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# BRAND POSITIONING OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (HEIS): STUDY OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

Brand positioning is a key strategy that shapes public perceptions of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). *The main aim of this study is to assess effect of Brand Positioning on Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to examine the effect of brand identity, brand personality and brand awareness on Student satisfaction, public perception and staff quality of service in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study employed survey research method with copies of structured questionnaires distributed among the respondents from three selected higher institutions. The population of the study was 3234 and was based on Taro Yamane's (1967) formula which is finite population. 356 copies of questionnaire were administered randomly to students of Lagos State University (LASU), Lagos State University of Science and technology (LASUSTECH) and Lagos State University of Education (LASUED) in Lagos State, Nigeria. Linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis.* The findings reveal that brand identity significantly impacts student patronage and satisfaction*; brand personality have significant effect on public perception; likewise, brand awareness have significant effect on staff quality of service. The study therefore recommended that regular workshops, seminars, and opportunities for collaboration among faculty members can help in sharing best practices and keeping educators updated about the latest advancements in their fields. Improved faculty quality directly contributes to the perceived value of academic programs, enhances learning outcomes, and increases student satisfaction.*

**Keywords**: Brand Awareness, Brand Identity, Brand Personality, Brand Positioning, Higher Educational Institutions, Public Perception, Quality of Service, Student Satisfaction.

## 1.0 Introduction

The general consensus among University management that marketization of Higher Education is a necessary and legitimate process, in-spite efficiencies or outcomes of monies spent on branding which is without a publicly available research (Jevons, 2006) need to be embraced. Universities are expected to articulate their brand identity through a constellation of signifiers that should not contradict their original reason for being in the education sector (Chapleo, 2011). For example, Lagos State University Motto is for Truth and Service; Lagos State University of Education is Knowledge and Professional Excellence; Lagos State University of Science and Technology is Mission and Professionalism; University of Lagos is In Deed and In Truth; Obafemi Awolowo University is For Learning and Culture; Unilorin is better by far and University of Nigeria Nnsuka is to restore the dignity of man.

If an assessment is done on the motto of other Nigerian Universities, it may suggest something comparable, probably in areas of faith, ethics, liberation or virtue as the case may be. Thus, the need for research on branding within Higher Educational Institutional (HEI) sector is essential, owing to global mobility of students that may hit 8 million by 2025 (Su-Chin, 2022). While the population seems high, there is fierce competition amongst Higher Educational Institutions because of low enrolment (Su-Chin, 2022) or paucity of funds from donor organisations amongst other concerns which is why organisations, especially HEIs, are admonished to adopt branding strategies in their organisations, for their critical impacts on business performance (MSI, 2020 – 2022).

However, a large number of HEIs in Nigeria seldom take advantage of brand strategies in promoting their institutions, in–spite the massive and latent educational market. This is because most HEIs funded by the state are not running a "perform or perish" strategy (Kaushal & Ali, 2019). Nigeria Universities Commission oversee the 175 public Universities in Nigeria by ensuring that establishing and sustaining quality educational services that can enhance each institution's brand positioning strategy could help achieve competitive advantage. So, the development of key associations on stakeholders' minds about HEI provides differential advantage (Amadi, 2022) through strategies on quality, packaging / aesthetics, delivery speed or quality, price and benefits aid the creation of image, value offered, identity, perceptions, impressions, ideas and feelings to positively meet

customers buying criteria and influence perception plus brand competitiveness of HEIs.

Literature on branding in higher education is limited in-spite that focus has been on sub areas such as marketing communications, marketing planning, heritage, brand architecture, university selection requirements, related discipline of branding and to some extent positioning and corporate identity (Mourad et al., 2019). Brand positioning is a massive communicating strategy that combines functional attributes and emotional benefits that has a place in the minds of consumers on product (Situmorang et al., 2021). It influences consumer perception, company image, market share, return on investment, and profits and provides firms with a sustainable competitive advantage.

