



## The Role of Aesthetic Properties of Granitic Dimension Stones on Marketability: A Case Study of CIBI Nigeria Limited, Kaduna State

Kayode A. IDOWU<sup>1\*</sup>, Victory N. JESSEY<sup>2</sup>, Emmanuel B. SAMANI<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1\*,2,3</sup>Department of Mining Engineering, University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria

<sup>1\*</sup>idowuk@unijos.edu.ng, <sup>2</sup>victoryjessey7@gmail.com, <sup>3</sup>samma1965@gmail.com

### Abstract

*This study investigates the disconnect between aesthetic quality and market positioning of locally sourced granite at CIBI Nigeria Limited, Kaduna State. The study was motivated by the growing need to understand how intrinsic stone qualities translate into commercial value in emerging markets. Through mixed-methods analysis involving visual/tactile assessment of ten granite samples and perspectives from management/sales personnel (n=10), findings reveal that CIBI's products possess premium aesthetic attributes; diverse colours (Zaria Red, Champagne Gold), distinctive veining/speckling patterns, and consistently high lustre (mean score 5.0/5.0). These aesthetic strengths, however, are not fully reflected in the company's commercial strategies. Despite 80% of personnel rating their granite as "very competitive" against imports, the company employs a cost-based rather than value-based pricing strategy, with aesthetics treated as secondary to logistical factors (transportation costs from quarry sites). Marketing relies heavily on traditional channels (brochures, sales teams; mean effectiveness 4.4-4.5/5.0) while digital platforms remain underutilised (website effectiveness 3.8/5.0). These findings point to a systemic misalignment between product quality and market communication that constrains the company's commercial performance. The study recommends strategic adoption of value-based pricing and investment in digital marketing infrastructure to align external communication with proven product quality and capture premium market segments.*

**Keywords:** Granite, aesthetic properties, marketability, dimension stone, value-based pricing, Nigeria.

### 1.0 Introduction

Granite, an intrusive igneous rock formed by the slow crystallisation of magma beneath the Earth's surface, is one of the most valued dimension stones in global construction and architectural design [1,2]. Its enduring popularity arises from a unique combination of physical durability and diverse aesthetic properties, comprising colour, texture, pattern, and lustre, which collectively exert a significant influence on consumer preferences and market demand [3,4]. As a phaneritic rock, granite's characteristic coarse-grained texture and the varied proportions of its primary mineral constituents, including quartz, alkali feldspar, plagioclase, biotite, and hornblende, give rise to a wide spectrum of colours and visual effects, from the reddish tones of feldspar-rich varieties to the darker hues associated with biotite and hornblende [1,5]. Recent studies have underscored the growing significance of stone aesthetics as a driver of consumer choice, particularly as architects and interior designers increasingly specify natural stone on the basis of visual differentiation rather than structural performance alone [29,30]. This shift reflects broader trends in the global construction materials market, where experiential and sensory product attributes have come to command substantial price premiums [31].

Globally, the natural stone market has experienced consistent growth, driven by increasing demand in construction and interior design sectors [6]. According to recent industry analysis, the global dimension stone market was valued at over USD 40 billion in 2023 and is projected to grow steadily through 2030, with Sub-Saharan Africa emerging as a region of growing supply significance [32]. In Nigeria, the solid minerals industry, encompassing granite quarrying and processing, represents a significant contributor to economic development and infrastructure supply [7,8]. Kaduna State, situated in the north-central region of the country, hosts several key quarrying operations that benefit from the region's documented granite deposits [8,9]. CIBI Nigeria Limited, established in 1992, is a notable company within this sector, utilising advanced processing technology to produce a diverse array of dimension stone products, including tiles, slabs, and customised stoneworks from various granite varieties sourced across Nigeria [10].

The marketability of natural stone is governed by a complex interplay of factors. Beyond intrinsic material properties such as durability and low maintenance requirements, effective pricing strategies, marketing and branding, and distribution efficiency are all critical determinants of market success [11,12,13]. Porter's [14] product differentiation theory provides a foundational lens for this analysis, positing that firms can achieve competitive advantage by differentiating their products along dimensions that create perceived value for customers. In the context of granite, unique aesthetic attributes such as distinctive colours, rare patterns, and high lustre constitute powerful differentiators. Complementing this, Krishna's [15] sensory marketing theory underscores how tactile

and visual sensory experiences, precisely the properties assessed in this study, directly shape consumer behaviour and purchase intentions.

Despite the acknowledged importance of aesthetic differentiation, a strategic disconnect has been observed among Nigerian granite producers. While companies like CIBI Nigeria Limited possess granite products with demonstrably premium visual qualities, featuring distinctive Nigerian varieties such as Zaria Red and Champagne Gold, their pricing strategies have remained predominantly cost-based, driven by transportation and production logistics rather than by the aesthetic value of the product [10,14]. Concurrently, marketing efforts have relied heavily on traditional channels such as physical brochures and sales teams, with minimal investment in digital platforms that could more effectively communicate aesthetic appeal to broader and more geographically dispersed markets [12,13]. This gap between product quality and market communication represents an underexplored area in the Nigerian context, where detailed studies on the strategic leveraging of granite aesthetics for commercial gain are scarce.

To address this gap, this study investigates the role of aesthetic properties in determining the marketability of granite at CIBI Nigeria Limited. Specifically, it: (i) describes the key aesthetic properties of colour, texture, pattern, and lustre of CIBI's granite products; (ii) analyses how these properties are presented and utilised in the company's marketing and communication strategies; and (iii) examines the perspectives of management and sales personnel on the influence of aesthetics on pricing and competitive positioning. Through mixed-methods analysis, the research identifies strategic opportunities to align CIBI's external communication and pricing strategies with its proven product quality, enabling the capture of premium market segments that are currently underserved by its conservative marketing approach.

### 1.1 Justification of the Study

This study is bounded in its scope and does not purport to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Nigerian granite industry as a whole. Specifically, the research does not extend to comparative analysis of similar granite-producing companies or competing firms operating in the same sector, nor does it incorporate the perspectives of end-customers, architects, or construction project managers who represent the demand side of the market. The structured questionnaire and interview instruments were administered exclusively to management and sales personnel at CIBI Nigeria Limited, and the granite samples assessed were drawn solely from CIBI's active product portfolio. Furthermore, the study does not address the supply chain dynamics, extraction processes, or environmental sustainability considerations associated with granite quarrying operations. These areas, while acknowledged as important, fall outside the defined scope of the present investigation and are recommended as directions for future research.

