African Journal of Business and Economic Research (AJBER)
(Online) ISSN 1750-4562 (Print) ISSN 1750-4554

Indexed by SCOPUS, UGC CARE List, IBSS, EBSCO, ProQuest, ABDC, SAJE, COPERNICUS, CABELL, Sabinet and J-Gate

Vol. 16, (Issue 2), June 2021
pp 245 – 266

Measuring the Sources and Outcomes of Customer-Based Brand Equity in a Service Industry

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31920/1750-4562/2021/v16n2a12

Dr Imoh Uford
Department of Marketing,
Faculty of Management Sciences,
Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU),
Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria.
Email:praisebill2@yahoo.com

&

Helen Inseng Duh*
Department of Marketing,
School of Business Sciences,
Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management,
University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg, South Africa.
Email:duhhelen@yahoo.com
**Corresponding Author*

Abstract

Customer-based brand equity (CBBE) is a business' important intangible asset from which benefits flow. However, most studies focus on measuring CBBE sources, rarely on the outcomes/benefits. Moreover, investigations on sources of CBBE have been limited to product brands, with limited studies on service brands. This study integrated two models to measure the CBBE sources and outcomes of Nigeria's United Bank for Africa (UBA). Cross-sectional data was collected from UBA customers (n=178) in 12 UBA branches in six of the seven Nigerian provinces. Structural equation modelling results revealed that among four CBBE sources, brand association and brand loyalty significantly influenced UBA's overall CBBE. UBA's CBBE significantly impacted customers' brand preference, repurchase intention and price premium-payment. Theoretical and managerial implications are provided.

Keywords: *Sources of customer-based brand equity; repurchase intention; price premium; brand preference; United Bank for Africa.*

1.Introduction

Despite the increasing competition in the banking industry, particularly in developing economies, the United Bank of Africa Plc (UBA) has been thriving in Nigeria. The bank is a multinational financial services provider that operates in 22 African countries. It also has offices in the US, UK and France. UBA has 626 global branches and serves more than 7 million retail, commercial and corporate global customers (Research and Market, 2015). Positioned as a Pan-African bank, the UBA Group is firmly in the forefront of driving the renaissance of the African economy. It is also well positioned as a one-stop financial services institution, with a growing reputation as the face of banking on the African continent. UBA Plc has grown over the years from being a brand name to a household name in Nigeria (UBA, 2016). Even though UBA was the fifth largest bank in Nigeria in 2015, its profit after tax grew by 69.7% from 2014 to 2015 (UBAs' annual reports, 2011-2015). In 2019, UBA was ranked the 21st leading banking brands out of 100 African banks with total assets worth $13.3 billion (African Business Magazine, 2019).

The measurement of UBA's asset worth is important because it provides information about the bank's financial performance. However, it might be more valuable to measure the bank's intangible assets, which are assessed from its brand equity (Keller, 2020). Jia and Zhang (2013) assert that brand equity consists of an organisation's intangible assets, which do not only reflect the feelings and attitudes that consumers have of a brand, but can also secure long-term commercial and competitive advantages for companies. Aaker (1991, p. 15) defines brand equity as "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol, which add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to the firm's customers".

Considering brand equity in terms of customer-based brand equity (CBBE), Keller (2013, p. 9) defines CBBE as "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on a consumer response to the marketing of a brand". For example, some consumers are prepared to pay more for a branded shirt, handbag, sunglasses than for unbranded but equally functional equivalence. Keller (2020) declares that the value of a brand resides in consumers' minds in terms of their brand knowledge. This knowledge, in the form of brand awareness, brand image, and various judgments and feelings, can enhance positive differential responses in the marketplace and has the potential to deliver a number of benefits. Some of the benefits that Keller (2020) highlights are increased marketing communication effectiveness, trade co-operation and support, customer referrals and brand loyalty.

With these benefits, Keller (2013) recommends the measurement of the sources and outcomes of customer-based brand equity (CBBE). However, most studies have measured only CBBE sources, mainly using Aaker's (1996a) and Keller's (1998) models. Keller's (1998) CBBE model measures brand equity from two perspectives: brand awareness and brand image or associations. Aaker's (1996a) model, which Kwon (2013) considers the most comprehensive CBBE model, measures brand equity from five perspectives: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and proprietary assets. Even though Aaker's (1996a) CBBE model is more comprehensive, it does not measure the CBBE outcomes. Buil, Martinez, and De Chernatony's (2013) model integrates Aakers' (1996a) model with some CBBE outcomes—customers' purchase intention, brand preferences, willingness to pay a premium price and accept brand extensions—as consumers' responses to a brand.