As a core element of branding and marketing activities, Kethuda, (2021) posit it as a deliberate, proactive, iterative process by which marketers attempt to create a distinct position in the minds of customers by defining, measuring, modifying, and monitoring consumer perceptions for an offering. This implies that that positioning gives prospective customers the real reason to be seen as unique among rivals through differentiation strategies by attributes that are favourable to customers. Nevertheless, offerings to be positioned might be a product, a brand, or even an organization such as a University. HEIs communicate their brand promises to prospective students either through traditional approaches like people, promotion, and price and those specific to HEIs such as program, prominence, prospectus, and premiums (Ivy, 2008). More so, brand identity, brand personality clues and brand awareness strategies HEIs relates messages to prospective and actual students via all marketing media so that public perception that can either be from prospective students and other stakeholders make their preferences by assessing the perceived service quality of HEIs.

**Problem Statement**

Nigeria with the highest number of Universities and arguably the most extensive educational system in sub-Sahara Africa, better understanding of the diversity and differences within its Universities is essential (Farinloye et al., 2020). Unfortunately, the existing Universities are not meeting the demand for tertiary education (Olaleye et al., 2020). This posits why applicants scramble and jostle to be admitted into the limited spaces. However, many of these applicants are not informed nor aware about the realities that exist in these universities especially the

government owned HEIs who rarely engage in any branding and marketing activities so as to influence consumer perception.

While public owned HEIs seem not bothered about positioning themselves on minds of prospects by means of brand management techniques because the population of applicants is overwhelming; it is more worrisome that there is no existing typology of University grouping in Nigeria that can guide prospective students on the positioning of different University brands in Nigeria (Farinloye et al., 2020). Consequently, prospects rely on untrustworthy sources to determine their choices for HEI.

While significations such as academic program reputation, tuition, brochures and interactions among faculty, students, staff, facilities, landscaping, students satisfaction, service quality and other brand personality attributes were seen to be important for positioning University Brand **(**Amadi, 2022) the lack of using adequate marketing communication tools and strategies to place the Universities on the minds of prospects and other stakeholders to create differential advantage (Amadi, 2022) is worrisome.

However, studies such as Farinloye et al., (2020); Okoh, (2022); Olaleye et al., (2020); Kethunda (2021) and Situmorang, et al., (2021) amongst others were able to establish typology for Nigeria Universities; a comparison between positioning strategies and rankings within HEIs; advocated the use of marketing public relations to build university brands. Nevertheless, there is still a dearth of empirical studies that specifically examined the relationship between brand identity, brand personality and brand awareness on students' satisfaction, public perception and staff service quality respectively from the lens of Nigeria Higher Education.

This paper is subdivided into five major sections and this introductory section serves as the first. This is aptly followed by review of literature section where concepts of brand positioning and Higher Educational Institution with their indicators are defined and conceptualised. Third section is research methodology section where data collection and analytical tools used to examine the objective of this study is examined. The next section is the analysis and discussion of findings. Section five completes the study with findings and conclusion of the study.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptual Review

#### 2.1.1 Brand Positioning

At its core, marketing is all about brand positioning, which lets consumers form

favourable or negative mental associations with a brand (Keller, 2013). These associations help to differentiate the company from competitors. This implies recognizing the segment on which they will develop positioning actions, competing brands and associations to position themselves in order to highlight differentiation. Establishing the offer and the product image, aiming to occupy a distinct place in the consumer's mind, using differentiation and credibility, and controlling for brand-specific, product category-specific, and socio-demographic influences are all part of brand positioning (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010; Wang, 2016). The findings demonstrate that the positioning strategy's impact on a brand's positioning success is strategy specific. In particular, the study's findings that benefit-based positioning and surrogate user are often more effective than other key positioning tactics lend credence to normative considerations regarding this matter.