### 1.2 Scope of Study

The aesthetic properties of granite: colour, texture, pattern, and lustre; are widely recognised as key drivers of consumer preference and purchasing decisions in the natural stone market. Yet despite this acknowledged importance, many granite producers, particularly in Nigeria, continue to rely on cost-based pricing and traditional marketing channels that fail to communicate or capitalise on the visual qualities of their products. This creates a gap between the actual quality of locally produced granite and its perceived market value.

CIBI Nigeria Limited presents a compelling case for examining this disconnect. The company produces granite varieties with demonstrably premium aesthetic attributes, including distinctive Nigerian varieties such as Zaria Red and Champagne Gold, yet its pricing and marketing strategies do not reflect the aesthetic value these products carry. This misalignment means the company is likely leaving commercial opportunities unrealised, particularly in premium and export market segments.

There is also a broader knowledge gap. Studies examining how granite aesthetics translate into market strategy and commercial outcomes are scarce in the Nigerian context. Most existing research either focuses on the geological or engineering properties of Nigerian granite, or addresses marketing strategy in other industries entirely. A focused investigation into the strategic role of aesthetics in granite marketability is therefore both timely and necessary.

This study is justified on three grounds: it addresses a clear practical problem faced by a real industry player; it fills a gap in the academic literature on natural stone marketing in Sub-Saharan Africa; and its findings and recommendations are transferable to other Nigerian granite producers facing similar challenges. By generating evidence-based insights, the study contributes to efforts to improve the commercial positioning of Nigeria's significant but underutilised granite resources.

### 1.3 Literature Review

#### 1.3.1 Aesthetic Properties and Marketability of Dimension Stones

The relationship between the aesthetic properties of natural stone and its market performance has attracted growing scholarly attention. Siegesmund and Duber [33] established that colour, texture, and surface finish are the

primary determinants of architectural stone selection, noting that these properties are particularly decisive in high-end residential and commercial construction projects. Similarly, Prikryl [34] demonstrated that the aesthetic grading of dimension stones significantly influences their price stratification in international commodity markets, with visually distinctive varieties commanding premiums of 30 to 80 percent above standard grades.

In the African context, Olaleye *et al.* [35] examined the commercial potential of Nigerian ornamental stones and concluded that the country possesses world-class granite varieties whose market value is substantially underrealised due to inadequate branding and marketing infrastructure. Musa and Aliyu [36] similarly found that Nigerian granite producers predominantly adopt cost-plus pricing models, failing to capture the aesthetic premium that international buyers are willing to pay for distinctively coloured or patterned stone. These findings provide important contextual grounding for the present study.

### 1.3.2 Value-Based Pricing and Marketing Strategy

The transition from cost-based to value-based pricing in natural stone markets has been a recurring theme in recent marketing literature. Hinterhuber and Liozu [37] argued that value-based pricing, anchored in the customer's perceived value of product attributes, consistently outperforms cost-based approaches in terms of profitability and market share retention. In the context of construction materials, this principle has been validated empirically: Terho *et al.* [38] found that firms adopting value-based selling approaches in B2B markets achieved significantly higher margins than competitors relying on cost-oriented pricing. The application of these principles to African stone producers represents a nascent but promising area of inquiry.

Digital marketing has emerged as a critical channel for communicating the visual qualities of natural stone products. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick [39] documented that high-resolution digital showcasing, including virtual showrooms and interactive product catalogues, significantly increases consumer engagement and purchase intent for visually differentiated products. In the natural stone sector specifically, Montani [40] reported that companies investing in professional digital marketing infrastructure achieved measurably higher export revenues than those relying exclusively on traditional sales channels. The underutilisation of digital platforms by Nigerian producers, as documented by Olaleye *et al.* [35], thus represents both a research gap and a commercial opportunity that the present study seeks to illuminate.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a single-case study design, a well-established methodology in social science and management research for its capacity to provide an in-depth, contextualised understanding of complex phenomena within specific real-world settings [16]. The case study approach is particularly suited to “how” and “why” research questions and enables analytical generalisation from empirical findings to broader theoretical propositions [16,17]. The selection of CIBI Nigeria Limited as the unit of analysis was strategic, offering a focused exploration of the relationship between granite aesthetics and marketability within the operational realities of a key Nigerian industry player. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to provide a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of the research problem [18].

### 2.2 Data Collection

Data collection involved three complementary techniques directed at the three specific research objectives:

(i) **Visual and Tactile Assessment:** Ten representative polished granite slab samples from CIBI's active product portfolio were subjected to systematic visual and tactile examination. Each sample was assessed for its dominant colour(s) and colour uniformity, surface texture and grain size, natural pattern formation (e.g., speckling, veining), and lustre or degree of surface reflectivity. Findings were documented via detailed descriptive notes supplemented by photographic records, consistent with a descriptive qualitative analysis framework [18].

(ii) **Semi-structured Interviews:** Ten management and sales personnel at CIBI Nigeria Limited were engaged in semi-structured interviews, guided by a pre-tested interview protocol. This approach allowed for guided exploration of predetermined themes while retaining flexibility to probe emergent issues relating to product aesthetics, marketing strategy, pricing decisions, and competitive positioning [18]. Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

(iii) **Structured Questionnaire:** A structured questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree/Not at all Important to 5 = Strongly Agree/Extremely Important) was administered to the same ten respondents. The instrument collected quantifiable data on perceptions of aesthetic quality, customer importance of aesthetic properties, effectiveness of marketing channels in communicating aesthetics, pricing determinants, and the competitive positioning of CIBI's granite against imported alternatives.

### 2.3 Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure all participants possessed direct, operational experience with CIBI's granite products and market activities, with a minimum threshold of one year of relevant experience required for inclusion. All ten personnel meeting the inclusion criteria participated in both the interview and questionnaire components, a sample size consistent with achieving data saturation in qualitative inquiry [19]. The granite samples were selected purposively to represent the full range of aesthetic categories within CIBI's active product portfolio.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

Triangulation of findings across the three data sources was central to the analytical strategy, strengthening validity and enabling a comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon. Three analytical methods were employed:

(i) Descriptive Qualitative Analysis: Observations from the visual and tactile assessment, alongside photographic documentation, were systematically organised and narratively described by aesthetic category.

(ii) Thematic Analysis: Interview transcripts were analysed following the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke [20], comprising data familiarisation, initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, theme defining, and report production. Direct participant quotations are used to substantiate identified themes.

