	36	234
	28.20%	25.20%	31.20%	15.40%	100.00%
$\chi^2 = 116.078$; df = 39; p-value = .000					

Table 90*Chi-Square Tests of Awareness and Business Sector*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	53.939 ^a	39	.056
Likelihood Ratio	57.578	39	.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	.777	1	.378
N of Valid Cases	234		

- a. 41 cells (73.2%) have expected less than 5. The minimum expected is .18.

Table 91*Chi-Square Tests of Attitude and Business Sector*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	64.325 ^a	39	.007
Likelihood Ratio	69.817	39	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.935	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	234		

- a. 40 cells (71.4%) have expected less than 5. The minimum expected is .45.

Table 92*Chi-Square Tests of Perceived Benefits and Business Sector*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	64.325 ^a	39	.007
Likelihood Ratio	69.817	39	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.935	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	234		

a. 40 cells (71.4%) have expected less than 5. The minimum expected is .45.

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Table 93*Chi-Square Tests of Motivation and Business Sector*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	108.542 ^a	39	.000
Likelihood Ratio	100.086	39	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.502	1	.479
N of Valid Cases	234		

a. 42 cells (75.0%) have expected less than 5. The minimum expected is .32.

Table 94*Chi-Square Tests of Challenge and Business Sector*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	98.683 ^a	39	.000
Likelihood Ratio	110.306	39	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.300	1	.584
N of Valid Cases	234		

a. 41 cells (73.2%) have an expected count of less than 5.
The minimum expected count is .19.

Across all sectors, the manufacturing sector had the highest number of respondents with 41 while wholesale/retail at 36 respondents. While reviewing the individual variables across the different sectors, the level of brand awareness was very high amongst some sectors of the business areas; arts, entertainment and recreation at 50%, Information and communication at 60% and Transport and Storage at 60% and Real estate activities at 55. 6%. Important to know that the business owners are dispersed across 14 business sectors and some of the sectors have low bases of respondents. Some sectors with a high figure may have recorded low percentage numbers versus others.

On perceived benefits, the real estate sector scored very high at 100%, while Information and communication score was 50%. On motivation to adopt brand building, the sectors that recorded very high ratings are real estate at 66.7%, agriculture, at 66.7%, arts, entertainment and recreation is 80% and construction at 100%. On the attitude of business owners towards brand building, real estate stands out versus others at 55.6%, while other services are the next at 38.5% and transport and storage at 40%. The manufacturing sector recorded a significant variance in this

at a 2.4% attitude score. On challenge, the severity of the level of challenge is not very high across most of the business sectors, except transport is at 40% and manufacturing at 24.4%.

Even though different sectors individually had high scores for brand building awareness, there was no established relationship between the business sectors and awareness, as the chi-square score was .056. The chi-square score is above 0.05 which shows that there is no relationship between the sectors of the business areas and brand awareness.

On perceived benefits of brand building, there is an established relationship between the business sector and perceived benefit. The chi-square score was .000. Motivation within the real estate sector is very high at 66.7% which may be explained by the level of activities within the sector in Nigeria. The chi-square score is .000, which establishes a relationship within the sector and motivation toward brand building.

On attitude, the real sector also shows a high level at 55.6% and a chi-square score of .007, validating a relationship between the business sectors and the attitude of MSME business owners. The level of challenges encountered is low within the real sector, and not very high at 0% respectively. The chi-square score is .000 which establishes a relationship.

Evaluation of Findings

During this research, four research questions and four hypotheses were investigated. The research questions were turned into hypothesis statements which informed the testing of relationships amongst the variables. The results of the hypothesis testing will be detailed below.

Research Question 1:

What is the association of the level of awareness on the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners

The first hypothesis investigated the association between awareness of brand-building strategies and the adoption of brand-building initiatives by business owners in the marketplace. The Null Hypothesis (H_{10}) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_{11}) is accepted. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between the level of awareness and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners. The Cramer's V score of 0.342, indicates a strong relationship.

It was discovered that the level of brand-building strategy awareness among business owners impacts their decision to implement brand development strategies. This outcome is consistent with what has been found in the literature, and it is in line with the conceptual framework developed for the study.

In a study by Lee & Griffith (2023), it was found that knowledge and awareness of brand-building strategies are key drivers of strategic decision-making in MSME businesses. Businesses with a greater understanding of branding are more inclined to invest in comprehensive branding efforts, leading to enhanced brand visibility and customer loyalty. The study by Lee and Griffith (2023) further highlighted that business owners with greater awareness of brand-building strategies reported more significant success from their branding efforts. These businesses experienced improved brand recognition, customer engagement, and market share. The positive impact of awareness on branding success underscores the importance of education and knowledge in the branding process.

In a study by Smith (2021), it was found that MSME businesses with a well-rounded understanding of branding were better equipped to execute effective branding strategies, resulting in tangible business benefits. The study suggests that awareness is not just a precursor to action, but a determinant of the quality and effectiveness of the branding initiatives undertaken.

Table 19 analysis further reveals that the chi-square value (χ^2) is 3.439 and the 'p-value is 0.489, which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. This implies that there is no relationship between the gender of business owners and their adoption of brand-building strategies. In other words, the gender of business owners does not influence their level of awareness of brand building.

This outcome challenges some of the preconceived notions and expectations in the literature, where gender has often been considered a potential variable influencing business practices and decision-making, including brand-building efforts.

Recent literature on gender and entrepreneurship has explored various aspects of how gender might influence business strategies and outcomes. For instance, several studies have suggested that male and female business owners may differ in their approach to marketing and brand development due to differences in risk tolerance, access to resources, and social networks (Brush et al., 2018; Coleman and Robb, 2016). These studies have posited that female business owners might be less likely to engage in brand-building strategies due to more conservative business practices or limited access to capital.

However, the findings of this study are consistent with more recent research that suggests the gap in business practices, including brand-building awareness, between male and female entrepreneurs is narrowing. For example, a study by Díaz-García et al. (2017) found that when

controlling for industry, size of the business, and education level, there were no significant differences in marketing strategies, including brand building, between male and female business owners. This suggests that gender may not be as influential a factor in brand-building awareness as previously thought.

Furthermore, the findings align with the work of Alsos et al. (2019), who argue that as women increasingly enter various sectors and receive more targeted support through entrepreneurial training programs, the perceived gender differences in business strategy awareness, including brand building, are diminishing. This supports the notion that gender-neutral factors, such as experience, education, and industry type, may play more substantial roles in determining the awareness and adoption of brand-building strategies.

In a cross-tabulation of business registration and level of awareness of brand building, table 20 further shows that the chi-square value is 14.190 and the "p-value" is 0.007, which is less than the threshold of 0.05 for statistical significance. Therefore, there exists a relationship between the registration of a business with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and the level of awareness of brand-building strategies.

The findings from this study indicate that business owners whose businesses are registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) demonstrate a higher awareness of brand-building strategies compared to those whose businesses are not registered. This outcome aligns with existing research that highlights the importance of formal business registration in accessing resources, information, and networks that are crucial for effective brand development.

The positive relationship between business registration and brand-building awareness is supported by recent literature that emphasises the advantages of formalising business operations. According to a study by Adebisi and Gbegi (2020), business registration with government bodies

such as the CAC provides entrepreneurs with greater legitimacy, which in turn increases their access to business development services, including training in marketing and brand-building strategies. Registered businesses are more likely to participate in formal networks and receive information on best practices, including branding, which is often disseminated through official channels.

Furthermore, a study by Eniola and Entenbang (2017) underscores that registered businesses tend to have better access to financial resources, including loans and grants, which can be invested in brand development initiatives. The formal status of a business also increases its visibility and credibility, making it more likely to attract partnerships and opportunities that can enhance brand awareness and strategic planning.

In contrast, unregistered businesses often operate in the informal sector, where they may lack access to the same level of resources and information. According to Williams and Kedir (2016), businesses in the informal sector are less likely to be aware of formal brand-building strategies due to limited access to formal training, business support services, and networking opportunities that are more readily available to registered businesses.

These findings are also consistent with the work of Ratten (2020), who found that business formalisation is linked to higher levels of strategic thinking and long-term planning among entrepreneurs, which includes a stronger emphasis on brand-building as a critical component of business success.

The findings suggest that business registration with the CAC plays a crucial role in enhancing the strategic capabilities of business owners, particularly in brand-building.

Cross-tabulating the number of years in business and the level of brand-building strategies in Table 22, As shown in Table 22, the association between the level of awareness of brand

building and the number of years a business has been in existence was tested using Spearman Rank Correlation. The Spearman Rank Correlation value is $-.080$ in the table, which indicates a weak negative correlation, and one that is not statistically significant at a p -value of $.349$ because of the small sample size. There is no relationship between the number of years in business operation and the level of awareness of brand building, as demonstrated by the findings of this study. In other words, the number of years a company has been in operation does not have an impact on the awareness of brand-building tactics among its owners.

This outcome challenges the conventional assumption that longer-established businesses are more likely to have greater awareness of brand-building concepts and practices. The absence of a significant relationship between years in business and brand-building awareness contrasts with some existing studies, which suggest that experience in business should naturally lead to greater strategic awareness, including brand development. For instance, Alam et al. (2017) found that business longevity often correlates with a deeper understanding of market dynamics and brand positioning, as longer-established businesses have more time to learn and adapt to industry trends.

However, other research supports the findings of this study by highlighting that the number of years in operation does not necessarily equate to strategic knowledge or marketing expertise. As noted by Gichuki et al. (2014), the survival of a business over time is often more dependent on operational efficiency and customer relationships than on advanced marketing strategies such as brand-building. They argue that many MSME business owners, particularly those in survivalist sectors, focus more on day-to-day operations rather than on long-term strategic activities like brand-building, regardless of how long they have been in business.

Further supporting this perspective, a study by O'Dwyer et al. (2009), suggests that MSME business owners often rely on informal and ad-hoc marketing practices rather than structured

brand-building activities. Their findings indicate that even experienced business owners may lack formal awareness of brand-building strategies because they do not perceive them as immediately relevant to their business needs, which could explain the lack of a significant relationship in this study.

Additionally, the findings are consistent with the work of Kapferer (2012), who notes that brand-building awareness often requires exposure to specific training or education in marketing, which is not automatically acquired through business experience alone. This underscores the need for targeted educational initiatives to improve brand awareness among MSME business owners, regardless of their experience level. The findings suggest that the mere passage of time does not necessarily lead to greater awareness of brand-building strategies among micro, small and medium business owners.

As shown in Table 23, the result of the Spearman Rank Correlation reveals that there is no statistically significant correlation between the level of awareness of brand building and the level of education of business owners. It can be seen in the table that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is .044. This is a weak positive correlation, and it is not statistically significant because the p-value for this correlation is .611. The finding from the analysis shows that there is no relationship between the level of education and the level of awareness of the importance of brand building among business owners.

This result challenges the assumption that higher educational attainment is a key driver of strategic marketing awareness, including brand-building knowledge.

The lack of a significant relationship between educational level and brand-building awareness contrasts with some prior research, which suggests that education should positively influence strategic awareness. For instance, studies by Solomon et al. (2018) emphasise that higher

education equips individuals with critical thinking skills and knowledge of contemporary business practices, including brand management, which should ostensibly increase awareness of brand-building strategies.

However, other research aligns more closely with the findings of this study, suggesting that practical business experience and exposure to specific industry practices may play a more significant role in brand-building awareness than formal education. For example, a study by Kara et al. (2005) found that MSME business owners often rely on practical knowledge and industry-specific experiences rather than formal education when it comes to strategic decision-making, including branding.

Additionally, studies such as those by Resnick et al. (2016) suggest that the informal nature of many MSME businesses means that branding and other strategic activities are often learned "on the job" rather than through formal education. This can explain why the level of formal education does not necessarily correlate with awareness of brand-building strategies among micro, small and medium-scale business owners.

Another consideration is the possible gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. As noted by Jones and Rowley (2011), MSME business owners with higher education may possess theoretical knowledge of marketing and branding but may not prioritise these strategies in their day-to-day operations, especially if they perceive other areas as more critical to business survival. The findings suggest that educational attainment alone may not be a reliable predictor of awareness or implementation of brand-building strategies among micro, small and medium-scale business owners.