Brand positioning is conceptually similar to the brand image, according to Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2010). A brand's image is the mental picture that consumers have of the product as a whole. Because everyone's ideas, beliefs, sentiments, and impressions shape their interpretations of the world, interpretation is both an objective and subjective perceptual phenomenon (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010). It's the act of creating a mental picture of a product in comparison to its rivals, using the resources at an organization's disposal to do so (Serna, Salazar & Delgado, 2009). Alternatively, it can be the result of a marketing mix strategy that aims to influence consumers' overall impressions of a product or brand; in this case, the organisation determines which aspects will serve as the foundation for that impression (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2011; Solomon & Stuart, 2001; Arellano, 2010).

Positioning in higher education institutions (HEIs) pertains to components that are linked to the tangible aspect of the service. Reputation is derived from the recognition of an academic program by society, as well as the service, financing, and campus, among other factors (Van Rooij and Lemp, 2010).

**2.1.1.1 Brand Identity**

Branding is a concept that is subject to a variety of interpretations and changes over time. In order for a private educational institution to establish itself and establish a brand, it must achieve legitimacy, possess predefined visions, missions, and values, develop its institutional identity, ensure its sustainability, be recognised by its surroundings, and adapt to innovations by monitoring changes. It is also imperative

that all stakeholders of the institution organise themselves in a manner that is consistent with this process and provide support and enhancement (Suslu, 2024).

**2.1.1.2 Brand Personality**

According to Aaker (1997), brand personality is "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (p. 347). Aaker further states that brand personality is "a collection of human characteristics associated with a brand by describing how consumers express themselves so that consumers use the brand." (p. 86) Keller, Parameswaran, and Jacob (2010) further state that "brand personality reflects how people feel about a brand as a result of what they think the brand is or does, the manner by which the brand is marketed, and so on." Therefore, brand personality can differentiate a brand and boost its competitiveness in a given industry, particularly when there is little variety among comparable items in that market (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). As a result of what customers learn and experience, brands start to take on human traits (Sung & Kim, 2010). According to Eisend and Stokburger-Sauer (2013), brand personality assists individuals in expressing their true or ideal selves in various social settings by building trust and assisting them in projecting a particular image to others.

**2.1.1.3 Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness is defined by Gupta (2023) as the degree to which consumers are able to identify and distinguish a brand from competing brands. This recognition is based on the user's familiarity with the brand's defining characteristics, such as its slogan, logo, audios, and so on. According to Harvey (2021), taking use of methods and capturing the target audience so that people can recognise them beyond their commercial name is what brand recognition is all about. In addition, according to Chiang and Shang-Chia (2014), consumers' mental representations of brands can be likened to a network. This network includes both positive and negative associations with the brand, as well as the specific knowledge and understanding of the brand itself (Keller et al., 2011).

**2.1.2 Higher Educational Institutions**

Higher Education Institution is considered a crucial tool for national and individual social and economic development [Mukhtar, U., Anwar, S., Ahmed, U. & Baloch, M. A., 2015]. According to Escotet (2012), the main goal of higher education is to foster innovation and creativity so that the world can progress through the dissemination of knowledge. Additionally, Fortino asserted that the purpose of higher education is to create prepared minds of

students (Fortino, A., 2012). According to DeShields Jr., Ali, and Erdener (2005), academic institutions are starting to understand the importance of catering to their students' wants and requirements. Thus, the primary goals of educational institutions at the university level are the completion and improvement of students' education.

According to Yusoff, McLeay, and Woodruffe-Burto (2015), this encouraging trend in higher education highlights how crucial it is for schools to know how to make students happy even in the face of intense competition. These days, globalisation has a major impact on the field of higher education. As a result, universities are in a fierce race to attract the most students while also meeting the demands and expectations of their present student body through the implementation of market-oriented strategies.