Buil *et al.'s* (2013) model provides both CBBE sources and some important outcomes. However, their model was tested in a European setting (Spain and the UK) and with a physical product brand, not a service brand. Considering service companies are also branded and customers also develop feelings, beliefs and judgements about service brands from which differential responses to the marketing of the brands are made (Keller, 2013), the current study employed Buil *et al.'s* (2013) model to examine the sources and outcomes of UBA's CBBE in Nigeria. It specifically examined the extent to which Aaker's (1996a) CBBE sources—perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association and brand loyalty—present in Buil *et al.'s* (2013) model impact overall CBBE.

It also examined how overall CBBE in turn drives three—customers' purchase intention, brand preferences, willingness to pay a premium price—of Buil *et al.'s* (2013) suggested CBBE outcomes. Their brand extension outcome was left out because service brands cannot be extended as is done with a physical product brand.

2 Literature Review

2.1 *Benefits or outcomes of consumer-based brand equity*

In today's competitive global business environment, brands are becoming pivotal assets for a company's survival. Consequently, firms are developing strategies to develop and manage their brand equity (CBBE) effectively (Karadeniz, 2010).This is because CBBE has the capacity to generate a future value stream, either through its ability to extract a premium price from consumers (for example, being prepared to pay more for an Adidas sportswear than for an unbranded functionally equivalent one), or through its ability to attract capital (for example, investors prefer to place their funds in a company with strong brand equity) (Karadeniz, 2010). According to Hussain, Mu, Mohiuddin, Danish and Sair (2020), sustainable competitive advantage should first be generated from brand equity before these market benefits can be earned. To be one step ahead of their rivals in a fiercely competitive arena, firms are developing marketing strategies to increase their CBBE by creating strong brands and managing them for the many benefits they provide, such as higher perception of product performance, larger profit margins from positive responses to price increases, and opportunities for brand extensions (Keller, 2013 and 2020). CBBE also creates barriers to competitive entry and thus drives brand wealth and resilience against competitors' promotional pressures (Hussain *et al.,* 2020). Keller (2020) avers that significant market share and expansion into new businesses are some of the benefits of strong brands that are traceable to CBBE.

Lewis (1993) categorizes benefits that can be gained from CBBE into two: (i) factors related to *growth* (e.g. a brand's ability to attract new customers, resist competitive activity, introduce line extensions, and cross international borders); and (ii) *outcomes related to profitability* (e.g. brand loyalty, premium pricing, lower price elasticity, lower advertising/sales ratios, and trade leverage). Buil *et al.* (2013) recommend the measuring of consumers' CBBE behavioural outcomes, which include brand preference, repurchase intention and willingness to pay premium prices. According to Hussain *et al.* (2020), these outcomes are particularly important because they inform marketers about the performance of their marketing and branding efforts. On measuring these outcomes, marketers should first know the sources of their CBBE (Keller, 2020).

2.2. *Sources of customer-based brand equity*

The first conceptualization of CBBE sources was done by Aaker (1996a), whose model is viewed as providing one of the most comprehensive sources of CBBE. The sources are thus measured in the current study. As aforementioned, Aaker (1996a) identified five sources: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and propriety assets of brand equity. Out of these five, four of them—brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty—are considered sufficient to represent consumers' evaluations and reactions to a brand (Tong and Hawley, 2009). They are measured in this study and below-discussed.

2.2.1 *Description of sources of brand equity in Aaker's (1996a) CBBE model*

Brand awareness: Aaker (1996a, p. 114) describes brand awareness as the salience of the brand in the customer's mind, and an important component of brand equity, which comprises of recognition, recall and top-of-the-mind (i.e., whether a brand will be the first-named brand in a recall task). Kwon (2013) sees brand awareness in terms of the strength of a brand's presence in the mind of consumers. Brand awareness is the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category (Mohan and Sequeira, 2012, Keller, 2020). Aaker (1996a) posits that brand awareness can affect brand perception, attitudes, and can drive brand choice and even loyalty. While awareness creation is usually the task of companies, in a customer relationship context, Elabbasy (2021) opines that brand awareness is also created by external customers, especially in the current technological era.