Table 24 presents the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between the age group of business owners and their level of awareness of brand building. The table shows that the

Spearman Rank Correlation value is .031 which is an almost non-existence correlation with no statistically significant at a p-value of 0.556. The result shows that there is no relationship between the age group of business owners and their level of awareness of brand building. That is, the age group of business owners does not influence their awareness of brand-building strategies.

This finding is noteworthy as it suggests that awareness of brand-building strategies does not vary significantly across different age groups of business owners. This contrasts with the common perception that younger entrepreneurs, often more tech-savvy and exposed to contemporary marketing trends, would have greater awareness of brand-building strategies than their older counterparts.

The finding that age does not significantly influence brand-building awareness is consistent with some recent studies, which suggest that the proliferation of digital resources and the democratisation of knowledge through online platforms have levelled the playing field in terms of access to branding knowledge across different age groups. As observed by Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo (2018), the widespread availability of information and the increasing use of digital tools in business operations mean that brand-building knowledge is accessible to all entrepreneurs, regardless of age.

However, this finding contrasts with earlier research, which often highlighted a generational gap in marketing practices. For example, Gilly and Zeithaml (1985), suggested that older business owners might be less inclined to adopt new marketing strategies, including branding, due to a preference for traditional business practices. More recent studies, however, have started to challenge this view. For instance, a study by Martin and Wright (2005) indicates that older entrepreneurs are increasingly adopting new marketing strategies, including brand-building, as they recognise the importance of these practices in a competitive market.

This shift can be attributed to the growing recognition of the importance of continuous learning and adaptability in business, which is highlighted in the work of Shirokova et al. (2013). Their research suggests that successful entrepreneurs, regardless of age, are those who continually update their knowledge and skills to remain competitive, which includes staying informed about brand-building strategies.

Table 25 reveals the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between the level of awareness of brand building and the number of employees. The Table shows that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is .177 which is a weak but positive correlation which is statistically significant at a p-value of 0.037. The result shows that there is a relationship between the number of employees and the level of awareness of brand building by owners. That is, the number of employees business owners have does influence their awareness of brand-building strategies.

This result suggests that the more the number of employees, the more the impact it has on the level of brand awareness of the business owners and their understanding of brand-building strategies. It has been established that employees play an important role in building the company brand and driving equity (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). This supports the outcome of the study in this area. Even though some other studies, Reijonen et al. (2012) suggest that brand orientation may not only be related to the number of employees alone but also is more closely linked to the owner-manager's attitudes and values rather than to the size of the business. They argue that MSME business owners who recognise the importance of branding will invest in it, regardless of the number of employees they have. Similarly, a study by Krake (2005) highlights that brand-building in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) is often driven by the personal involvement and vision of the owner rather than by the size of the organisation or the number of employees.

On the other hand, earlier studies, such as those by Wong and Merrilees (2005), propose that larger businesses might be more inclined to engage in formalised brand-building activities due to their capacity to allocate specific resources, including employees, to these efforts. However, the present study's findings challenge this notion, indicating that the level of awareness of brand-building strategies is not necessarily a function of the number of employees but may depend on other factors such as the owner's attitude, experience, and industry exposure.

Research Question 2:

How does the attitude of business owners influence their adoption of brand-building strategies?

This is shown in Table 37: The mean of the chi-square values is 26.129, and the p-value is 0.00, which is less than the threshold of 0.05 for statistical significance. So, the Null Hypothesis (H_{20}) is disproved, resulting in the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis (H_{21}). The implication of this is that there is a relationship between the mindset of business owners and their decision to implement brand-building initiatives. The study reveals a statistically significant positive relationship between the attitude of owners of micro, small and medium-scale businesses (MSMEs) and their decision to implement brand-building initiatives. The Cramer V's value of 0.334, denotes a strong positive association between the variables.

This finding suggests that the mindset and perceptions of MSME owners play a critical role in determining whether they engage in activities aimed at building and enhancing their brand.

The significant relationship between the owner's attitude and brand-building initiatives aligns with existing literature that emphasises the importance of owner-manager orientation and

personal beliefs in driving strategic business decisions, especially in MSME businesses where the owner's influence is paramount.

A study by O'Cass and Weerawardena (2009), highlights that MSME owners who possess a positive attitude toward branding are more likely to recognise its value and invest in brand-building activities. This is because such owners often perceive branding not merely as a marketing tactic but as a strategic asset that can differentiate their business in a competitive market. Similarly, Reijonen et al. (2012) argue that brand orientation, which is closely linked to the owner's attitude, is a crucial factor that influences the likelihood of MSMEs engaging in branding practices.

Further supporting this, the work of Berthon et al. (2008) suggests that an owner's entrepreneurial attitude, particularly their openness to innovation and change, significantly impacts their propensity to adopt brand-building strategies. These findings are consistent with the notion that the subjective norms and attitudes of MSME owners are vital determinants of their strategic choices, including decisions related to branding.

The results of the cross-tabulation of gender and attitude toward brand building are presented in Table 38. The table reveals that the chi-square value is 6.080 and the 'p-value is 0.048, both of which are less than the threshold for statistical significance of 0.05. So, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is disproved, resulting in the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1). In other words, there appears to be a relationship between the gender of business owners and their attitude toward brand-building strategies.

The study reveals a relationship between the gender of micro, small and medium-scale business owners and their attitude toward brand-building initiatives. This finding suggests that gender plays a role in shaping how business owners perceive and engage with brand-building

activities, potentially influencing the strategic decisions they make concerning their business's market positioning and long-term success.

The relationship between gender and attitude toward brand-building initiatives is supported by existing literature that explores gender differences in business management and strategic decision-making. Studies have shown that male and female entrepreneurs often have distinct approaches to various aspects of business, including branding and marketing strategies.

Research by Díaz-García and Jiménez-Moreno (2010) indicates that female entrepreneurs tend to place a stronger emphasis on the relational aspects of branding, such as building trust and maintaining customer relationships, compared to their male counterparts who may focus more on the functional and performance-oriented aspects of the brand. This difference in emphasis can lead to varying attitudes toward the importance and execution of brand-building initiatives.

Furthermore, a study by Eddleston and Powell (2008) highlights that women entrepreneurs are generally more inclined to adopt a holistic approach to business management, where branding is seen as integral to the overall business strategy, rather than as a separate marketing function. This integrated approach may lead to a more positive attitude toward brand-building initiatives among female business owners.

On the other hand, male entrepreneurs may view branding through a more competitive lens, focusing on differentiation and market positioning. This competitive perspective can also foster a strong attitude toward brand-building, but the underlying motivations may differ between genders. These differences suggest that gender influences not only the attitude towards branding but also the strategic importance placed on brand-building initiatives.

The results of the cross-tabulation of business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and attitude towards brand building are presented in Table 39. A look at the

data in the table indicates that the chi-square value is 25.459 and that the "p-value" is 0.000, which is less than the threshold for statistical significance (0.05). Thus, there exists a relationship between the registration of business with the Corporate Affairs Commission and one's attitude toward a branding plan. From the percentage analysis of the cross-tabulation, business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission had a higher attitude score compared to those who have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

This finding suggests that the formal registration of a business is associated with a more positive and proactive attitude toward brand-building activities. Business registration appears to influence how seriously owners perceive the importance of branding in contributing to their business's success.

The relationship between business registration and attitudes toward branding is supported by existing research that highlights the benefits of formal business registration on various aspects of business operations, including branding and marketing strategies. According to Leung and Jha (2017), formal business registration often signifies a business owner's commitment to professionalism, which extends to adopting structured and strategic approaches to brand management.

Moreover, business registration with official entities such as the CAC provides access to legal protections, business credibility, and opportunities for growth that are not as readily available to informal businesses. These benefits can enhance the business owner's perception of the importance of brand-building initiatives as essential components of establishing and maintaining a reputable market presence (Djankov et al., 2010).

Formal registration also facilitates access to financial resources and support programs, which are often contingent on a business's legal status. These resources can enable business owners

to invest in branding efforts, further reinforcing a positive attitude toward brand-building initiatives (Ayyagari et al., 2011). The formalisation of a business, therefore, correlates with a heightened awareness and appreciation of the value of brand-building as a driver of business growth and sustainability.

A Spearman Rank Correlation test was used to determine the relationship between attitudes toward brand building and the number of years in business operation, as shown in Table 40. It can be seen in the table that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is $-.185$. This is a weak negative correlation, but it is statistically significant because the p-value is 0.004 (which indicates statistical significance).

The findings of this study reveal a significant relationship between the number of years a micro, small and medium-scale business (MSME) has been in operation and the attitude of business owners toward brand building. This suggests that the longevity of a business influences the owners' attitude.

Businesses that have been operational for a longer period are more likely to have developed a stronger understanding of the importance of brand building. This finding aligns with existing literature, which indicates that as businesses mature, their owners typically gain more experience and become more aware of the strategic importance of branding as a tool for competitive advantage. For instance, studies by Mazzei and Noble (2017) and Keller (2013) emphasise that long-standing businesses may develop a positive attitude if the benefits were to be tangible and well understood, more than newer businesses because they have witnessed the tangible benefits that branding could offer over time.

Moreover, the development of brand-building attitudes among long-established businesses can also be attributed to the accumulation of resources and market knowledge that comes with

time. As MSMEs grow, they often expand their customer base, increase their revenue, and have more resources to invest in brand-building initiatives. This is supported by the resource-based view (RBV) theory, which posits that businesses with more resources, including time and market experience, are better positioned to develop and maintain competitive advantages through branding (Barney, 1991).

Table 41 shows the Spearman Rank Correlation result of the correlation between attitude towards brand building and level of education. The Table shows that the Spearman Rank Correlation value is $-.062$ which is a weak negative correlation, and this is not statistically significant at a p-value of 0.347 . This study reveals that there is no statistically significant relationship between the level of education and the attitude toward brand-building initiatives among owners of micro, small and medium businesses (MSMEs). This suggests that the educational background of MSME owners does not necessarily influence their attitude or implementation of branding strategies.

The results of this study challenge the assumption that higher levels of education inherently lead to a more positive attitude toward brand-building. Contrary to some expectations, the findings indicate that educational attainment does not play a decisive role in shaping how MSME owners view the importance of brand-building initiatives. This lack of correlation is consistent with the findings of Chatterjee and Wernerfelt (1991), who observed that practical business experience and market exposure often outweigh formal education in determining strategic business decisions, including those related to branding.

The study aligns with research by Osei (2017), which posits that while education can provide foundational knowledge, it does not automatically translate into the effective application of branding strategies. In many cases, entrepreneurs rely more on experiential learning and

industry-specific knowledge, which they gain through hands-on business operations rather than formal education. This explains why MSME owners with varying educational backgrounds may exhibit similar attitudes toward branding.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of recognising the diverse factors that influence branding attitudes. For example, factors such as industry type, market conditions, and prior business experience may be more significant determinants of branding attitudes than education level. These insights are in line with the resource-based view (RBV) theory, which emphasises that competitive advantage arises from the effective use of available resources, rather than from any single attribute like education (Barney, 1991).

Research Question 3

What is the association of motivation and perceived benefits with the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners?

Testing hypothesis 3 using the binary logistics regression, there is a positive statistically significant relationship between business owners, indicating that motivation and perceived benefit of branding influence the adoption of brand-building strategies. The null ($H3_0$) is rejected and the alternative ($H3_1$) is accepted.

The findings of this study reveal that motivation and perceived benefits significantly influence the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners. This suggests that the more motivated a business owner is and the greater the perceived benefits of branding, the more likely they are to implement brand-building initiatives.

The study's results indicate that motivation is a critical driver in the adoption of brand-building strategies. Motivation, in this context, refers to the internal and external factors that

inspire business owners to pursue branding as a strategic business activity. This aligns with the findings of Kotler and Keller (2016), who emphasise that motivated entrepreneurs are more proactive in seeking out and implementing strategies that can enhance their business's market presence and competitiveness. The desire to distinguish their business in a crowded market, achieve long-term growth, and build a loyal customer base are common motivators that lead business owners to embrace branding initiatives.

Moreover, the findings suggest that intrinsic motivation—such as personal satisfaction and the aspiration to create a lasting brand legacy, plays a significant role in driving branding efforts. Extrinsic motivations, such as financial rewards and competitive advantage, also contribute to the decision to adopt brand-building strategies. This is consistent with the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which posits that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are crucial in driving human behaviour, including entrepreneurial actions.