**2.1.2.1 Student Satisfaction**

Student satisfaction is a transient attitude stemming from the assessment of educational experiences (Elliott, K. & Healy, M., 2001). It serves as a positive precursor to student loyalty (Navarro, M. M., Iglesias, M. P. & Torres, P. R., 2005) and is a consequence of the educational system (Zeithaml, 1988). Furthermore, Elliott & Shin (2002) characterise student satisfaction as a subjective evaluation of educational outcomes and experiences. Consequently, it can be defined as a function of the relative levels of experiences and perceived performance regarding educational services (Mukhtar, U., Anwar, S., Ahmed, U. & Baloch, M. A., 2015) during the academic period (Carey, K., Cambiano, R. & De Vore, J., 2002). In summary, student satisfaction can be defined as a short-term attitude derived from the evaluation of educational experiences, services, and facilities.

Students are the essential clients of higher education institutions and Illias et al (2008) argue that student satisfaction is created consistently with experiences on campus during their study years. Student satisfaction is vital since satisfied students could end up coming back to their prior schools for further studies or to enroll for new courses (Helgesen & Nesset, 2007). Oliver and Desarbo (1989) characterise student satisfaction as the positive evaluation of a student's subjective perceptions regarding various educational outcomes and experiences, which are continuously influenced by recurrent interactions within campus life. Student satisfaction is the immediate disposition that arises from the assessment of their experience with the educational service provided. Higher Education Institutions prioritise student satisfaction because it

influences student motivation, recruitment of new students, and retention of current students.

**2.1.2.2 Public Perception**

Researchers (Irfan et al., 2020) assert that for a higher education institution to thrive in a competitive landscape, it must cultivate a favourable reputation by upholding superior service quality to secure the satisfaction and loyalty of prospective and current students, as well as alumni. An HEI must manage its image and understand how it is seen by various audiences, in comparison to competitors, and how it should assess the disparity between its actual and anticipated image (Nguyen et al., 2022). Snadrou and Haoucha (2024) observe that numerous, if not all, higher education institutions endeavour to cultivate robust brands, thereby generating a brand image that affects the perception of these institutions. Brand image encompasses more than mere external perceptions, influencing your selection of higher education institutions. It comprises multiple components, both logical and emotional, that provide a comprehensive representation of the surrounding environment.

**2.1.2.3 Staff Quality of Service**

Staff service quality is a crucial factor that enhances value and favourably influences student achievement (Ali et al., 2020; Stankovska et al., 2024). Superior service delivery is the key to thriving in a competitive environment. SQ significantly influences various institutions by sustaining student enrolment through the acquisition of the educational market (Mulyono et al., 2020). Service quality (SQ) is recognised as a fundamental factor of consumer satisfaction (Umair et al., 2023). Establishing a baseline to meet customer satisfaction in the service industry is an exceedingly complex endeavour (Butt, 2021). Quality service is characterised by consumers' opinions of service performance that meet or above their expectations of the service organisation. Consequently, service quality entails meeting client expectations (Pariseau & McDaniel, 1997). Castleberry and McIntyre (2011) characterise perceived service quality as the conviction regarding the level of service excellence (p. 75). Zeithaml (1998) defines perceived service quality as "the consumer's assessment of the superiority or excellence of a product or service" (p. 3). The perceived quality of service contrasts with objective quality.

## 2.2 Theoretical Review

### 2.2.1 The GAPS Model of Service Quality

The GAPS Model of Service Quality, created by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and

Berry in 1985, has functioned as a foundational framework for research in services marketing for more than twenty years. The model is founded on expectation-confirmation theory (Oliver, 1980; 1993) and demonstrates how customers evaluate quality, taking into account the quality provided by enterprises and the quality perceived by users post-service consumption. The GAPS model seeks to determine the potential reasons for a discrepancy between anticipated quality and perceived quality. The model delineates fundamental concepts, strategies, and decisions vital for delivering quality offerings, commencing with the consumer, identifying requisite actions for the firm to devise and provide a service, and ultimately returning to the consumer for the evaluation of expectations versus perceptions.