(iii) Descriptive Statistics: Questionnaire responses were cleaned, coded, and analysed using Microsoft Excel, yielding frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores for Likert-scale items.

### 2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Department of Mining Engineering; University of Jos. Informed consent was secured from all participants prior to data collection. Participant anonymity was maintained throughout the study, with interviewees identified by assigned codes (e.g., Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2).

## 3.0 Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Aesthetic Properties of CIBI's Granite Products

#### 3.1.1 Results

The visual and tactile assessment of the ten granite samples (CIBI-G-001 to CIBI-G-010) revealed a diverse range of high-quality aesthetic attributes across the product line. The findings are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Visual and Tactile Description of CIBI Nigeria Limited Granite Samples

Sample ID	Product Name	Dominant Colour(s)	Texture/Finish	Pattern	Lustre
CIBI-G-001	Tatara Pink	Black, Grey, Cream, White, Colourless	Coarse-grained / Polished	Speckled	High
CIBI-G-002	Zaria Red	Red, Grey, Black, White	Coarse-grained / Polished	Speckled with light veining	High
CIBI-G-003	Tatara Pink	Black, White, Light Pink, Colourless	Coarse-grained / Polished	Speckled	High
CIBI-G-004	Champagne Silver	Grey, Black, White	Fine-grained / Polished	Fine speckling	High
CIBI-G-005	African Multicolour Buruku	Pink, Black, Colourless	Medium-coarse / Polished	Veining	High
CIBI-G-006	Champagne Light	Brown, White, Black, Colourless	Medium-grained / Polished	Speckled	High
CIBI-G-007	Kamazou Wavy	Grey, Pink	Medium-grained / Polished	Veining	High
CIBI-G-008	African Multicolour Buruku	Brown, Pink, Grey	Medium-coarse / Polished	Veining	High
CIBI-G-009	Champagne Silver	Grey, White, Brown	Fine-grained / Polished	Fine speckling	High
CIBI-G-010	Champagne Gold	Gold, Brown, Black, Colourless	Medium-grained / Polished	Speckled with light veining	High

Source: Field assessment, 2025

Regarding colour, the products exhibit a broad chromatic range, from the rich reddish tones of Zaria Red (CIBI-G-002), reflecting a high alkali feldspar content consistent with petrological descriptions of such granites [1,5], to the warm gold-brown hues of Champagne Gold (CIBI-G-010), the neutral greys of Champagne Silver (CIBI-G-004/009), and the multi-tonal compositions of Tatara Pink (CIBI-G-001/003) and African Multicolour Buruku (CIBI-G-005/008). This chromatic diversity is rooted in Nigeria's documented geological richness [9] and directly reflects the varied mineral proportions described by Best [1] and LeMaitre *et al.* [5].