The study also highlights that perceived benefits are a strong predictor of the adoption of brand-building strategies. When business owners recognise the tangible and intangible advantages of branding—such as increased customer loyalty, brand recognition, and competitive differentiation, they are more likely to invest time and resources in branding efforts. This finding is supported by Aaker's (1996) work, which underscores that a clear understanding of the benefits of branding encourages businesses to develop and maintain strong brands.

The perceived benefits often include improved market positioning, the ability to command premium pricing, and enhanced business credibility. When business owners see branding as a valuable tool that can lead to these outcomes, they are more inclined to prioritise branding within their overall business strategy. This is consistent with the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen,

1991), which suggests that the perceived outcomes of an action strongly influence the intention to perform that action.

Research Question 4

How does the level of challenges experienced influence and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owner

Table 77 reveals that the chi-square value (χ^2) is 16.922 and the 'p-value is 0.001, which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. This implies that there is a relationship between the level of challenges and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners. In other words, business owners' level of challenges in branding building influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives. The percentage analysis of the table reveals that a higher percentage of business owners who have adopted brand-building initiatives have a low level of challenge compared to those who have not adopted brand-building initiatives.

The study reveals that owners of small and medium-scale businesses who encounter more challenges with branding are less likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to those who face fewer challenges. This finding highlights a paradox where increased challenges seem to correlate with a decreased likelihood of engaging in brand-building efforts.

The study's results suggest that higher levels of difficulty associated with branding—such as financial constraints, lack of expertise, and inadequate resources, may deter business owners from adopting brand-building strategies. This is contrary to the expectation that facing significant challenges would compel business owners to invest in branding as a means of gaining a competitive edge. Instead, it appears that the difficulties themselves may act as barriers to brand-building efforts.

This finding is supported by recent literature that discusses how challenges in branding can overwhelm micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), leading to a reluctance to invest in brand development. According to Ruvio et al. (2014), MSMEs often face resource limitations that make it difficult to allocate funds and effort toward branding, particularly when the challenges are perceived as too great to overcome. As a result, business owners may prioritise immediate operational concerns over long-term brand-building strategies.

Additionally, the study aligns with the findings of Gotsi and Wilson (2001), who argue that the perceived complexity and cost of brand-building can be daunting for SMEs, especially those already struggling with various operational challenges. This perception of brand-building as an additional burden rather than a strategic necessity can lead to lower adoption rates among those facing significant branding difficulties.

Summary of Findings

The conceptual framework in this study is a representation of the relationship that exists between the independent variables – awareness, attitude, motivation, perceived benefits and challenges, and the dependent variable – adoption of brand-building strategy. The findings support the conceptual framework where relationships were established between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable. This finding was in line with the expectation set out at the beginning of the study. Against each of the 4 tested hypotheses, it was established that a relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables tested.

A summary of the findings will be provided by the hypotheses of the study. A relationship was discovered between the level of awareness of business owners and their adoption of a brand-building approach, according to the results of the first test of the hypothesis. That is, the level of

awareness that business owners have of branding-building tactics has an impact on their decision to implement brand-building initiatives. To evaluate this theory, more analyses were conducted, and conclusions were reached.

Following the completion of a cross-tabulation based on gender and the level of brand-building awareness, it was discovered that there is no association between the gender of owners of businesses and their adoption of brand-building strategy. In other words, the gender of business owners does not influence their level of awareness of brand building. A cross-tabulation of Business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and awareness of brand building was also carried out and it was found that there is a relationship between the registration of business with the Corporate Affairs Commission and the level of awareness of brand building strategy. From the percentage analysis of the cross-tabulation, business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission have a higher level of awareness of brand building strategy compared to those who have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission. According to the results of cross-tabulating the adoption of brand-building initiatives with the number of years in business operation, it was discovered that the chi-square value (.237) and the p-value are both 0.627, which are both larger than the degree of significance of 0.05. As a result, there is acceptance of the Null Hypothesis (H_0), and the rejection of the Alternative Hypothesis (H_1), as shown in the diagram. In other words, there is no correlation between how long a company has been in existence and the adoption of brand-building strategies.

Thus, the length of time (years) that a company has been operating has little effect on the adoption of a brand-building strategy by business owners. A Spearman Rank Correlation of the level of awareness of brand building and length of years in business existence was carried out. There is a relationship between the length of years in business existence and the level of awareness

of brand building, as demonstrated by the findings of this study. In other words, the period of years a company has been functioning has an impact on the awareness of brand-building tactics among its owners. The positive correlation means that the greater the number of years spent in business operations, the greater the level of awareness of brand building strategy among those who have spent a long time in business operations. Using Spearman Rank Correlation, it was determined that the level of awareness related to the level of education. The findings showed there is a conclusive association connecting the greatest level of education and the level of awareness of brand building in the population. To put it another way, the level of education of business owners has an impact on their awareness of brand-building tactics. It follows from this positive link that business owners who have had a higher level of education are more likely to know the relevance of brand building strategy. Therefore, business owners who have higher educational levels are more likely to be cognizant of the relevance of brand building than business owners who have lower educational levels, according to the study. The connection between the age profiles of the owners of businesses and their level of awareness of brand building was determined using the Spearman Rank Correlation method. There is no association between the age group of business owners and their level of awareness of brand building, according to the findings of this research.

That is, the age of a business owner has no significance on their awareness of brand-building techniques, as demonstrated by the data. Finally, concerning the first hypothesis, a Spearman Rank Correlation was done to ascertain the connection between the level of awareness of brand building and the number of employees in the organisation.

It was discovered while doing research for the second premise of the study, that a connection exists between the attitude of owners of businesses and their acceptance of brand-building techniques. In other words, business owners' attitude toward branding-building strategies

influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives. Findings from the analysis revealed that a higher percentage of business owners who have adopted brand-building initiatives have a very high score concerning attitude towards brand-building compared to those who have not adopted brand-building initiatives. In testing this hypothesis, further analyses were carried out and findings were made.

A cross-tabulation of gender and attitude toward brand building was carried out and it was found that there is a connection between the gender of business owners and their attitude towards brand building strategy. In other words, the gender of business owners influences their attitude towards brand-building strategy. A cross-tabulation of Business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and attitude towards brand-building strategy was also carried out and it was found that there is a connection between the registration of business with the Corporate Affairs Commission and attitude towards brand building strategy. From the percentage analysis of the cross-tabulation, business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission had a higher attitude score compared to those who have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

A Spearman Rank Correlation was used to determine the relationship between attitude toward brand building and the number of years in business operation. Following the conclusion of the study, it was discovered that there is an inverse relationship between the number of years a company has been in existence and the attitude toward brand building. The longer a company has been in operation, the more negative its attitude toward brand-building strategy is. Using Spearman Rank Correlation, it was discovered that people's attitudes about brand building related to their degree of education. The findings revealed that there is no association between the level of education and the attitude toward brand building among participants. That is, the level of

knowledge attained by business owners does not affect their attitudes on brand-building techniques, as previously stated.

The association between the age group of business owners and their attitude toward brand building was determined using the Spearman Rank Correlation method. There is no correlation between the age of business owners and their attitudes on brand building, according to the findings. The age group of business owners, in other words, does not affect their attitudes regarding brand-building techniques. A Spearman Rank Correlation was used to determine the relationship between attitudes toward brand building and the number of employees, which was the subject of the third hypothesis. In the study, it was discovered that there is no relationship between the number of employees and their attitude toward brand development. That is, the number of employees that a company has does not affect the attitudes of the company's owners toward brand growth and development.

The binary logistic regression was used to test the third hypothesis, which sought to determine the effect of motivation and perceived benefits on the adoption of brand building strategies by owners of businesses. It was discovered that business owners with an average perceived benefit of brand building are more likely to adopt brand building strategies when compared to business owners with a low perceived benefit of brand building, according to the findings. The analysis revealed that the odds of business owners with the average perceived benefit of brand building adopting brand building strategy is 4.454. That is, business owners with the average perceived benefit of brand building are over four times more likely to adopt brand building strategies compared to those with low perceived benefits of brand building. Similarly, it was found that business owners with high perceived benefits of brand building are more likely to adopt brand building strategies compared to business owners with low perceived benefits of brand building.

The analysis revealed that the odds of business owners with a high perceived benefit of brand building adopting brand building strategy is 2.098.

That is, business owners with high perceived benefits of brand building are two times more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to those with low perceived benefits of brand building. Furthermore, it was found that business owners with very high perceived benefits of brand building are more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to business owners with low perceived benefits of brand building. The analysis revealed that the odds of business owners with a very high perceived benefit of brand building adopting brand building strategy is 1.435. That is, business owners with very high perceived benefits of brand building are almost one and a half times more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to those with low perceived benefits of brand building.

Concerning motivation, it was found that business owners with average motivation for adopting brand-building are more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to business owners with low motivation for adopting brand-building. The analysis revealed that the odds of business owners with average motivation adopting brand building strategy compared to those with low motivation is 4.308. That is, business owners with average motivation for adopting brand-building were over four times more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to those with low motivation.

Similarly, the analysis revealed that business owners with high motivation for adopting brand-building are more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to business owners with low motivation for adopting brand-building. It was found that the odds of business owners with high motivation adopting brand building strategy is 11.929. That is, business owners with high motivation are almost twelve times more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared

to those with low motivation. Furthermore, it was found that business owners with very high motivation to adopt brand building are more likely to adopt brand building strategies compared to business owners with low motivation. The analysis revealed that the odds of business owners with very high motivation adopting brand building strategy is 3.363. That is, business owners with very high motivation for adopting brand build are almost three times more likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to those with low motivation.

It was discovered when testing the fourth hypothesis that there is a relationship between the level of obstacles faced by business owners and their adoption of a brand-building strategy by their organisations. In other words, the level of difficulty that business owners have in branding building has an impact on their willingness to implement brand-building projects.

In testing the fourth hypothesis, further analyses were carried out and findings were made. A cross-tabulation of gender and level of challenge with brand building it was found that there is no relationship between the gender of business owners and the level of challenge they have with brand-building strategy. In other words, the gender of business owners does not influence their level of challenge with brand building. A cross-tabulation of Business registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and challenge with building strategy was also carried out and it was found that there is a relationship between the registration of business with the Corporate Affairs Commission and challenges with brand-building strategy. From the percentage analysis of the cross-tabulation, business owners who have registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission have a lower level of challenge with brand building compared to those who have not registered their business with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

A Spearman Rank Correlation was performed to determine the relationship between issues with brand building and the length of years in business existence. According to the findings of the

study, there is a connection between the length of years a company has been in existence and the level of difficulty associated with brand building. That is, the level of years a business owner has been in existence has an impact on the difficulty they have in implementing brand-building tactics. It was concluded from the positive correlation that the greater the length of years a company has been in existence, the greater their level of difficulty in implementing a brand-building plan.

When it comes to attitude toward brand building, there is an inverse link between the length of years in business operation. The longer a company has been in operation, the more negative its attitude toward brand-building strategy is. Using Spearman Rank Correlation, it was discovered that people's attitudes about brand building related to their degree of education. The findings revealed that there is no connection between the level of education and the attitude toward brand building among participants. That is, the level of knowledge attained by business owners does not affect their attitudes toward brand-building techniques, as previously stated. The connection between the age group of business owners and their attitude toward brand building was determined using the Spearman Rank Correlation method. There is no correlation between the age of business owners and their attitudes on brand building, according to the findings. The age group of business owners, in other words, does not affect their attitudes regarding brand-building techniques.

A Spearman Rank Correlation was used to determine the association between attitudes toward brand building and the number of employees, which was the subject of the third hypothesis. In the study, it was discovered that there is no correlation between the number of employees and their attitude toward brand development. Thus, the number of staff that business owners have does not alter their attitudes regarding brand building or how they conduct their firm.

Overall, the 4 hypotheses were valid for the alternative hypothesis which was in line with the conceptual framework developed earlier in the study.

One of the key imperatives that this study set out to validate is based on the notion by previous literatures about how the variables relate by business sectors under this study. It was exigent to further understand how this play out within the context of sectors and the local sphere of this study, and the need for further studies to confirm the applicability of these variables to MSME businesses in Nigeria is required.