**THE GAPS MODEL**

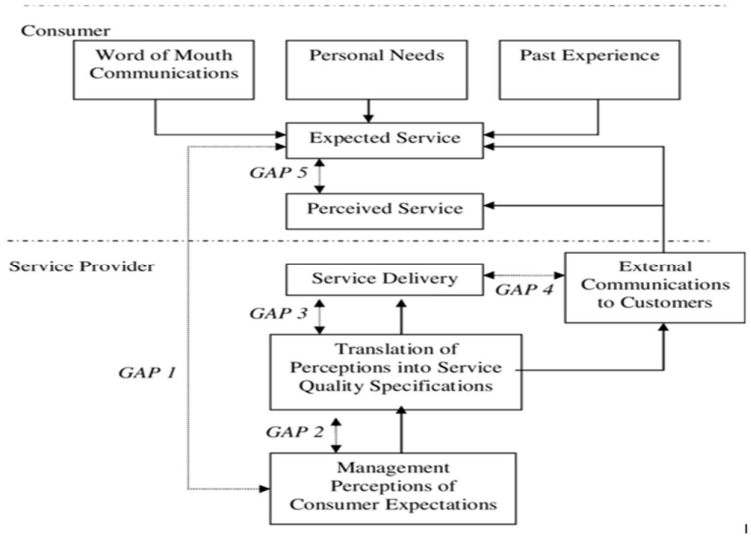



**Figure 2.1**
**Source: Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985)**

The GAPS model in figure 2.1 outlines five service quality gaps which are:-

GAP 1: - The initial gap in service quality arises when a firm's management fails to appropriately discern consumer expectations. It is also known as the knowledge gap.

GAP 2:- The design gap is defined as the discrepancy between management's perception and customer expectations. The disparity is contingent upon management's

conviction regarding the significance of quality and the resources allocated for service delivery.

GAP 3:- It signifies the divergence in service design and service execution. This is termed the performance gap. The quality of service is contingent upon the expertise and training of the individual delivering it.

GAP 4:- This phenomenon is referred to as the communications gap, which denotes the disparity between what is openly or tacitly promised to the client and what is ultimately delivered. Excessive promises typically account for this discrepancy.

GAP 5: It encompasses the overall adjustment of discrepancies and signifies the disparity between customer expectations and observed service. Parasuraman et al. (1985) assert that consumers assess perceived service across five quality characteristics, namely:

1. Reliability - The capacity to execute the provided service consistently and precisely
2. Responsiveness - The readiness to assist clients and deliver timely service.
3. Assurance - The employee's expertise and politeness, along with the firm's capacity to instill trust and confidence in its clientele.
4. Empathy - The compassionate, personalised care the firm extends to its clients.
5. Tangibles - The visual presentation of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials. Consumers assess service quality during each experience by evaluating it according to specific dimensions. Parasuraman et al. (1985).

### 2.3 Empirical Review

Wong et al., (2017) did a study on the relationship between institution branding, teaching quality and student satisfaction in higher education in Hong Kong. The study sought to understand how institutions might become more competitive by examining the connection between their branding, teacher effectiveness and the happiness of their students. Using a questionnaire survey, a quantitative study was carried out to evaluate three hypotheses empirically. Students enrolled full-time in post-secondary programs offered by both publicly and privately funded universities in Hong Kong were chosen at random to participate, since they are the main consumers of higher education. The response rate was 58.5%, with 1,170 valid responses obtained out of 2,000 students who were sent the surveys. The study's findings reveal that, on one hand, teaching quality has a positive and significant impact on institution branding; on the other hand, student satisfaction is positively and significantly impacted by institution branding. It was further noted that

institution branding only partially mediates the relationship between teaching quality and student satisfaction. This study adds to the ongoing discussion about higher education in Hong Kong by offering first-hand accounts from students about issues including institution branding, student happiness, and faculty quality of instruction.