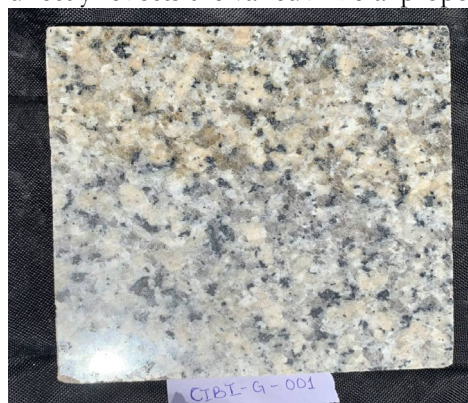


Plate 1: Showing Sample 1

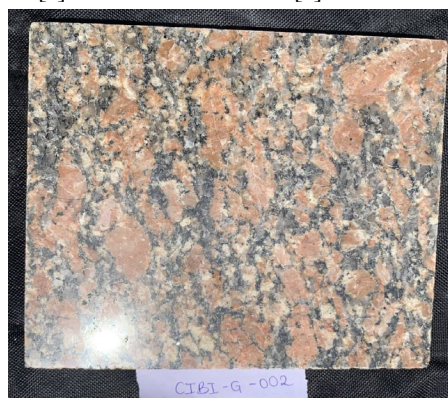


Plate 2: Showing Sample 2

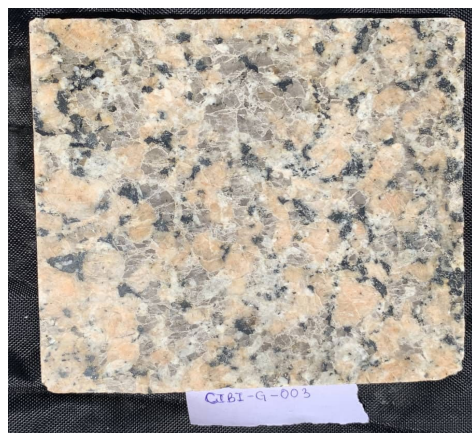


Plate 3: showing Sample 3

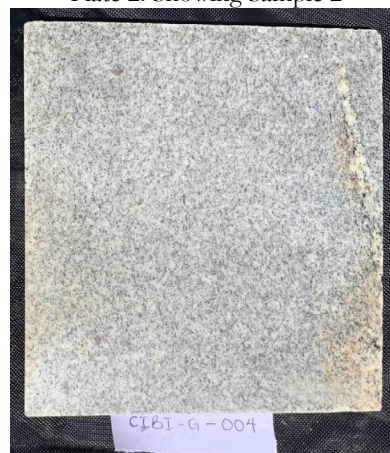


Plate 4: showing Sample 4

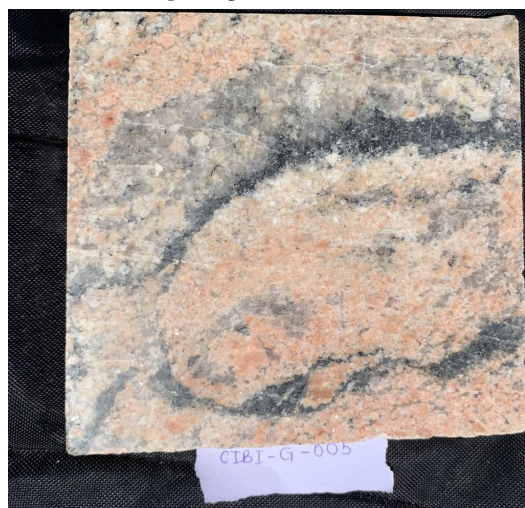


Plate 5: Showing Sample 5

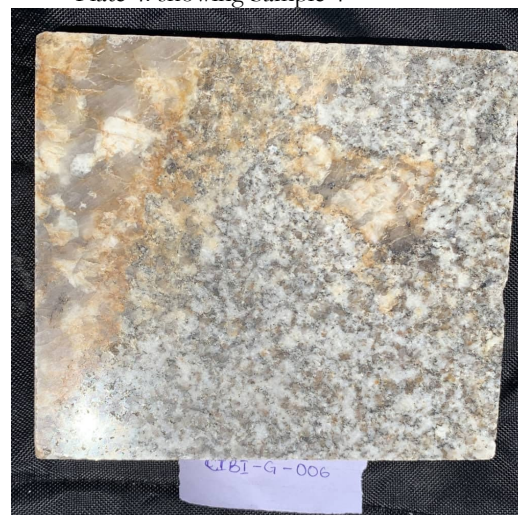


Plate 6: Showing Sample 6



Plate 7: showing Sample 7



Plate 8: showing Sample 8



Plate 9: Showing Sample 9

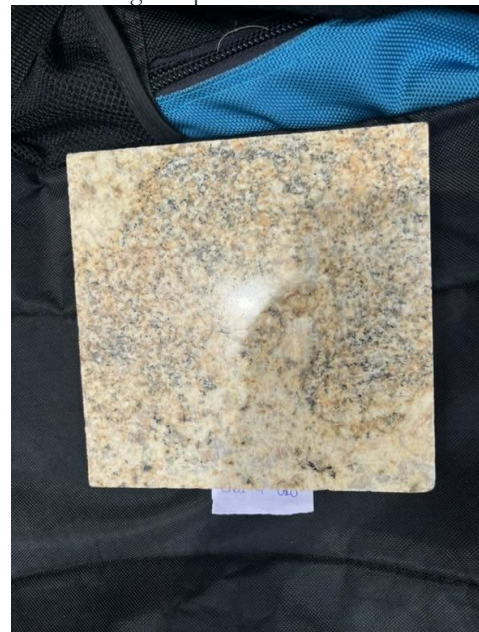


Plate 10: Showing Sample 10

Texture varied across the product range: Tatara Pink samples displayed coarse-grained phaneritic textures characteristic of slower-cooling granites [1], while Champagne Silver exhibited a finer grain size. All samples were presented with a polished finish, which, consistent with Smith [4] and Deer *et al.* [21], is the finish that maximises specular light reflection and therefore enhances colour vibrancy and visual depth. Patterns were either speckled, arising from the uniform distribution of mineral grains (Samples 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10), or veined, reflecting structural mineralogical features or the presence of aligned mineral phases (Samples 5, 7, 8), consistent with descriptions by Penttila [3] and Dolbear [22]. Notably, all ten samples exhibited uniformly high lustre (mean questionnaire score 5.0/5.0), a direct consequence of the consistent high-quality polishing process applied across CIBI's production.

### 3.1.2 Discussion

The assessment confirms that CIBI Nigeria Limited's granite products possess a well-differentiated portfolio of premium aesthetic attributes. The chromatic breadth, spanning at least six distinct colour families, and the presence of both speckled and veined pattern varieties provide the raw material for effective product differentiation as conceptualised by Porter [14]. The uniformly high lustre across all samples is particularly significant as a quality signal, consistent with Krishna's [15] sensory marketing framework, whereby high-quality visual and tactile cues directly elevate perceived product value and trigger favourable consumer responses. These findings align with Penttila [3] and Smith [4], who collectively establish that colour, texture, pattern, and lustre are the primary aesthetic drivers of dimension stone selection and market demand.

### 3.2 Marketing and Communication of Aesthetics

#### 3.2.1 Results

Analysis of questionnaire data on marketing channel effectiveness revealed a clear divergence between traditional and digital communication modalities. Physical brochures and catalogues received the highest mean effectiveness score (4.50/5.0), followed closely by the sales team (4.40/5.0), while the company’s website received a markedly lower score of 3.80/5.0. These findings are presented in Table 2 and Figure 1.

Table 2: Mean Scores for Marketing Channel Effectiveness in Conveying Aesthetic Properties

Marketing/Communication Channel	Mean Score (1–5)	Interpretation
Brochures/Catalogues	4.50	Effective
Sales Team	4.40	Effective
Company Website	3.80	Moderately Effective