Previous literature by Reijonen (2010) of 106 SMEs, a key takeaway is that there were differences in how marketing and branding were carried out by sector and by business size, especially among MSME businesses. It can be inferred that as such, may vary by sector, location, and business size (Kiliç, & Özdemir, 2016). This current study validates this position in some respect, perceived benefits, motivation, attitude and challenges established relationships with the various business sectors. While there was a contradiction on awareness and brand adoption that established no relationship across business sectors.

Table 95*Summary of the four (4) hypothesis testing*

Hypothesis	P-value	Decision
<p>H1₀: There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand-building strategy by business owners.</p> <p>H1₁: There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand building strategy by business owners.</p>	.003	The Null Hypothesis (H ₀) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H ₁) is accepted
<p>H2₀: The attitude of business owners does not influence their adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.</p> <p>H2₁: The attitude of business owners influences their adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.</p>	.000	The Null Hypothesis (H ₀) is rejected, resulting in the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis (H ₁).
<p>H3₀: Motivation and perceived benefits do not influence the adoption of brand-building strategy by business owners.</p> <p>H3₁: Motivation and perceived benefits influence the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.</p>	<p>Benefits: Low 0.019. average 0.002. high 0.111. very high 0.337.</p> <p>Motivation: low 0.000. average 0.003. high 0.000. Very 0.000.</p>	The Null Hypothesis (H ₀) is rejected, resulting in the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis (H ₁) @ low and average perceived benefit and motivation at low, average, high and very high levels
<p>H4₀: There is no significant relationship between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.</p> <p>H4₁: There is a significant relationship between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.</p>	.003	The Null Hypothesis (H ₀) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H ₁) is accepted

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CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The objective of this research is to ascertain the present scale of adoption of brand-building strategies by owners of MSME businesses, the know-how pervasive they have activated brand building and how the brand building has played out in their businesses. This study was to bring to light the challenges faced by MSME businesses in Nigeria (Lagos State specifically) in building brands and to proffer solutions, strategies and tactics for their adoption of brand building to drive business growth.

This study was to see how MSME business owners feel about brand building and what function it plays in their businesses. This concluding part of this study itemises the challenges faced by MSME business owners in deploying brand building, it will analyse and offer strategies for solving the brand-building issues faced by Nigerian MSME businesses. These findings are based on a survey of 234 owners of MSME businesses in Lagos State, Nigeria, whose business operations have existed for at least 2 years. The study used quantitative research approaches to solve the research questions by gathering primary and secondary data. Primary data came from pre-identified respondents, whereas secondary data came from reading relevant papers and publications. A standardised questionnaire with closed-ended questions was used to examine MSME business owners' impressions of brand building strategies and tactics. Data on respondents' motivations, perceptions, awareness, attitudes, and behaviours were collected using a Likert scale, which was then analysed. The total number of participants in this study was selected by a multi-stage selection procedure. Before selecting survey respondents, the stratified sample strategy was used to identify distinct groups within the population. After that, respondents for the survey were selected using probability sampling, which is a straightforward random procedure.

To undertake any research, it is important to follow strict ethical standards which should be an integral aspect of the study. Participation in the study should be at the discretion of the participant and they must not be coerced into participating, it must be done in line with their free will and consent. The application of ethics in research provides directions that will lead to appropriate behaviours and conduct during the research (Nayak & Singh, 2015). In this study, the approved consent forms were read to the respondents, and they gave their consent before the session commenced.

It was made clear to them that their participation could be terminated at any point within the process if they didn't want to progress. They were assured that there was no consequence if they refused to take part in the study. The background to the study, the objective and the nature of the study were read out to them as a demonstration of openness and transparency. Confidentiality of the study was emphasised and the position that none of the respondents' data will be divulged, this is to act in line with approvals received from the UREC board. In the analysis of data, there is nothing to indicate which of the respondents said what as the information that could serve as identifiers was not used. This requires the researcher not to share any information that could identify the respondents and no public display of information to identify them as a respondent in this study. This researcher did not act in any other role during the study, aside from being a researcher. The expectation to act with a high level of professionalism and competence was adhered to by this researcher. The researcher was careful to demonstrate respect, for the rights and dignity of the respondents. The researcher was mindful of being in a position of bias and such cases, suspended knowledge in certain areas to work within the limit of what the research study reported. The researcher knew of the relevance and importance of adhering to ethical standards in

this study and this commenced right from the beginning of the study, commencing from the identification of the problem area all through to the reporting of findings.

Because of the lack of studies on brand strategies for MSME enterprises in Nigeria that have been conducted in the Nigerian context, this study believes that there is a significant vacuum in the literature on brand building among MSMEs in Nigeria. Given the size and importance of the MSME sector in the economic landscape in Nigeria, the necessity of understanding the role of building brands in the sector's development, as well as the challenges that businesses are currently facing, will aid in the identification of the steps that need to be taken to remove roadblocks in the sector's development. Given the rapid rise of entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria, this study is relevant for growing companies seeking practical and useful recommendations on how to minimize their learning curve to accelerate their growth. By boosting the number of materials available to students studying Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Management, as well as Consultants who work with Micro, Small and Medium-sized firms (MSMEs), this study will contribute to theory as well as practice.

The first chapter served as an introduction to the subject matter. In the first chapter of the study, brand building is defined as the process through which businesses create a distinct identity for their product or service. This is a common technique among multinational firms, which have the financial wherewithal to carry out operations while also generating consumer involvement. Branding is commonly thought to be only relevant to major organisations. This assumption is incorrect (Wong & Merrilees, 2005). Because they are dealing with the day-to-day problems of running their operations, MSME businesses often struggle with brand-building issues and are unable to spend the necessary time and resources on brand-building efforts. While most multinational enterprises started as MSME businesses headed by a single individual, there are

numerous examples of how they grew over time to reach their status. In this way, the relevance and value of brand creation for a MSME business can be explained. Brand-building initiatives have numerous benefits, especially for MSME businesses. It should come as no surprise that the MSME competitive landscape is crowded, making it difficult for most rivals to break through because they all provide items that are comparable and undifferentiated. The problem statement, study objectives, research questions and hypotheses statement were all addressed as well as the type of the investigation and the relevance and significance of the study.

The review of the literature and theoretical foundation for the project was covered in detail in Chapter 2. The theoretical framework begins with an examination of the term of what constitutes a brand, and the framework involved in brand building. The chapter emphasises how the brand enhances consumers' memories, ultimately consolidating the company's qualities that are based on their previous experiences. There is a claim that brand building is a process that involves integrating a company's brand into its corporate structure and that the building of brands is one of the most significant marketing tactics because it highlights the company's interconnectedness with its outward-facing environment, which encompasses consumers or customers who are a key component of the brand. In addition, the chapter discusses strategies for creating an MSME business's brand. It states that marketing in MSME business enterprises differs from marketing in giant multinational organisations and that branding in MSMEs differs from how the building of brands is implemented in big corporations. In addition, the conceptual structure of the research is discussed in this chapter. Following an examination of the study's conceptual framework, sub-themes that were relevant to the investigation were investigated.

The third chapter included a description of the study's research methodology; with this covering the following topics: the research problem statement, the research approach and design,

data collection, the study population, the sample size, the research instrument, checking to know the validity and reliability of the research constructs, and more. The operational definition of variables in the study, as well as the approach to data analysis, were all examined in greater depth. The results of the data analysis were presented in chapter four, and four hypotheses were tested, the choice of statistical tools adopted and the justification for usage were extensively discussed. This chapter will contain the implications of the findings of the research, with conclusions drawn on each of them, it will cover the researcher's recommendation for the application of this study, recommendations that will guide future studies as well as the overall conclusion of the study.

Implications of Findings

Four hypotheses were tested in this study and other statistical analyses were carried out along with the test of hypotheses which led to further findings.

H1₀: There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand-building strategy by business owners.

H1₁: There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of brand building and the adoption of brand-building strategy by business owners.

The outcome of the first hypothesis test indicates a strong positive relationship between the level of awareness and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners. The Cramer's V score of 0.342, indicates a strong relationship.

Business owners' adoption of brand building strategies was found to be influenced by their level of brand building strategy awareness, hence the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. In this finding, it is ascertained that the higher the awareness of business owners, the higher the likelihood of their adoption of brand building strategies, as their awareness influences the implementation of branding efforts in their organisation. On the flip side, of those who have not

implemented brand building in their operations, their level of brand awareness ranged from medium to high. So, it is not uncommon to have some business owners who have high knowledge of brand building but have not used that in their businesses for reasons that varied beyond just awareness. Be that as it may, it did not affect the significant relationship that exists between the level of awareness and the adoption of brand building tactics or strategies. This researcher also attempted to see if there will be a correlation between the gender of the business owner and how they choose brand building efforts for their businesses.

It is found that awareness has no gender bias as a further check between gender and level of brand awareness returned a lack of correlation. There is therefore no relationship between gender and how business owners have chosen to implement branding. Given that the level of awareness of brand building relates to how owners of businesses execute the same, this can be related to literature that demonstrates how the actions and the personality of the brand owner leave a mark on their brand, this is indicated as such (Brown et al., 2017; Boubakary, 2015; Centeno, 2013; Centeno, 2019; Garavan et al., 2016; Franco and Matos, 2015). The necessary competencies, skills, and knowledge are essential for MSME business owners to adequately perform their roles from a strategic and operational perspective (Garavan et al., 2016; Shokri et al., 2016).

According to the literature, the capabilities of the owners, their skills, knowledge, and know-how affect the direction of the business approach they pick (Centeno et al., 2019; Wijewardena et al., 2008). Understanding comes about from how they use their expertise and how the information is managed, and this is then integrated with the company activities (Shane, 2000).

As a result, the business owner of a MSME business is seen as the creator of the know-how and the driver of transferring the same to their staff, which involves marketing choices (Janet & Chua, 2013). The perception, as well as the adoption of branding strategy within the

organisation, are influenced by the business owners' expertise and knowledge (Krake, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2012). MSME owner-managers who apply their skills and knowledge produce positive results for their businesses, just as they would if they lacked skills (Murphy, 2010). The owner-managers position in strategic decisions and brand strategy adoption is emphasised (Mintzberg et al., 2005; Porter, 2008; Shrader and Siegel, 2007). An owner-manager with high competence, talents, skills, and expertise can create a competitive edge (Mulani et al., 2019). According to Day (1994), a firm with strong branding know-how is better positioned to apply brand orientation than a firm without such know-how (Centeno, 2013). The owner's knowledge can help the company achieve its aims (Neuvonen, 2016).

Other areas tested relating to the level of awareness are to check how it correlates with how long the business has been in existence. It is concluded that there is no relationship which means that businesses that are longer in existence do not necessarily have more knowledge of brand building than those in shorter durations of existence. Another test was to check the correlation between the level of education and the level of awareness. Business owners with higher educational qualifications did not demonstrate a higher awareness of brand building ahead of lower levels of educational qualifications.

These findings have implications that indicates that any intervention to be applied to driving awareness or to bridge the knowledge gap of business owners, must be holistic enough and not gender-biased or under the assumption that higher educated owners are fully entrenched in the knowledge of brand building.

Business owners are integral to the strategic direction undertaken by their company. To be able to adopt brand-building, business owners must be able to increase their knowledge. Given that the result showed that some business owners who had a high level of awareness still did not

adopt branding, there may be reasons that varied beyond just awareness. This is related to literature in that it demonstrates how the actions and the personality of the brand owner leave a mark on their brand (Boubakary, 2015; Brown et al., 2017; Centeno, 2013; Centeno, 2019; Garavan et al. 2016; Franco and Matos, 2015). The necessary competencies, skills, and knowledge are essential for business owners to perform their roles from a strategic and operational perspective (Garavan et al., 2016; Shokri et al. 2016)

H2₀: The attitude of business owners does not influence their adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

H2₁: The attitude of business owners influences their adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

The second hypothesis looked at the attitude of business owners and brand building approach adoption. 2. The testing of the hypothesis denotes a strong positive association between the variables. Their attitude toward branding-building strategies influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives. The study found that business owners' attitudes regarding branding influence their brand building strategies. According to the literature review, business owners are supportive of brand building.