Perceived quality: Keller (1998, p. 176) defines perceived quality as the "customers' perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service relative to relevant alternatives and with respect to its intended purpose". "Perceived quality is a brand association that is elevated to the status of a brand asset for three main reasons" (Aaker 1996a, p. 17), namely:

(1) among all brand associations, only perceived quality has been shown to drive financial performance;
(2) perceived quality is often a major (if not the principal) strategic thrust of a business; and
(3) perceived quality is linked to and often drives other aspects of how a brand is perceived.

Keller (2013) suggests that among the host of attitudes that consumers develop towards a brand, perceived quality is one of the most important, especially since it can be used as a tool to launch brand extension, gain distribution space, and to charge a premium price. Calvo-Porral, Martinez-Fernandez, Juanatey-Boga and Levy-Mangin (2015, p. 99) define perceived quality as "consumers' subjective perception of a product's attributes". Customers' responses to product/brand offerings are mainly based on their perceptions of the quality (Calvo-Porral *et al.,* 2015). In the current social media era, Verma (2021) found that it is rather the brand love generated from brand engagement that drives overall brand equity. The predictor of brand engagement was however not studied.

Brand association: Aaker (1996a, p. 114) conceptualizes brand association as "a set of indicators of the brands ability to achieve differentiation". According to Keller (2013, p. 72), brand associations are other information nodes that are linked to the brand node in a consumer's memory, containing the various meanings of the brand for consumers, which creates a brand image. Thus, marketing programmes that link strong, favourable, and unique associations to a brand in a consumer's memory create a positive brand image (Keller, 2013). Associations, Keller (2013) continues, take many forms and may reflect characteristics of the product, or aspects that are independent of the product itself. For example, Apple has a rich brand image, consisting of product and non-product brand associations, such as user-friendly, cool, innovative, fun, and friendly (Keller, 2013, p. 73).

According to Keller (2020), brand association is anything "linked" in the consumer's memory to a brand. He further emphasizes that associating a brand with prominent people, places and things causes consumers to change their feelings, attitudes and actions towards a company's brand. Brand associations are driven by the level of awareness, the amount of brand experience, and other exposures, because they signal quality, confidence and credibility. They can drive brand loyalty, purchase decisions, and play a dominant role in building brand equity (Kwon, 2013).

Brand loyalty: This source is viewed as a primary dimension of brand equity and has thus received much attention by both academics and practitioners over the years (Kwon, 2013). Keller (2013) gauges brand loyalty in terms of repeat purchases, how often customers purchase a brand, and how much of the brand they purchase. Oliver (1999, p. 34) defines brand loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronise a preferred product or service consistently in the future". Compared to Aaker's (1996a) other CBBE sources, brand loyalty only exists after a consumer has purchased and experienced a brand. A high level of brand loyalty, which is reportedly driven by perceived quality, brand associations (Buil *et al.,* 2013) and mostly brand satisfaction can drive market share and provide barriers of entry to a company's competitors (Kwon, 2013).

2.3 *Buil et al.'s (2013) CBBE and response model*

Buil *et al.* (2013) examined the impact of Aaker's (1996a) CBBE dimensions on overall brand equity. Contending that positive brand equity influences the performance of a firm through the extent to which consumers positively response to the brand, they also examined the impact of overall CBBE on four types of consumer responses or market performance indicators. The indicators are willingness to pay a premium price, willingness to accept a brand extension, brand preference and repurchase intention. Buil *et al.* (2013) selected Adidas and Nike, Sony and Panasonic, and BMW and Volkswagen from the sportswear, electronics and car product categories, respectively, in two European countries to test their model.

Buil *et al.* (2013) tested their model in Spain and the UK to deviate from the usual testing of Aaker's (1996a) CBBE in the US and other non-European countries. With the exception of the relationship between perceived quality and brand loyalty, Buil *et al.* (2013) found that Aaker's (1996a) CBBE sources positively related to each other: brand loyalty strongly drove overall CBBE, which in turn, positively and significantly impacted all four market performance indicators. With this finding, it was concluded that their model is empirically robust in the two European countries.