Also, Rutter et al., (2017) did a study on Brand personality in higher education: anthropomorphized university marketing communications. The study aimed to compare the relative positions of the top ten UK HEIs through a brand personality lens by exploring and analysing their prospectuses. The study revealed that brand personality helps us understand HEI positioning better; all of the HEIs shared the quality of honesty, but there was noticeable variation based on other attributes. The top ten schools fell into two distinct brand personality categories: enthusiastic and competent.

Mulyono (2016) also did an investigation on Brand awareness and brand image of decision making on university. The study's overarching goal is to tease out the relationships between several brand-related variables, such as brand awareness, brand image, perceived value, satisfaction, brand image, and loyalty. Using the Structural Equation Model Lisrel 8.80, data was derived from 200 student samples in Jambi (primary data). A total of four hypotheses were tested in this study, with the most significant conclusion being that satisfaction has the greatest impact.

Kimani et al. (2011) investigated business students' perspectives regarding the quality of service offered by public and private colleges in Kenya. This comparative study sought to elucidate the impact of diverse aspects or dimensions of service quality on perceptions in a university context. A comparison was conducted between two governmental institutions and two private universities located in rural and urban areas of Kenya. A survey methodology was employed to evaluate business students' views of service quality. A total of 424 questionnaires were sent, encompassing statements of the institution's overall quality, including university administration, lecture halls, cafeteria, library, residential halls, student support, academic staff, and student welfare. The results indicated that most university students expressed satisfaction with the quality of services received at their schools, as these were rated above average. The critical variables that influence service quality at Kenyan institutions include administrative quality, academic quality, program quality, student assistance, and resource availability.

Subair, Okotoni, and Adebakin (2012) conducted a study titled "Perceived Quality of Infrastructure in Selected Nigerian Universities" at Obafemi Awolowo University at Nigeria. The researchers employed a quantitative methodology, gathering data from a random sample of 800 final-year students from federal (300) and state (500) colleges nationwide. They utilised a 20-item self-constructed questionnaire and an Available Infrastructure Checklist (AIC) to evaluate the perceived quality of infrastructure, with the data examined by t-test statistics and descriptive statistics. The research revealed no substantial disparity in infrastructure development between state and federal colleges. The writers advocate for the government to augment financing for university infrastructure construction. They also recommend that colleges comply with suitable infrastructure maintenance norms and admit only those students for whom they possess enough facilities.

**Conceptual Model of Brand Repositioning of Higher Educational Institution (HEI)**

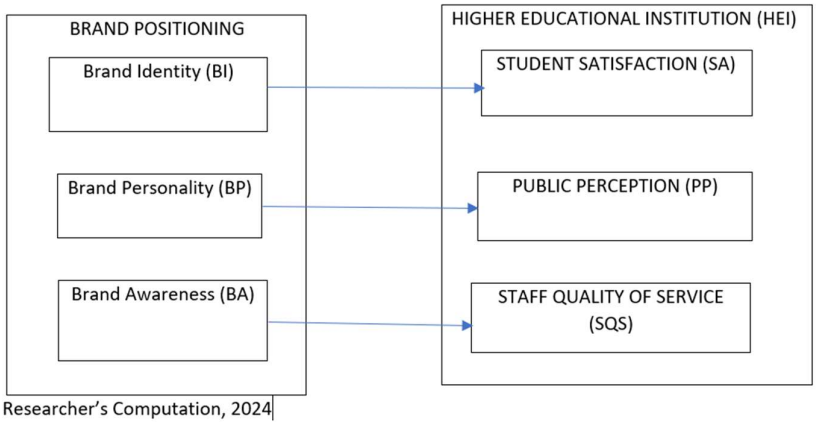



**Figure 2.2: Conceptual Model**
**Source: Researcher's Conceptual Model (2024)**

## 3. Research Methods

The survey research method was adopted for this study, with copies of structured questionnaires distributed among the respondents from three selected higher institutions. The population of the study was 3234 and was based on Taro Yamane's (1967) formula which is finite population. 356 copies of questionnaire were administered randomly to students of Lagos State University (LASU), Lagos State

University of Science and technology (LASUSTECH) and Lagos State University of Education (LASUED) in South-West Nigeria. Out of the 356 questionnaires administered, 334 copies were retrieved and considered valid, representing 93.82% response rate; these were used for analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) using linear regression was used to analyse based on the nature of the hypotheses.