The business owner constitutes a significant contributor to how decisions are made in micro, small and medium-sized firms (Centeno et al., 2013; Horan et al., 2011; Krake, 2005), as the duty for brand handling is generally vested in owners and not usually transferred to other MSME members (Centeno et al., 2013). The owner's consent is required to properly implement brand strategy (Mitchell et al., 2015; Neuvonen, 2016). The business owner's personality and character frequently affect the brand, an imperative for growing brand awareness and exposure

(Kienzler, 2017). Krake (2005) claims that the owner has a big impact on the amount of attention branding receives within the company, emphasizing the owner as the brand mirror and embodiment. (Blomback et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2011).

Because the owner-personality managers are believed to be strongly linked to the brand's identity, and because owners are crucial in starting and driving the entire process, brand-building techniques have traditionally relied on owner buy-in and dedication (Centeno et al., 2013; Krake, 2005). Because of this, MSMEs that embrace brand building must involve the owner-manager in all brand-related decisions, from brand orientation to defining and implementing a brand identity framework (Centeno et al., 2012; Krake, 2005). A recent study found that owner-manager brand orientation has a more significant effect on small enterprises than on big corporations (Krake, 2005). The current market and business climate are demanding, necessitating MSMEs to develop strategies that set them apart from the competition. Branding is one way to achieve product uniqueness (Tavares, 2015).

From the findings, it is asserted that the attitude of business owners contributes to the acceptance and implementation of brand activities. There is a positive relationship between the owners of businesses' attitudes and branding adoption. A higher percentage of businesses that have adopted branding also have a high score concerning attitude. The study shows that there is a correlation between the gender of the owners and the adoption of branding, which tilts the score for male owners more in line with adoption than their female counterparts. A point to note however is that the sample is significantly more male than female, which may have contributed to this result.

From a cross-tabulation of the level of attitude of business owners and those who have registered their businesses with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), there exists a positive correlation. Registration of business is an indication of how seriously one takes the business

venture. As such this is evident in the attitude score of those who have registered their businesses. The longer the number of years of a business's existence, the lower the attitude of the owners towards brand building. Inferring those businesses that are older see no value in adopting brand building. They may seem comfortable in their old tactics and strategies. The age of the business owners does not affect their attitude and is not correlated in any way.

H3₀: Motivation and perceived benefits do not influence the adoption of brand building strategy by business owners.

H3₁: Motivation and perceived benefits influence the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

In testing the third hypothesis, it was found that perceived benefit and motivation influenced the adoption of brand-building initiatives. There is a statistically significant relationship between business owners with low and average perceived benefits and the adoption of brand-build strategies. The analysis also revealed there is a statistically significant relationship between business owners with motivation at all levels (low, average, high and very high) and adoption of brand-building strategies. It was found that business owners who had higher motivation and a higher perception of the benefits of brand-building strategies were more likely to adopt brand-building initiatives. This finding implies that motivation and benefits should be put into consideration in determining how MSME business owners adopt brand building strategies. What motivates business owner is a significant component of how decisions are made (Hashim et al., 2018; Marn et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2006). The ambition to succeed, take risks and innovate drives business owners to engage in strategic activities (Kisfalvi, 2002). If they succeed, they can keep this drive (Korunka et al., 2003). Goals, like intentions, are potent motivators because they

guide the individual to meet expectations (Reijonen, 2008). MSME owners are regarded to be motivated by the achievement of their organisation's goals and vision (Cardon et al., 2009; Reijonen, 2008; Reijonen, 2014), meaning that the success of their company is what motivates them (Becherer et al., 2008; Marn et al., 2006). The intention to act is linked to the motivation to achieve goals, and MSME business owners' intentions are mirrored in the way they conduct their operations (Ncube & Zondo, 2018). SME owners who possess a high level of motivation to expand their businesses have a high likelihood of success (Delmar & Wiklund, 2008).

Researchers in Malaysia examined the motivations of business owners, as well as the push and pull variables that influence their decisions in a study that included 260 SMEs. The findings revealed a closer link between personal development, financial goals, and strategic planning than previously anticipated. Micro, Small and Medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) that want to grow are encouraged to engage in strategic planning, and business owners can assist drive the process (Charles et al., 2015; Moog et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2006). It is stated that certain owners of MSME businesses are not desirous of growing beyond their immediate level, as such, the owners' wish to operate on a small scale or have restricted growth ambitions may result in non-engagement in strategic planning (Marn, et al., 2016; Walker and Brown, 2004; Weber et al., 2015). The pull motivation parts of the study were shown to be the most important motivators for MSME owners in terms of being innovative and driving success in their businesses. This study was based on a study of 300 Micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) in Tanzania, which looked at the push and pull variables that influence motivation (Isaga et al., 2015). Cassiar (2007) previously illustrated the tenacity of MSME business owners and their outperformance of other owners of businesses who are driven by push elements. This study investigated the link between motivation

and business growth. The findings showed a link between motivation and business growth (Isaga et al., 2015).

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between the level of challenges experienced and the adoption of brand-building strategies by business owners.

Lastly, the results of the fourth test of the hypothesis revealed that challenges experienced by business owners influence their adoption of the brand-building strategy. The test of hypothesis implies a moderate association between the variables. It was found that business owners who experienced more challenges are less likely to adopt brand-building strategies compared to those who experienced fewer challenges. When business owners face challenges, they tend to focus on the ones that can result in immediate value for resolution. It was also found that there are several challenges faced by business owners in the bid to adopt brand-building initiatives.

These are identified as follows:

1. Lack of clarity on the target audience
2. Inability to focus due to business pressure
3. It is a time-consuming process
4. Inability to be consistent with branding tactics
5. It has less impact on business
6. The business benefits are not immediate
7. It has a high cost of execution

8. Lack of support
9. Challenges from external factors
10. Incompetence/lack of knowledge on brand building

As a result of owners' insufficient application of skills, the business faces challenges, and a lack of understanding of what branding entails has an impact on its adoption (Hirvonen and Laukkanen, 2014; Scheers, 2018). According to Scheers (2018), 74% of SME owners believe that a lack of marketing skills contributes to business failure in South Africa. This lack of expertise led to challenges such as limited market access, bad business location, and low product acceptance. Of the challenges faced by owners, the most severe brand-building challenge faced by business owners is the high cost of execution. Other prominent challenges are challenges from external factors, incompetence/lack of knowledge of brand building, lack of support, and business benefits not being immediate. With all these identified, the level of challenges faced by owners of businesses in accepting brand building is correlated with how long a business has been in existence, which may infer that business owners rely on other known and tested strategies than brand building.

From the study, it can be concluded that awareness, motivation, perceived benefits, and attitudes of owners of businesses have a relationship with their adoption of brand-building strategies. Even with these relationships, there could be other reasons why MSME businesses may not adopt brand building. Some of the reasons they have subscribed to as preventing them from adopting brand building have alluded to some of the variables tested in this research; like the lack of knowledge of brand building, to conclude the study, MSME business owners.

Findings show that business owners are still mostly driven by the expected financial returns. Of the people who have not adopted brand building, 4 questions were posed to them on

what would make them adopt brand building. On an increase in sales, they score 66%, if support were provided at 54%, assurance of returns at 59% and if financially viable at 75%. Most business owners who claim to have adopted brand building have executed some marketing activities like word of mouth 80%, social media 49%, direct marketing 53%, and website 31%, compared to newspaper 2%, radio/TV 6%. This supports the assertion that MSME brand brand-building activities at a level commensurate with their ability; the most important element is having a brand-building orientation.

Given the results of the 4 hypotheses tested, these adequately answer the research questions set at the beginning of the study. Each of the questions has been answered in the study and conclusively gives the study a confirmation of the questions being answered.

The research method is quantitative only may have imposed a limitation on the result. Having closed-ended questions puts a constraint on the respondents who may have wanted to add their perspectives to the responses aside from the structured questionnaire provided. If this were to be the case, the business owners would have offered their own personalised experiences to the study. This could have been achieved if the researcher adopted a mixed method. This would have necessitated both qualitative and quantitative data collection. Though this does not in any way invalidate the result of this study, it, however, offers an opportunity for other researchers to exploit this angle in future research.

This result from the research findings is expected and is illustrated in the conceptual framework of the study that links the various independent variables of awareness/knowledge, perception, motivation, and attitudes to the adoption of brand building. As such the envisaged output of the study is related to the conceptual framework and as such in line with expectations.

This study has provided new insights and literature that will be added to the body of knowledge. Having data from MSME businesses in Lagos Nigeria enriches the discourse and supports previous literature mostly found in foreign studies.

Recommendations for Application

With the understanding gained of the challenges that MSME business owners encounter in the adoption of brand-building strategies; among the several challenges being faced by MSME business owners, the key callouts are as follows:

- Inability to focus on business pressure
- The benefits of brand building not being immediate
- Incompetence and lack of knowledge on how to apply brand-building strategies
- The concern about brand building not having an impact on the business.

As a result of the study's findings, the following recommendations for practical application are put forward:

1. **Government Intervention:** Given the importance of MSME to the economy, the government should get involved in its development – establishing incubation centres, and funding universities to set up entrepreneurship centres for capability development. The government should incorporate entrepreneurship curriculums in universities to expand brand-building knowledge. For instance, government and private sector programs could provide registered MSMEs with branding workshops, financial incentives, or access to professional branding services. These initiatives could help further bridge the gap between business formalisation and strategic brand management. For policymakers, the findings in this study highlight the need to encourage more businesses to formalise their operations through registration with the

CAC. This could involve reducing the barriers to registration, such as simplifying the process and reducing associated costs, to make it more accessible to MSME businesses. For business development service providers, the findings suggest that targeted interventions should be designed to reach unregistered businesses, providing them access to information and training on brand-building strategies even if they are not registered. This could help bridge the awareness gap and support the growth and formalisation of these businesses over time.

2. **Business owners require training and knowledge:** Given that a key challenge of MSME business owners is the incompetence on brand building strategies and knowledge gap; MSME business owners should get the requisite training and knowledge on brand building strategies as it is important to have good marketing and branding skills (Douglas et al., 2017). The recommendation by Kennedy and Wright (2011) is that it is important to have brand owners/managers educate themselves on the branding industry ahead of undertaking any initiative related to branding, as well as undertake extensive market surveys which will enhance their abilities and capabilities before initiating brand building. To this end, the role of SMEDAN (The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria), established in 2003, to facilitate the promotion and development of structured and efficient Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), (Ajayi et al., 2018), has been further emphasised. SMEDAN as an agency should be deliberate in developing training and capability development for business owners in brand building. Such training can be on how to digitalise their business operations and set up structures to enhance their brand-building capabilities. Programs aimed at increasing brand-building awareness may need to focus more on practical, industry-specific training rather than if higher education levels will naturally lead to greater strategic awareness.

For policymakers and educators, these findings highlight the need to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical application in the field of MSME business management. There may be a need for more tailored training programs that focus on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by MSME businesses in brand-building, regardless of the educational background of the business owners. There should be an inclusive approach to driving awareness among business owners, without a gender bias. Consequently, interventions aimed at increasing awareness and adoption of brand-building strategies might be more effective if they are designed to target entrepreneurs broadly rather than focusing on gender-specific approaches. A re-evaluation of the support structures and educational programs available to entrepreneurs, suggests that these resources should emphasise inclusivity and accessibility for all business owners, regardless of gender. This increased knowledge will better serve the business owners who can apply such in the ability to match their choice of branding activities with the resources at their disposal, which will ultimately bring about a better outcome. This knowledge should also be exposed to their team. This proposal is because business owners' awareness of brand-building strategy and implementation of brand-building efforts are related. MSME business growth is an important indicator of performance and success (Carton and Hofer, 2006; Eggers et al., 2013), especially when many MSMEs are struggling to survive in most nations (Lee et al., 2012). However, research shows that MSMEs who develop and apply excellent branding can get both financial (such as sales revenue and profit margin) and non-financial performance benefits (Abimbola, 2001; Asamoah, 2014; Hsiao & Chen, 2013; Wong and Merrilees, 2005;). Renton et al. (2015) claim that moving from a minimalist to an integrated brand orientation improves performance. The research shows that brand-focused SMEs outperform their non-brand-focused competitors (Berthon et

al., 2008). Agostini et al. (2015) suggest that branding (through trademarks) helps MSMEs' sales performance in the fashion industry. To help business owners gain more knowledge, workshops, mentoring programs, and case studies showcasing the long-term benefits of brand-building could be effective in shifting attitudes and encouraging more business owners to invest in their brands. According to Merrilees et al. (2011), branding affects MSMEs' market and financial performance. Similarly, Asamoah (2014) discovered that brand equity positively impacts MSMEs' sales growth and new product success. Reijonen et al. (2012) further show that branding orientation distinguishes rising MSMEs from stable and declining ones. Typically, non-financial performance benefits from branding have been demonstrated in the accrual of strong brand reputation, brand image, brand awareness as well as customer brand loyalty (Hirvonen et al., 2013; Wong and Merrilees, 2008;). Following the leads of Reijonen et al. (2012) as well as Renton et al. (2015), it could be hypothesized that a strong connection exists for MSME businesses whose businesses are high performing to be linked with an increase in how they perform brand building versus others who are low performers.