*Source: Questionnaire data, 2025*

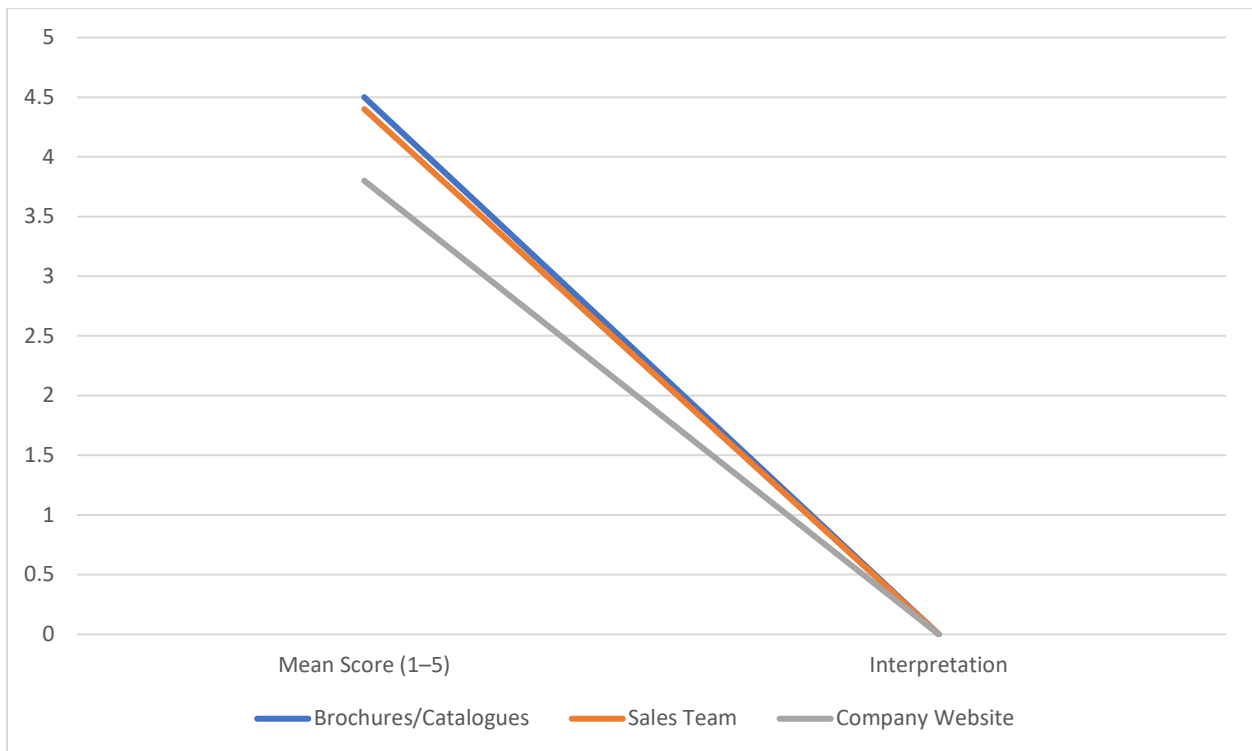


Figure 1: Mean Scores for Marketing Channel Effectiveness

Regarding challenges in aesthetic communication, Table 3 shows that 40% of respondents answered "Yes" and a further 40% answered "Maybe" to the question of whether they face significant challenges in effectively conveying the true aesthetic appeal of their granite through marketing, with only 20% responding "No" (Figure 2).

Table 3: Respondent Perspectives on Challenges in Conveying Aesthetic Appeal

Response	Frequency (N=10)	Percentage (%)
Yes	4	40%
Maybe	4	40%
No	2	20%
Total	10	100%

*Source: Questionnaire data, 2025*

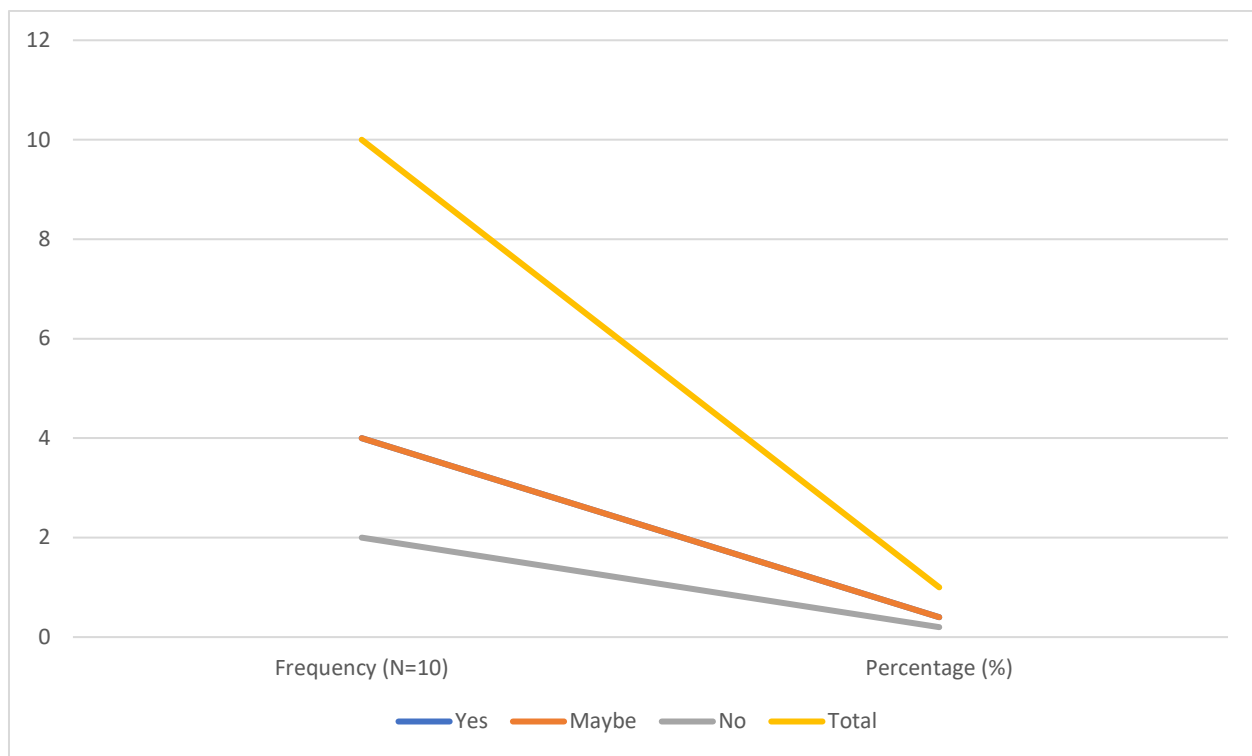


Figure 2: Respondent Perspectives on Challenges in Conveying Aesthetic Appeal

Interview data provided critical qualitative context for these quantitative findings. Interviewee 1 stated that the company does not "do anything" to formally highlight or communicate its aesthetic properties and cited an "in-house challenge" whereby the company is unwilling to invest in marketing. Interviewee 2 corroborated this by noting the absence of any formal channel for collecting customer feedback on aesthetic preferences, which would otherwise be foundational to refining marketing strategy.

### 3.2.2 Discussion

The results expose a significant internal tension between CIBI's demonstrably high product quality and its conservative investment in communicating that quality. The effectiveness of the sales team and brochures reflects the company's reliance on direct, person-to-person marketing, a modality that, while effective within its reach, is inherently limited in geographic and market scale. Kotler and Armstrong [12] emphasise that in competitive markets, effective branding and multi-channel marketing, particularly through digital platforms, are essential for conveying a product's value proposition to diverse and distant customer segments. The company website's comparatively low effectiveness score (3.80/5.0), corroborated by Interviewee 1's qualitative disclosure of deliberate under-investment in digital marketing, represents a significant missed opportunity given the global evidence that digital showcasing with high-resolution imagery is now a primary driver of natural stone purchase decisions [12,15].

The finding that 80% of personnel acknowledge challenges in aesthetic communication ("Yes" or "Maybe" combined) is particularly telling. It suggests systemic awareness of a strategic gap that is not being addressed. The absence of formal customer feedback mechanisms, noted by Interviewee 2, further compounds this issue: without systematic collection of end-user aesthetic preferences, CIBI cannot adapt its product presentation or channel strategy in response to evolving market demands, an oversight that has been identified as a critical vulnerability in natural stone marketing in comparable contexts [11,12].