**Table 3.1**
**Proportional Distribution of Questionnaire**

| S/N | Selected Universities under Study | Study Population | No Distributed | No Retrieved & Valid |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lagos State University (LASU) | 1,241 | 137 | 126 |
| 2 | Lagos State University of Science and technology (LASUSTECH) | 1,009 | 111 | 107 |
| 3 | Lagos State University of Education (LASUED) | 984 | 108 | 101 |
| | **TOTAL** | **3,234** | **356** | **334** |

**Source: Researcher's computation (2024).**

## 4. Data Analysis, Results and Discussion of Findings

### 4.1 Test of Hypothesis

**HYPOTHESIS ONE**

| Models | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | T | Sig. | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | | | | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) Brand Identity | .702 | .093 | 7.526 | .000 | .592[a] | .351 | .348 | .46189 |
| | Student Satisfaction | .647 | .051 | 12.660 | .000 | | | | |

**Source: Researcher's computation (2024)**

The study revealed a positive effect of Brand Identity on Student Satisfaction, with Brand Identity explaining 35.1% of the variance. The adjusted R Square and standard error of the estimate are also significant. The ANOVA table shows a total variance explained by the model and the remaining unexplained variance. The model is statistically significant, with a high F-value and p-value of.000, indicating Brand Identity is a significant predictor of Student Satisfaction. The coefficients indicate that for every one-unit increase in Brand Identity, Student Satisfaction increases by 0.647 units. The t-test indicates Brand Identity is a statistically

significant predictor, suggesting a strong influence on Student Satisfaction. Which means that the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis Two**

| Models | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | T | Sig. | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | | | | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) Brand Personality | .647 | .103 | 6.297 | .000 | .608[a] | .369 | .367 | .49533 |
| | Public Perception on Graduate | .627 | .048 | 13.182 | .000 | | | | |

**Source: Researcher's computation (2024).**

The linear regression analysis revealed a positive effect of Brand Personality on Public Perception of Graduate. Brand Personality accounts for approximately 36.9% of the variance in Public Perception of Graduate. The model is reliable, with a high F-statistic and p-value of.000. The coefficients show that for every one-unit increase in Brand Personality, Public Perception of Graduate increases by 0.627 units. The standardized coefficient, Beta, is.608, indicating a strong impact on the dependent variable. The high t-value and very low p-value indicate that Brand Personality is a statistically significant predictor of Public Perception of Graduate. The model suggests that as Brand Personality improves, Public Perception of Graduate also improves significantly.

**Hypothesis Three**

| Models | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | T | Sig. | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | | | | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) Brand Awareness | 1.184 | .098 | 12.071 | .000 | .386[a] | .149 | .146 | .55236 |
| | Staff Quality of Service | .378 | .052 | 7.217 | .000 | | | | |

**Source: Researcher's computation (2024).**

This linear regression output examines the effect of "Brand Awareness" on "Staff quality of service." The model demonstrates a weak to moderate positive relationship between Brand Awareness and Staff Quality of Service. Brand Awareness explains 14.9% of the variance in Staff Quality of Service, with a slight but meaningful effect. The model is statistically significant, with a high F-value and p-value of.000, indicating a meaningful relationship between Brand Awareness and Staff Quality of Service. The Brand Awareness Coefficient suggests that for every one-unit increase in Brand Awareness, Staff Quality of Service increases by.378 units. The regression analysis shows that Brand Awareness has a positive effect on Staff Quality of Service, explaining approximately 15% of its variance. That is the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

### 4.2 Discussion of Findings

The regression analyses reveal significant relationships between brand positioning, student satisfaction, public perception of graduates, and staff quality of service, with each variable acting as a predictor.