3. **Adopt a creative way of executing brand building:** This researcher recommends that MSME businesses adopt a creative way of executing brand-building strategies. There will always not be enough resources to undertake everything that an SME aspires to do; resources such as money, time and capabilities. Examined literature submits that despite the paucity of resources, MSME businesses can deploy creative means to drive the exploitation of the capabilities of their brands through a negligible level of resources (Berthon et al., 2018). A simple way in which small enterprises can drive brand visibility and retention is the way they deploy their brand messaging. They can ensure that they develop creative and exciting visual identity items in materials that can be easily viewed like letterhead documents, complimentary cards, social

media platforms, taglines and brand websites. There should be a standardised application of the brand communication elements across these platforms to ensure consistency in the look and feel of the brand (Sharma et al., 2017)

4. **Understand the benefits of brand building:** Having clarity on the benefits of brand building is an avenue that business owners should explore, in addition to its advantages. This will make them more willing to adopt brand-building initiatives and improve their business. This recommendation is given considering the finding that motivation and perceived benefit influence the adoption of brand-building initiatives. To be motivated to adopt brand-building strategies, MSMEs would require knowledge about the value and importance that the adoption of branding strategies brings to their businesses for them to be open and ready for adoption, as well as know the challenges posed by branding (Roy & Burjamee, 2012). Regarding the benefits derivable from brand building which could serve as motivation for owners to adopt a brand building, branding is said to contribute to improved sales performance and ultimately higher financial performance (Agostini et al., 2015; Merrilees et al., 2011). Literature indicated that clarity of the goals to be achieved is a motivation for business owners and could push them to adopt brand-building strategies. The equity of the brand has an appreciable impact on the performance of SMEs (Asamoah, 2014), in terms of sales growth and new product success. The adoption of brand orientation has a marked difference in SME companies that are more vibrant and growing than those that are doing poorly (Reijonen et al., 2012). Aside from the financial value, other benefits from brand building adoption are – solid brand reputation, strong brand identity, awareness, and brand loyalty (Hirvonen et al., 2013; Wong and Merrilees, 2008). MSMEs that are doing well can be linked to the adoption of brand building compared to those who are not on board (Reijonen et al., 2012; Renton et al., 2015). The reason

given by business owners about not knowing the value derivable from brand-building strategies application as a problem area can be removed through understanding the benefits and taking learnings from other organisations that have adopted brand-building strategies.

5. **Get employees' support:** Given that most business owners often perceive brand building as a form of distraction to their existing businesses, MSMEs should find support in activating brand building in their organisations. This they can do through utilising latent skills within their workforce to serve dual roles and add value to the business through skills that they already possess which can be of value to the business. This can also be identified at the point of recruitment, where business owners look out for added and multi-skills from the intending staff. From the data gathered respondents who have not previously adopted brand-building strategies claim they would be open to its adoption if they get adequate support in execution (54% of those who haven't adopted brand-building). This support can be provided by the internal team within the organisation. If this approach is decided upon, the owners of businesses will not be required to pay additional salaries to achieve this. In addition to this, the internal resources of a MSME business are valuable tools. Through communication, they can build their loyalty, and this can be cascaded to their customers through simple means of extending brand values. Gromark and Melin (2011) offer a perspective that companies can create internal value amongst employees ahead of offering this externally. If this position is adopted by MSME business owners, they can deploy messaging amongst their employees, so when value is created, this is extended to their customers. Gromark and Melin (2011) supports the notion that from the inside out, employees can serve as catalysts to aid external interactions with customers to drive up the equity of the brand. Given the role of the business owner in the running and operations of the company, it is important to create an enabling environment to

support brand management in its daily operations. This way, employees can recognise the importance of showcasing their business and brands to consumers and they begin to see it as part of their responsibilities. The influence of the business owner through these structures helps support branding as the staff have an appreciation for the image of the brand and the company and a sense of pride develops and evolves (Sharma et al., 2017). As such the recommendation is to use employees as brand ambassadors to showcase the products and services of the MSME businesses to attract purchasers.

6. **Scale up brand building:** The value of adopting brand-building strategies by MSME businesses has been thoroughly discussed in this study. Given that MSME business owners have varying levels of challenges preventing them from adopting brand building (even when the value is realised), a recommendation would be for the business owners to start small and scale up in their drive towards brand adoption. Adopting a brand orientation strategy does not relate to spending money only, but hinged on creating a unique brand identity and positioning upon which the brand can execute. Since brand building is not for big businesses alone, MSME businesses should customise what fits their current peculiarities and make this work for them before moving up. From the available literature, it is important to note that brand engagement is deemed to be better as a focus than just brand orientation. And this engagement is brought to life in the interactions that the brand makes with its customers.
7. **Business owners to relinquish some control:** Business owners should learn to relinquish some of the control they exert on their businesses. This will allow them to get support where required from sources that have more knowledge and skills in deploying brand building strategies. This strategy will also allow them to focus on the important aspect of the business that requires their attention, rather than holding control of everything without the ability to give

them the individual attention they require. The control and effect that MSME business owners have on their operations have been discussed extensively in the literature, they need to come to a point of realisation that delegating aspects of the business will bring added benefit to them in addition to value to the overall business. It does not imply a loss of total control, but more of empowering other people to help them achieve their objectives.

8. **Adopt internal branding approach:** Adopting a brand orientation approach requires everyone within the organisation to imbibe the brand approach. Brand building is not the responsibility of the business owner alone, but it is a collective responsibility of the entire company. Business owners need to initiate branding from the inside out through the adoption of internal branding. This approach makes employees an intrinsic part of the brand-building process. Employees must be given perspectives of the brands in the same way as efforts are made for the consumers or customers. They should live and breathe the brand(s), with internal materials deployed in critical areas as a reminder of what the brand stands for. In-house communication should have the brand outlook as well as the tonality of the brands. Customer service and orientation should be lived by the employees in a way that translates to the consumers/customers (Sharma et al., 2017). As such, this orientation is required to be cascaded through the organisation for everyone to know what their role is in entrenching the orientation internally and externally. This recommendation can be brought to life by the business owner driving the conversation from the top and cascading it down across the business. Everyone should take responsibility for brand management within the business as everything they do contributes to the overall consumer perception of their brands.
9. **Demonstrate a positive outlook on brand building:** Business owners should have a right and positive attitude towards brand building strategy. This recommendation is given considering

the finding that the attitude of business owners towards brand-building influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives. The relevance and importance of values is an integral component of SME brand building, (Centeno et al., 2019). Having a brand identity is a follow-up to being brand-oriented, and the components of brand identity are brand values, brand positioning, and brand vision (Muhonen et al., 2017). The brand identity is determined by the association that a business owner relates with (Spence and Essoussi 2010; Ojasalo et al., 2008). Arising from the alignment of brand orientation with the personality of the owner-manager, there must be value alignment also (Blomback & Brunninge, 2013). Neuroven (2016) in his study of high-tech industries found out that business owners are unable to see consistency between brand strategy and their values. The business owners do not see the adoption of a brand-building strategy as an enhancement to their status. They rather saw innovation as more value-adding to their business and the brand as enhancing their social status in their community (Centeno et al., 2019). They connect values achieved to product features rather than brand strategy. It goes further to say that given the context of a high-tech industry; brand-building may be adapted to take a different format; with innovation being an overriding factor (Neuroven, 2016). These findings imply that efforts to foster a positive attitude towards branding among MSME owners can lead to a greater uptake of brand-building initiatives, which in turn can enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of these businesses in the market.

10. **Utilise Media intelligently:** With the advent of technology and the growth of digital platforms, the use of conventional marketing platforms has evolved. Brands need to intelligently deploy these touchpoints based on an understanding of their target audiences. The choice of the right media applications for branding requires careful consideration. Choosing media based on the

habits of the consumers is necessary for having the right level of engagement and connection with the brand. For instance, a youth-oriented brand would do well in tapping into the various social media and digital platforms that exist. Given that most MSME businesses do not have funding to play around with, intelligent choices are required. Consumers online can be made to generate content for the brand for a little reward and recognition. This can be done on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Sharma, et al., 2017). Given the constraint encountered by MSME businesses to execute branding due to funding, the advent of social media has become a viable path to undertake. With many more people consuming digital platforms, they spend significant time rummaging through the web for information. Due to this habit, it offers a unique platform for brands to engage with users with their products and offerings. MSME businesses can take advantage of this to adopt this strategy (Stephen, 2016). Businesses are now able to deploy content on social media and digital spaces, as a way of having engagement and connections with their customers. they can give visibility to their products and drive higher recall of their brands, they can use reviews based on customers' experiences, which they can eventually bring to bear on improving the presentation and quality of what they offer. From the research findings, of those MSME business owners that have adopted brand-building strategies, only 31% of them have utilised digital campaigns. This appears to be a low-hanging fruit that they can explore and use to drive brand visibility. This way, they can influence the attitude of their customers and influence their choices to enable them to build a long-lasting brand (Ahmed et al., 2019; Algharabat et al., 2018; Lal et al., 2020; Puneet et al., 2018).

11. **Mitigate brand-building challenges:** The Challenges business owners face concerning brand-building should be mitigated as this has been found to influence business owners'

adoption of brand-building initiatives. This recommendation is given considering the finding that there is a relationship between the level of challenges and the adoption of brand-building strategy by business owners. It was found that business owners' level of challenges in branding building influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives. Understanding what contributes to business success or what challenges businesses face is important to MSME owners and policymakers, Rankhumise and Letsoalo (2019). MSME owners often have partial, or no knowledge of what brand building is and are sometimes unaware of the value that can be derivable from brand-building strategies (Gundala et al., 2014, Horan et al., 2011). According to SMEDAN (2013), the need to have a clearly defined branding framework is not pervasive. When a company does not understand the role of branding in their business, it leads to a lack of understanding of articulating its target audience and message; when a company is unable to transmit the right message to its target audience, it can make the business unsuccessful. Another major challenge facing MSMEs is the non-availability of the right marketing or branding skills to deploy in their businesses, given the importance attributed to the impact of brand building on business performance (Odoom et al., 2017). Such a gap can stunt the growth of such organisations that are incapable of conducting key initiatives like Research and Development, identifying new markets, and innovating on new products (Mishra et al., 2018). Among MSME owners/managers, it was said that there was a low appreciation of what branding is and the branding concept was not quite pervasive in usage, which is evident in the lack of attention being paid to what the brands stand for (Krake, 2005; Merrilees, 2007). The lack of know-how and expertise in branding are some of the reasons adduced for the non-adoption of branding strategies by MSMEs (Horan et al., 2011).

Business owners facing substantial challenges may benefit from targeted support and resources that address their specific branding difficulties. For instance, providing tailored branding workshops, financial assistance, or expert consultation could help these businesses overcome barriers and recognise the strategic value of branding.