## 3.3 Perspectives on Aesthetic Influence on Marketability

### 3.3.1 Perceived Importance of Aesthetics

Questionnaire data revealed that CIBI personnel place a uniformly high degree of importance on aesthetic properties. The findings are summarized in Table 4. Lustre/sheen received a perfect mean score of 5.0/5.0, while distinctive natural patterns (4.7/5.0) and diverse textures/finishes (4.7/5.0) also received near-perfect scores. Perception of wide colour range and unique aesthetic differentiation from competitors received mean scores of 4.6 and 4.5 respectively (Table 4). These perceptions of aesthetic quality were paralleled by assessments of the importance of aesthetics to customers, with texture/finish quality (4.7/5.0) and overall aesthetic appeal's influence on purchasing decisions (4.6/5.0) rated highest (Figure 5).

Table 4: Mean Scores for Personnel Perception of Aesthetic Quality of CIBI's Granite Products

Aesthetic Quality Dimension	Mean Score (1-5)	Interpretation
High Quality Lustre/Sheen	5.0	Consistently high
Distinctive Natural Patterns	4.7	Distinctive and attractive
Diverse Textures/Finishes	4.7	Diverse and appealing
Wide Range of Granite Colours	4.6	Wide range
Unique Aesthetic Features (vs. competitors)	4.5	Unique features

Source: Questionnaire data, 2025

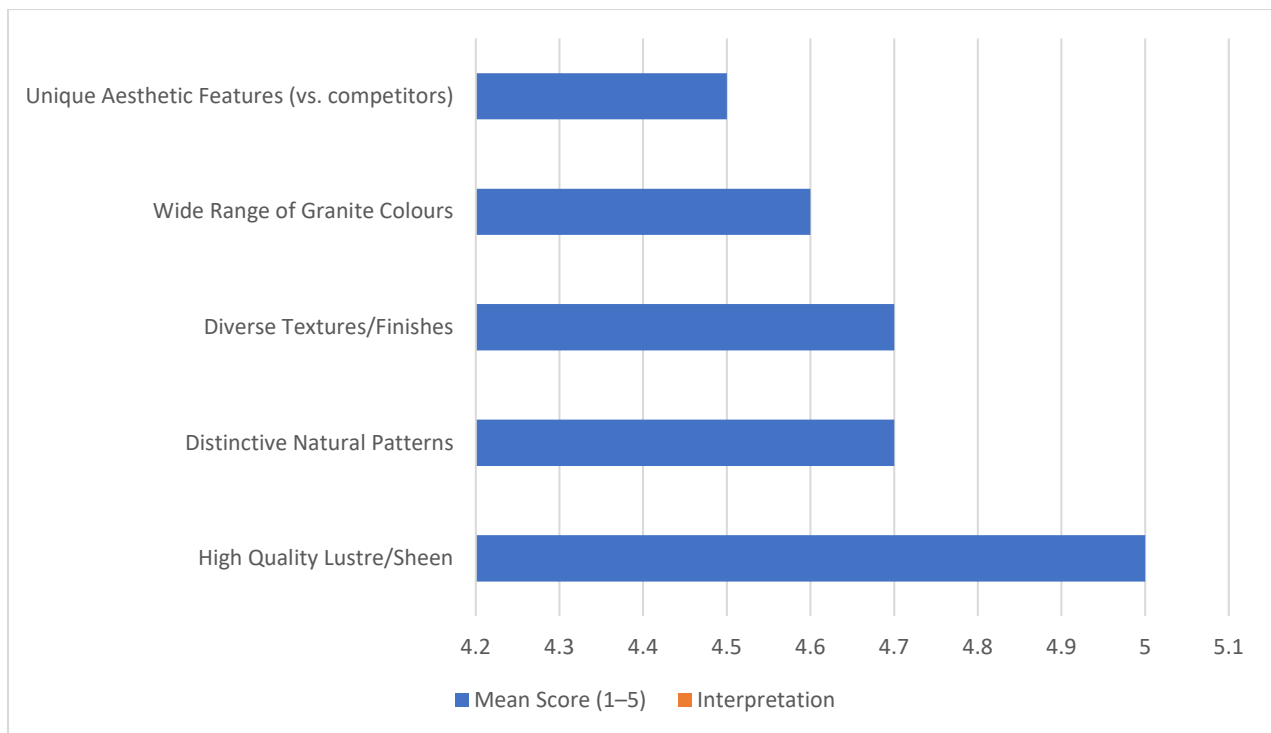


Figure 4: Personnel Perception of Aesthetic Quality

Table 5: Mean Scores for Perceived Importance of Aesthetic Properties to Customers

Aesthetic Property	Mean Score (1-5)	Interpretation
Texture/Finish Quality	4.7	Very Important
Overall Aesthetic Appeal (purchasing decisions)	4.6	Very Influential
Variety of Available Colours	4.3	Very Important
Colour Consistency	4.2	Very Important
Lustre/Sheen	4.2	Very Important
Uniqueness/Prominence of Natural Patterns	4.2	Very Important