**$H0_1$:** Brand Identity and Student Satisfaction

The model shows a moderate positive relationship between Brand Identity and Student Satisfaction, with Brand Identity explaining 35.1% of the variance. This finding is significant, as indicated by a high F-value and a p-value of .000, meaning Brand Identity is a crucial determinant of how students engage with and are satisfied by the brand. Several authors highlight the importance of brand identity in fostering customer loyalty and satisfaction. Aaker (1996) and Keller (2001) argue that a well-defined brand identity helps shape consumers' perceptions, leading to stronger brand associations, loyalty, and satisfaction. Furthermore, Kapferer (2008) posits that a clear brand identity is essential for creating a meaningful and distinct brand image, which, in turn, enhances customer satisfaction. The findings align with these perspectives, supporting the alternative hypothesis that Brand Identity positively influences Student Satisfaction of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

**$H0_2$:** Brand Personality and Public Perception on Graduate

The analysis for Hypothesis Two indicates a moderately strong positive relationship between Brand Personality and Public Perception on Graduate, with Brand Personality explaining 36.9% of the variance. This model is also statistically significant, as shown by a high F-value and

a p-value of .000. This means that improvements in brand personality are closely tied to how the public perceives graduates from that institution or brand. The role of brand personality in shaping public opinion is supported by the work of scholars like Kotler and Keller (2012), who suggest that brand personality builds trust and credibility, which can extend to associated individuals or entities, such as graduates. Furthermore, Balmer and Greyser (2006) argue that favorable brand personality contribute to a positive reputation, which is critical in influencing external stakeholders' views. These findings support the alternative hypothesis that Brand Personality positively influences Public Perception on Graduate of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

**$H0_3$:** Brand Awareness and Staff Quality of Service

For Hypothesis Three, the regression model demonstrates a weaker but statistically significant positive relationship between Brand Awareness and Staff Quality of Service, with Brand Awareness accounting for 14.9% of the variance. This suggests that while Brand Awareness is a significant predictor, its influence on Staff Quality of Service is more limited compared to the first two hypotheses. Authors like Aaker (1991) and Rossiter and Percy (1987) emphasize that brand awareness is foundational to brand equity, as it makes the brand more recognizable and accessible to customers. Furthermore, Yoo, Donthu, and Lee (2000) discuss how higher brand awareness can indirectly motivate staff to provide better service, as they are more closely associated with a reputable and widely recognized brand. Although the effect size is smaller in this case, the results support the alternative hypothesis that Brand Awareness has a positive influence on Staff Quality of Service of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The summary of the findings indicates that Brand Identity positively influences Student Satisfaction of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); Brand Personality positively influences Public Perception on Graduate of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); Brand Awareness has a positive influence on Staff Quality of Service of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusion drawn from this study indicated that brand positioning which were measured with brand identity, brand personality, and brand awareness have significant positive effect on student satisfaction, public perception, and staff quality of service respectively thereby aligning with how important branding

especially brand positioning is in Higher Educational Institutions in Lagos State. It was recommended that Higher Educational Institutions in Lagos State should ensure that Universities should ensure that they have a consistent positive brand identity that will continually make people aware of their brand which will also make the public have a good perception on their graduates. Also, Higher Educational Institutions should ensure they invest in continuous professional development of faculty members, such as introducing faculty training programs or adopting innovative branding campaigns to ensure high-quality teaching and academic support. This could include training in innovative pedagogical techniques, use of technology in the classroom, and methods for engaging students in active learning. Regular workshops, seminars, and opportunities for collaboration among faculty members can help in sharing best practices and keeping educators updated about the latest advancements in their fields. Improved faculty quality directly contributes to the perceived value of academic programs, enhances learning outcomes, and increases student satisfaction.

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