Recommendation for Future Research

The need to develop recommendations for future studies is necessary to build on the findings of this study, address limitations and flaws in this study, the need to test a theory in a new context or the need to re-evaluate a theory. The following recommendation is made for future research:

1. This study adopted a quantitative approach. This decision was taken bearing in mind the need to have a structured format to gather the responses of the business owners. The researcher took this approach given the diversity of the MSME business owner and the often-unstructured processes to be able to give a structure to the study. This is necessary to ensure that the data gathered, and the responses are in a usable format. Though the researcher recognises that this approach did not offer the opportunity to gain additional context as to the peculiarity of the individual business owner due to the closed-ended questioning; this limited some feedback that could have come directly from the respondents concerning their challenges. It is recommended that a mixed methodology be adopted in future research to provide robust data to gauge the minds of MSME business owners; the understanding that the diversity that exists amongst MSME businesses will offer varying degrees of perspectives would enrich the discussions on this topic. The use of a mixed-method approach will require the adoption of both quantitative and qualitative methods. This method allows for the interconnectivity of both methods in a way that allows for a

fuller context of the research problem. While using the mixed method, the researcher will draw on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research, while at the same time lessening the effect of their collective weaknesses so that a holistic comprehension of the study is achieved (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). The adoption of a mixed method could help to expand and enlarge the depth of the findings of some aspects of this study especially as it relates to the challenges faced by MSME business owners.

2. Research should be done on the factors militating against the awareness of brand-building MSME business owners. While the current study was able to establish a relationship between awareness and adoption of brand-building initiatives, the study did not investigate the factors responsible for the level of awareness of brand-building among business owners. An understanding of factors responsible for the level of awareness of brand-building strategies among business owners will help in determining why they have the level of awareness of brand-building strategies they have currently and how it can be improved to ensure that they adopt brand-building initiatives and improve their business.
3. There is a need to carry out a study to determine predictors of attitude towards brand-building initiatives. Given that the attitude of business owners towards brand-building strategy influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives, an investigation of factors influencing business owners' attitude towards brand-building strategies will help in knowing what to do to bring about a positive attitude of business owners towards brand-building strategy and thus getting them to adopt brand-building initiatives.
4. Even though this study has given some recommendations on how MSME business owners can remove some of the limitations or challenges that work against their adoption of brand-building strategies, it is still imperative to. manage this on a deeper level. It is recommended

that further studies are conducted on measures to be taken to mitigate the challenges faced by business owners concerning brand building. This recommendation is given considering the finding that the level of challenges experienced by business owners influences their adoption of brand-building initiatives. With the diversity of issues that exist, a focused study will help to develop mitigators.

5. This study undertaken in Lagos Nigeria has appraised the perspectives of business owners in this location. Lagos being a cosmopolitan city is quite reminiscent of Nigeria as it houses individuals from every facet of the Nigerian diversified population; as such, the result can be generalised to the entire country. However, it may do well for future studies if this research is conducted in a different context to ascertain if environmental or cultural factors would affect the findings in any way. As such the researcher recommends that a future study may be conducted to check for the peculiarities identified earlier and ascertain if these would apply.
6. The theoretical framework adopted for the study is hinged on the model of brand orientation (Wong & Merrilees, 2005). However, in a later study, Wong and Merrilees (2015) build on this model of brand orientation by recognising that beyond brand orientation is an antecedent of brand engagement. To achieve brand engagement, it is necessary to execute brand activities and this results from having a dual view of the business and consumer viewpoint. It is then this combination that comes about from the comprehensive value of both brand orientation and brand engagement which brings about business growth. Though this study looked at the various brand activities already being used by owners to drive brand engagement and also explored the benefits they derived from these implementations, and the value to the business for using brand orientation and

engagement, however, this study did not dwell on deep details on the elements of the brand engagement which is said to have a direct impact on brand performance (Wong & Merrilees, 2015). The reason for this lack of detail in this area is that it may have caused a derailment from the original intent of this study. The researcher believes that this area may inform an avenue to be explored for future study. This could be focused on the interconnectivity of brand orientation and brand engagement and the effect on higher business performance.

7. During the period that this study was underway, the global economy experienced a pandemic, and this also affected the location of this approach. The impact of the pandemic has reverberated across several global and local economies. It has altered business dynamics and changed the way people live and conduct their businesses. The effect has resulted in some cases, the decline of some industries and sectors and the expansion and growth of others. So, in other words, the business environment has changed in some respect to what it was before the pandemic. The researcher recommends that a study be initiated to check the resultant effect of the pandemic on the research topic as it relates to MSME business owners. This decision could unravel a new theory on how MSME business owners now see the variables in this study interplay – awareness, motivation, perceived benefits, the attitude of business owners as well as the challenges being faced by business owners in this new reality.

Conclusion

Building great brands should be a priority for many MSME businesses because of the values and benefits derivable as well as how it helps achieve competitive advantage. Brand

building if sustained delivers long-term value for the business. Brand building is a process that should be planned, strategic, and integrated across the entire firm. It contributes to the development of a company's most precious asset, its brand, by providing guidance, stewardship, understanding, influence, and enthusiasm to the organisation. The process of branding involves knowing the positioning that a company wishes to operate in and who its core targets are. This starts with how to construct a brand identity, which is an important foundation to build while building a brand. This helps to fully comprehend what the brand proposition is, the promise and the communication of its identity. Brand building, according to Lassen et al. (2011), begins with a corporation establishing the core of its brand and ends with specific brand communication.

The identity of the brand refers to the way the brand is seen and contributing to this perception are owners and employees. Brand identity marks the attributes, signs or connotations of a brand which is meant by a company's strategists to be established in the minds of its inward and outward-facing stakeholders.

It is the brand that sets apart the organisation from its competing brands or organisations, and it is even more important than that since branding is the assurance made by the corporation to its internal and external stakeholders. When an expense is made on a brand, it is made for the long-term viability of the company.

Micro, Small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) have a particular benefit over big organisations because their organisational framework and procedures are more versatile, allowing them to integrate numerous organisational functions into the branding process. Micro, Small and Medium business enterprises (MSMEs) are more integrative than big organisations as such, brand management can be integrated amongst multiple internal and external teams.

The owner of MSME businesses is bound to the company's brand and stature and defines its culture and identity; with the firm identity being based on the personality of the founder. However, a single brand strategy would not be appropriate for all MSMEs due to the differences in their character and the individuality of their customers, hence the need for them to adopt strategies that are relevant to their size and needs.

According to the findings of this study, the current level of acceptability of brand-building initiatives by business owners, as well as the factors impacting brand-building initiative adoption by business owners, were determined. According to the findings of the study, roughly half of the business owners who participated in the survey had not applied brand-building initiatives. In addition, factors such as brand-building strategy awareness, perceived advantages of branding strategy, motivation and attitude toward branding strategy, as well as impediments to brand-building strategy, have an impact on the adoption of brand-building activities.

The result of this study is relevant in understanding factors responsible for the adoption of brand-building strategies among MSME business owners and measures that can be taken to address this issue. This study also brings the identified predictors of the adoption of brand-building initiatives to the fore concerning examining them more closely to determine dimensions of these predictors that have implications for the adoption of brand-building initiatives by MSME business owners.

To build significant brand equity, a company must create a brand that customers recognise and associate with positive feelings. Brands are differentiated from competitors and other products through verbal and visual information. These elements are capable of increasing brand enlightenment and establishing distinct connotations of brands in the minds of consumers. When

people get familiar with any of the brand attributes associated with a product or service, they significantly help to raise brand recognition.

Brand identities of various companies usually contribute to the suggestiveness of advertising memory. Building and keeping a brand requires a proportion of all possible brand elements because different scenarios will likely result in different customer returns. When developing equity for a worldwide firm, identities like the company name and brand name operate as quality assurances. To build significant brand equity, a company must create a brand that customers recognise and associate with positive feelings.

Brands are differentiated from competitors and other products through verbal and visual information. Various brand attributes can be used to increase brand awareness as well as facilitate the development of differentiated brand associations. When people get familiar with any of the brand signs linked with a product or service, they significantly help to raise brand recognition. Brand identities of various companies usually contribute to the suggestiveness of advertising memory.

Building and keeping a brand requires a proportion of all possible brand elements because different scenarios will likely result in different customer returns. They need a well-balanced mix of brand elements, which are the visual components of an image, to help them develop individual identities in their small yet sophisticated surroundings. Brand-building considerations are often the cornerstone for generating individual identities within their little yet sophisticated surroundings. A company's product or service is often the key effect on how consumers connect with a brand, what others say about it and what they say about it in customer encounters. The selling company can command a premium concerning prices, which may result in consumers preferring them above their competitors which could trigger a rejection of the competitor's products.

To meet or exceed consumer expectations on time, a product's branding and marketing processes must be consistent with the company's entire brand. Micro, Small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) can establish competitive advantages by aligning their marketing strategies with their brand (Renton et al., 2015). When a brand is linked to another entity, new connections are likely to be made between the two, in addition to changes to current brand connections. Certain connections or feedback from third parties are routed to the brand in this way. Thus, only a well-balanced mix of external alliances can improve corporate performance. MSME business growth and development is a crucial indicator of performance and success, especially in a country like Nigeria where the existence of diverse MSMEs appears to be weak in most cases.

According to branding studies, MSMEs that plan and implement strong branding activities can receive both monetary (such as increased sales returns and increased profitability) as well as non-monetary performance values (Asamoah, 2014). According to Renton et al. (2015), organisations that transition from a minimalist to an integrated brand approach are more likely to succeed. According to research, brand-focused MSMEs outperform their competitors that do not prioritise their brands.

According to Agostini et al. (2015), branding (through trademarks) is a determinant of MSMEs' sales success in the fashion business. Asamoah (2014) discovered that brand equity boosted MSMEs' sales growth, new product success, and other metrics. Brand orientation is a fundamental attribute that distinguishes emerging MSMEs from stable and failing MSMEs. Brand prestige, brand reflection, brand enlightenment, and customer brand support/allegiance have all been demonstrated to be beneficial in building powerful brands. As a result, financially successful MSMEs invest more in brand creation than their less successful peers, indicating a favourable correlation.

In reviewing the objectives set at the beginning of this study, as stated below:

1. To identify the influence of the level of awareness on the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners
2. To determine the influence of motivation and perceived benefits on the adoption of brand-building strategies by MSME business owners.
3. To know how the attitude of business owners influences their adoption of brand-building strategies.
4. To know the challenges faced by business owners in adopting brand-building strategies in their business operations.

This study has delivered on these objectives, and in the same vein, has given output on the research questions posed at the beginning of the research, which are framed out of the research objectives as questions to be answered by the findings of the study. Each of these has been tested in the 4 hypotheses and is conclusive on the acceptability of establishing a relationship between the variables as set out in the development of the conceptual framework of the research.

At the commencement of this research, a significant gap was identified in the limited studies available on the role or activities of brand building for MSME businesses in Nigeria; in circumstances where literature is available, they are not local to Nigeria and do not reflect current trends or relatable to the Nigerian context. With the potential of, the contribution and growth of the MSME sector in Nigeria, it is important to have specific and relevant literature. Having this information and data will be critical to the removal of roadblocks and impediments to the growth of the sector. The scale of the MSME -business industry and its relevance and importance to the Nigerian economy necessitates the application of the benefits and values derivable from brand building to its operations.

From this study, the stereotype that brand-building is only for large corporations has been debunked, as MSME business owners have offered their perspectives as to the benefits, they derive from brand-building adoption. The findings have significantly contributed to the existing body of knowledge; most available research on brand-building strategies for MSMEs are qualitative studies (Wong & Merrilees, 2005). Some of the previous studies and theories were criticised based on generalisation; due to the qualitative nature of the study and the limited number of respondents, with the analysis mostly descriptive (Odoom, 2016; Odoom et al. 2017; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). The quantitative approach in this study allowed for more rigour in the analysis compared to previous studies. This further enriches the literature and allows for generalisation. The researcher developed the conceptual framework in line with the research objectives. Recognising the key variables that drive business owners in their centrality as an embodiment of the business. This is an addition to the body of literature. The findings provide accessible data points for MSME businesses in Lagos, Nigeria. This bridges the gap identified in the literature and is a significant addition to the body of knowledge for practice.

As such this study is relevant and significant in any respect as new and emerging business ventures can have practical measures that they can apply to the businesses that will allow them to derive benefit rather than go through it themselves. This study also contributes to theory and practice through materials that will be made available for students studying Entrepreneurship, Marketing, and Management, as well as MSME Consultants. This addition to the body of knowledge for both scholars and management will be valuable for the growth of micro, small business enterprises (MSMEs) businesses in the application of this knowledge, as well as helping businesses to have a competitive advantage over their competitors. Through this study, future scholars will have available literature that can enhance their research.