Source: Questionnaire data, 2025

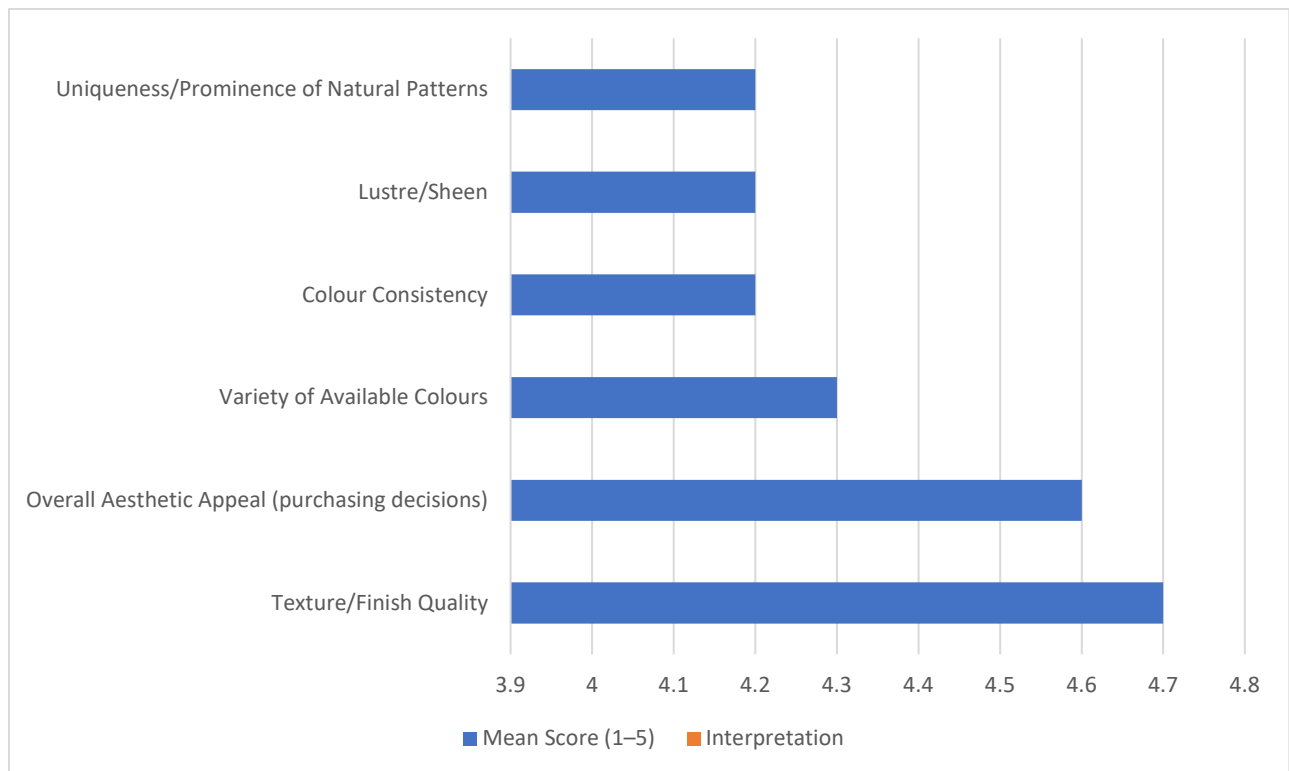


Figure 5: Perceived Importance of Aesthetic Properties to Customers

Interview data reinforced these quantitative findings. Interviewee 1 rated the importance of aesthetic properties at nine out of ten. Interviewee 2 stated that aesthetics is "very, very important" in customer decisions, noting that colour is frequently the primary driver of initial purchase interest. A particularly illustrative qualitative account was provided of a client who returned to purchase additional granite after being impressed by the material's lustre and its resistance to flood damage, a narrative that underscores the convergence of aesthetic and physical properties in generating customer loyalty.

### 3.3.2 Aesthetic-based Pricing Strategy

Questionnaire data on pricing revealed that 50% of respondents rated aesthetics as a "Significant" factor in pricing decisions, and 20% rated them as "Dominant", yielding a combined 70% acknowledgement of aesthetic pricing influence (Table 6). However, interview data introduced a critical tension: while aesthetics is acknowledged as important, pricing in practice is primarily determined by logistics, particularly transportation costs.

Table 6: Respondent Perspectives on Aesthetics as a Pricing Factor

Response Category	Frequency (N=10)	Percentage (%)
Dominant Factor	2	20%
Significant Factor	5	50%
Moderate Factor	3	30%
Minor Factor	0	0%
Not a Factor	0	0%
Total Respondents	10	100%

Source: Questionnaire data, 2025. Note: Interview data confirmed that despite this perceived importance, actual pricing decisions prioritise cost and logistics over aesthetic value.

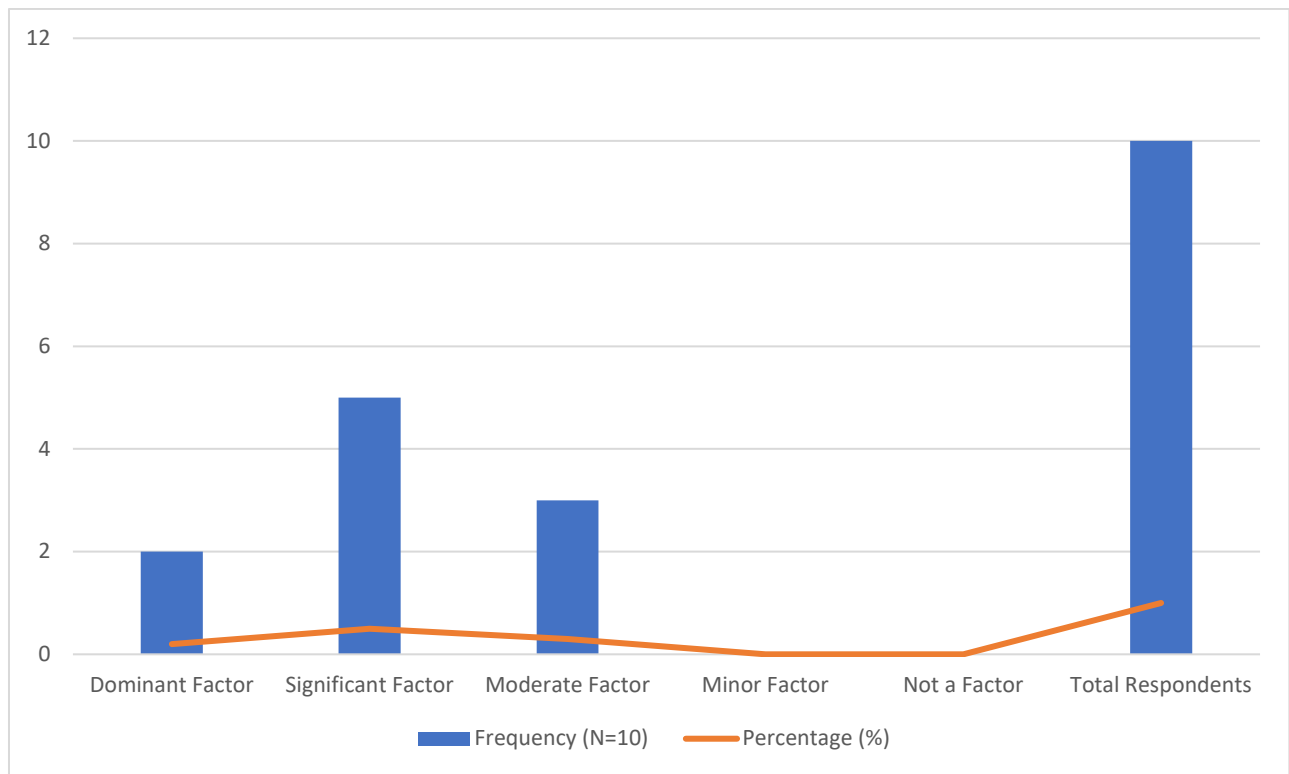


Figure 6: Respondent Perspectives on Aesthetics as a Pricing Factor

Interviewee 1 noted that Champagne Silver granite sees limited sales due to pricing driven primarily by the chairman’s cost-based pricing strategy rather than by the product’s distinctive aesthetic properties. Interviewee 2 further explained that Champagne Gold commands a premium price not because of its distinctive gold-brown speckling but because it is sourced from Bauchi State, and the long-distance transportation cost constitutes the dominant pricing variable. These examples collectively demonstrate that CIBI’s pricing model does not currently capture the full aesthetic value of its products, a strategic misalignment with value-based pricing principles as elaborated by Doyle and Stern [11].

### 3.3.3 Competitive Positioning Based on Aesthetic and Physical Quality

Questionnaire data on competitive positioning indicated a strongly positive self-assessment among CIBI’s personnel: 80% rated CIBI’s granite as "Very Competitive" against imported alternatives, and a further 10% rated it as "Somewhat Competitive" (Table 7 and Figure 7).

Table 7: Respondent Perspectives on Competitiveness of CIBI’s Granite vs. Imported Granite

Response Category	Frequency (N=10)	Percentage (%)
Very Competitive	8	80%
Somewhat Competitive	1	10%
Neutral / Unsure	1	10%
Not Competitive	0	0%
Highly Not Competitive	0	0%
Total Respondents	10	100%

Source: Questionnaire data, 2025

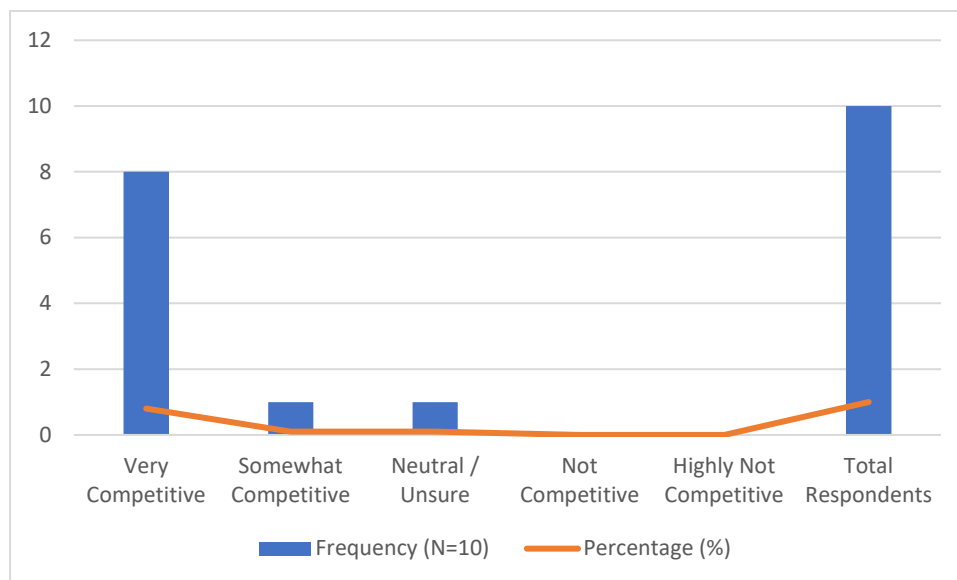


Figure 7: Respondent Perspectives on Competitiveness vs. Imported Granite

Interview data provided the technical substantiation for this confidence. Interviewee 4 cited the superior hardness of CIBI's granite relative to marble, its better chemical resistance, and, most notably, the consistent slab thickness achieved through CIBI's high-quality processing, a feature that some imported products, particularly lower-grade Chinese imports, reportedly fail to deliver. Interviewee 1 further stated that Nigeria possesses the "best granite in the world" and that CIBI's quality-to-price ratio is competitive.

This strong competitive confidence, rooted in both aesthetic differentiation and documented physical superiority, points to a substantial untapped opportunity. The evidence suggests that CIBI's advantage is not merely aesthetic but is grounded in a tangible, quality-driven production process. This combination of factors, if strategically communicated through value-based pricing and more effective marketing, would significantly strengthen CIBI's competitive positioning, particularly against the premium imported stone market that currently commands higher price points despite, in some cases, inferior physical consistency [7,8,14].

#### 4.0 Conclusion

This study confirms that CIBI Nigeria Limited's granite products possess a well-differentiated portfolio of premium aesthetic attributes, spanning diverse colour families (from Zaria Red to Champagne Gold), both speckled and veined pattern formations, and uniformly high lustre (mean score 5.0/5.0) across all assessed samples. These qualities are grounded in Nigeria's demonstrated geological richness and are further enhanced by CIBI's consistent high-quality polishing and processing operations.

However, a critical strategic disconnect exists between this demonstrable product quality and CIBI's current market positioning. Despite 80% of personnel rating their granite as "very competitive" against imported alternatives and articulating clear technical advantages (superior hardness, chemical resistance, and consistent slab thickness), pricing remains primarily cost-driven, particularly by transportation logistics, rather than value-based. Marketing relies predominantly on traditional channels, with brochures (4.50/5.0) and the sales team (4.40/5.0) as the principal communication tools, while the company website (3.80/5.0) and digital marketing infrastructure remain substantially underutilised.

To capitalise on demonstrable aesthetic and physical superiority, three strategic recommendations are proposed for CIBI Nigeria Limited:

(i) Adopt value-based pricing for visually and geologically distinctive granite varieties (e.g., Champagne Gold, Zaria Red, Kamazou Wavy). Rather than allowing transportation logistics alone to determine price premiums, CIBI should develop a pricing framework that explicitly captures aesthetic rarity and consumer-perceived value, consistent with the principles outlined by Doyle and Stern [11] and Porter [14].

(ii) Invest in professional digital marketing infrastructure. Developing a modern, high-resolution digital showcase, including virtual showroom capabilities and detailed per-product aesthetic descriptors, would enable CIBI to reach a broader, more digitally engaged audience and communicate product quality at scale, addressing the significant gap identified by this study and consistent with best practices in natural stone marketing [12,13].

(iii) Formalise customer feedback mechanisms. Establishing structured channels for collecting and analysing end-user aesthetic preferences would provide CIBI with the market intelligence necessary to align product presentations with evolving customer demands, refine marketing messages, and validate the effectiveness of any new pricing or communication strategies [12,19].

This study's primary limitation lies in its focus on personnel perceptions, with no direct access to end-customer or architect perspectives. Future research should incorporate qualitative inquiry with final purchasers, architects, and construction managers to validate these findings and provide a fuller picture of the consumer-side dynamics of granite aesthetics and marketability in Nigeria.

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