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APPENDICES:

- A. UREC decision letter
- B. Informed consent form
- C. Gate Keepers form
- D. Questionnaire

Appendix A: UREC decision letter



UREC's Decision

Student's Name: Bolajoko Bayo-Ajayi

Student's ID #: R1712D4196132

Supervisor's Name: Dr Abhishek Tripathi

Program of Study: UUZ: DBA Doctoral of Business Administration

Offer ID /Group ID: O21412G21403

Dissertation Stage: 3

Research Project Title: THE CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING BRANDING BUILDING STRATEGIES BY ENTREPRENEURS: A STUDY OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN NIGERIA

Comments: REAF:
 Program of Study: UUZ: DBA - Doctorate of Business Administration
 5b - Provide the Exclusion criteria.
 5b - Disabilities. Provide information on whether participants with disabilities will take part in the research.

Informed Consent Form
 Program of Study: UUZ: DBA - Doctorate of Business Administration
 Explain why and how you have chosen this person to participate in this research

Gatekeeper letter: provide the document. there is the Informed consent under the Gatekeeper.

QUESTIONNAIRE:
 Ask for the actual age and/ or a number of years in the organization, and the number of years the company being in operation, not the range as this will allow for more detailed statistical analysis at a later point. "

Decision: B. Approved with comments for minor revision

Date: 21-Jan-2021



UREC's Decision

Name of Participant:

Bolajoko Bayo-Ajayi

Title of the Research project:

THE CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING BRANDING BUILDING STRATEGIES BY ENTREPRENEURS: A STUDY OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN NIGERIA

Date:

05/12/2019

Comments

☒ V

Approved without revision or comments.

☐

Approved with comments for **minor revision**.

☐

Not approved with guidance comments for moderate revision and resubmission.

☐

Not approved with guidance comments for major revision and resubmission.

Appendix B: Informed consent form



UU_IC - Version 2.1



Informed Consent Form

Part 1: Debriefing of Participants

Student's Name: BOLAJOKO OMOLARA BAYO-AJAYI

Student's E-mail Address: Bolajoko.bayo-ajayi@outlook.com

Student ID #: R1712D4196132

Supervisor's Name: ABHISHEK TRIPATHI

University Campus: Unicaf University Zambia (UUZ)

Program of Study: UUZ: DBA - Doctorate of Business Administration

Research Project Title: THE CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING BRANDING BUILDING STRATEGIES BY ENTREPRENEURS: A STUDY OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN NIGERIA

Date: 02-Feb-2021

Provide a short description (purpose, aim and significance) of the research project, and explain why and how you have chosen this person to participate in this research (maximum 150 words).

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of how small business owners perceive brand building as an intervention in their businesses. The research will focus on these objectives:

- (1). To identify the level of knowledge/ awareness of brand building strategies among small business owners.
- (2). To understand the motivation and derived benefits for adopting brand building strategies by small business owners.
- (3). To know the attitude of business owners in the process of adoption of brand building strategies.
- (4). To know the challenges faced by business owners in adopting brand building strategies in their business operations.

You have been chosen to participate in this research because your business is based in Lagos State and qualifies against the criteria – having a staff strength of between 1-10 employees and being in operation for a minimum of 2 years. You were selected through engagement with gatekeepers who provided your details.

The above named Student is committed in ensuring participant's voluntarily participation in the research project and guaranteeing there are no potential risks and/or harms to the participants.

Participants have the right to withdraw at any stage (prior or post the completion) of the research without any consequences and without providing any explanation. In these cases, data collected will be deleted.

All data and information collected will be coded and will not be accessible to anyone outside this research. Data described and included in dissemination activities will only refer to coded information ensuring beyond the bounds of possibility participant identification.

I, BOLAJOKO OMOLARA BAYO-AJAYI, ensure that all information stated above is true and that all conditions have been met.

Student's Signature:

BoB



Informed Consent Form

Part 2: Certificate of Consent

This section is mandatory and should to be signed by the participant(s)

Student's Name: BOLAJOKO OMOLARA BAYO-AJAYI

Student's E-mail Address: Bolajoko.bayo-ajayi@outlook.com

Student ID #: R1712D4196132

Supervisor's Name: ABHISHEK TRIPATHI

University Campus: Unicaf University Zambia (UUZ)

Program of Study: UUZ: DBA - Doctorate of Business Administration

Research Project Title: THE CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING BRANDING BUILDING STRATEGIES BY ENTREPRENEURS: A STUDY OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN NIGERIA

I have read the foregoing information about this study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss about it. I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions and I have received enough information about this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason for withdrawing and without negative consequences. I consent to the use of multimedia (e.g. audio recordings, video recordings) for the purposes of my participation to this study. I understand that my data will remain anonymous and confidential, unless stated otherwise. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Participant's Print name:

Participant's Signature:

Date:

If the Participant is illiterate:

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had an opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the aforementioned individual has given consent freely.

Witness's Print name:

Witness's Signature:

Date:

Appendix C: Gate Keepers form



UU_GL - Version 2.0



Gatekeeper letter

Address: 13B ELM STREET, OSBORNE FORESHORE ESTATE**Date:** 08-Dec-2020**Subject:** REQUEST FOR RECRUITMENT OF RESPONDENTS

Dear Director, EDC,

I am a **doctoral** student at Unicaf University Zambia.

As part of my degree, I am carrying out a study on **THE CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING BRANDING BUILDING STRATEGIES BY ENTREPRENEURS: A STUDY OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN NIGERIA**

I am writing to enquire whether you would be willing to assist and give permission to recruit respondents from within your alumni/organisation.

The main target of the project are small business owners domiciled in Lagos and who have been in operation for a minimum of 2 years. They must have a staff strength of 1-10 employees. Subject to the approval by Unicaf Research Ethics Committee (UREC) this study will be using closed-ended questionnaires for collection of data.

The research will focus on the following objectives:

1. To identify the level of awareness of brand building strategies among small business owners.
2. To understand the motivation and derived benefits for adopting brand building strategies by small business owners.
3. To know the attitude of business owners in the process of adoption of brand building strategies.
4. To know the challenges faced by business owners in adopting brand building strategies in their business operations.

I would appreciate if you can help in getting the approval & access to 200 small business owners for their participation in this research. The questionnaires will be administered on-line and can be executed at their own convenience within a period of 10 minutes from commencement time.

Thank you in advance for your time and for your consideration of this project. Kindly please let me know if you require any further information or need any further clarifications.

Yours Sincerely,

Bolajoko O. Bayo-Ajayi

Student's Name: BOLAJOKO OMOLARA BAYO-AJAYI**Student's E-mail:** bolajoko.bayo-ajayi@outlook.com**Student's Address and Telephone:** 13b Elm Street Osborne Foreshore Estate 2 Ikoyi. 08033116773**Supervisor's Title and Name:** Dr Abhishek Tripathi

Appendix D: Questionnaire

I am currently pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration degree (DBA). I am undertaking research on the topic: **“THE CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING BRAND BUILDING STRATEGIES BY ENTREPRENEURS: A STUDY OF MSME BUSINESSES IN NIGERIA”**.

The key objectives of this study are to understand the level of awareness of business owners to brand building strategies and to know what motivates them into adopting brand building strategies. This study will also seek to know the role played by business owners in the adoption of brand building strategies while unravelling the challenges being faced by business owners in the deployment of brand building strategies in their business operations.

You have been identified as a viable and valuable participant in this study. Your responses will be anonymous and all the information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for the purpose of this research.

Your participation is highly valued, and I thank you for availing me of your time and value information for the success of this research project.

PART 1: BUSINESS OWNER BIODATA

Please select one option in this section. Tick in the relevant box.

3. Gender

Mark only one oval.

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

Age

Highest level of education *Mark only one oval/.*

0 Levels Diploma Degree

Postgraduate

2. Number of years in business operation

If Business Operation is less than 2yrs, close interview.

COMPANY INFORMATION

Please tick in the relevant box.

3. What is the nature of your business? *Mark only one oval.*

Accommodation and food services	1
Administrative and support service activities	2
Agriculture	3
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4
Construction	5
Education	6
Human health and social works	7
Information and communication	8
Manufacturing	9
Other services activities	10
Professional, scientific and technical works	11
Real estate activities	12
Transport and storage	13
Wholesale /retail trade	14
Others	15

4. Is your business registered with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

5. How many employees do you have in your business operation? *Mark only one oval.*

1-5 employees

6-10 employees

11-15 employees

Above 15 employees

Please tick in the relevant box.

AWARENESS OF KEY BRAND BUILDING PRACTICES

6. Are you aware of brand building as a practice in business operations? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

Maybe

If Yes or May be, continue at Q9, If No, continue at Q10

7. How will you rate your level of awareness of what brand building involves? *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5

Least knowledgeable

Very knowledgeable

10. In your opinion, rate your level of agreement with these statement

Mark only one oval per row.

	Least Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
Brand building is having a logo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building involves a brand proposition and identity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building is advertisement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building involves strategic thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building is necessary for MSME businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Have you undertaken any brand building initiatives in your business before? *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

If Yes, continue at Q11b, If No, continue at Q11a

11a. If you answered NO to above, what would make you adopt brand building initiatives? *Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Assurance of returns
- ☐ If it is financially viable
- ☐ If I can access adequate support to execute
- ☐ If it will increase my sales and profitability

11b. If you answered YES above, which of these have you done? (You can choose more than one)

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Brand identity/brand positioning
- ☐ Create a brand logo
- ☐ Advertisements
- ☐ Digital campaign
- ☐ Understand and know your target audience
- ☐ I have matched my strategy with the mission and Vision
- ☐ statement Know your competitors through research
- ☐ Having a unique selling proposition for the brand
- ☐ Set up Customer service
- ☐ Have packaging for your products
- ☐ Have a consistent brand message - What you tell customers about your brand

12. Relating to advertising channels, which of the following have you done for your business?

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Websites
- ☐ Social media Campaign
- ☐ Email Marketing/Newsletter
- ☐ Radio/Television
- ☐ SMS
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Brand Ambassadors
- ☐ Direct Marketing (One on one Marketing)
- ☐ Word of Mouth Marketing
- ☐ Other: _____

ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRAND BUILDING

Please tick in the relevant box.

13.

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Brand building is limited to your company logo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building is only done by multinationals/big companies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building can help a business grow	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Only business owners can execute brand building initiatives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building can lead to increase in profit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business owners have limited knowledge of brand building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I adopt brand building because it will increase my sales	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The most important thing to me is to increase my customer base.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building does not deliver any tangible result.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consumers will not switch due to brand building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please tick in the relevant box.

MOTIVATION FOR ADOPTING BRAND BUILDING

14. How will you rank the statements below on the degree of how you will be motivated to adopt Brand building?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I will adopt brand building because it will promote my corporate image.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will give my company a competitive advantage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To attract more customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building can lead to increase in profits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practice of brand building leads to long term business survival	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building increases consumer satisfaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand building builds the trust of the customers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**BENEFITS OF
ADOPTING BRAND
BUILDING**

Tick according to the level of importance (1= not important; 2= quite important; 3= Not Sure; 4= important; 5= Very important)

15. What do you think are the main benefits of adopting brand building?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not Important	Quite Important	Not sure	Important	Very Important
Influences customer's buying decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improves the company's public image.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It makes new customers acquisition better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increases sales and business profitability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Makes the business stronger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gives the company an edge over their competitors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhances the credibility of the company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positions the business to understand the needs of the customer/consumers better.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It drives a better customer/consumer engagement and relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It builds the trust of the customers/consumers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It makes the business more focused and gives the business a sense of direction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Branding increases the value of the company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It inspires employees and makes them more motivated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

It makes your business more
recognizable.

**CHALLENGES
FACING BUSINESS
OWNERS**

Given the following statements and based on your opinion, could you rate them from a scale of minor challenge to biggest challenge on the table below:

16. On a scale of 1-5, rate the degree of severity of the challenges that you have faced, or currently facing in the adoption of brand building in your business?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Least Severe	Somewhat Severe	Severe	More Severe	Most Severe
Incompetence/Lack of knowledge on brand building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High cost of execution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business benefits not immediate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has less impact on business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inability to be consistent with branding tactics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is a time-consuming process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inability to focus due to business pressure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of clarity on the target customers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Challenges from external factors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT IN COMPLETING THIS SURVEY