With the proven robustness of Buil *et al.'s* (2013) model and the fact that it incorporated Aaker's (1996a) CBBE sources, the current study employed this model to propose and test the relationships between Aaker's (1996a) CBBE sources, overall CBBE and three of Buil *et al.'s* (2013) market performance indicators in a service industry. As mentioned before, brand extension was left out because in a service setting, extensions may not be possible. The next section discusses and develops the hypotheses and conceptual model.

2.4 *Hypotheses Development and Hypotheses*

2.4.1 *The relationships between Aaker's (1996a) CBBE sources and overall CBBE*

In the examination of the extent to which Aaker's (1996a) CBBE sources-brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and brand loyalty—drive overall CBBE, various studies have produced mixed results in varied industries or product categories or countries. For example, for brand equity in a service sector, Balaji (2011) found that, in India, perceived quality is the strongest driver of brand equity, followed by brand awareness and brand loyalty. Brand association in the study was found to not have a significant impact on brand equity. For sports brand equity, however, brand association was an important factor (Biscaia, Correia, Ross, Rosado and Maroco, 2013). In a retail channel setting, Londono, Elms and Davies (2016) posit that perceived quality, brand awareness and loyalty, not brand associations, are the drivers of overall brand equity. Among customers and managers of a Ghanaian SME, Asamoah (2014) found that brand equity is determined by brand association and brand loyalty, with loyalty being the strongest driver.

With a product brand in Malaysia, Sasmita and Suki (2015) found that all four CBBE sources in Aaker's (1996a) model impacted on overall CBBE. With these mixed results and the fact that CBBE sources make varied impact on overall brand equity in different industries, it was important to assess the extent to which Aaker's (1996a) CBBE sources drive overall CBBE for a bank operating in the competitive banking service sector of Nigeria. Hence, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: There is a positive relationship between brand awareness and overall CBBE
H2: There is a positive relationship between brand association and overall CBBE
H3: There is a positive relationship between perceived quality and overall CBBE
H4: There is a positive relationship between brand loyalty and overall CBBE

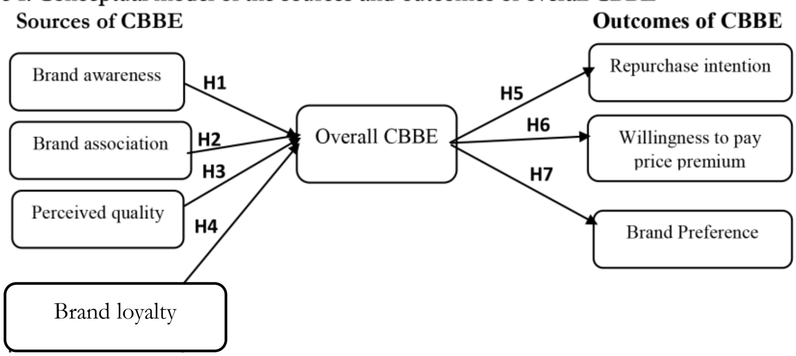
2.4.2 *Relationships between overall CBBE and its outcomes*

Considering the importance of brands in strategic marketing decisions and the huge expenditure by firms on brand-building, acquisition, and management, Morgan and Rego (2009) and Keller (2020) recommend the examination of the extent to which brand equity impacts market performance. However, the impact of CBBE on market performance has been assumed, with few empirical testing in the field of marketing (Buil *et al.,* 2013). Financial researchers have measured the value of a brand in terms of asset valuation for the balance sheet or the sum of all the values accrued to a brand when sold (Altigan, Aksoy and Akinci, 2005). It is however recommended that the measurement of brand value or brand equity outcome should start by examining a brand's market performance in terms of consumers' responses to the brand (Buil *et al.,* 2013; Li, Hua and Zhu, 2021). In response to this and conceptualizing market performance of a brand in terms of consumers' brand preference and repurchase intention, Tolba and Hassan (2009) surveyed 5598 Japanese, Americans, and Europeans to examine the impact of CBBE on market performance of a number of brands. They found that brand equity, in terms of relationship equity (satisfaction and attitudinal loyalty), were the drivers of consumers' brand preference and repurchase intentions.

Mohan and Sequeira (2016) examined the impact of overall CBBE on the operational performance of fast-moving consumer goods in India. They found a significant positive relationship, even though it was not clear how operational performance was measured or operationalized. In terms of repurchase intention in India, Verma (2021) found that it is directly impacted by overall CBBE. Buil *et al.* (2013) measured market performance in terms of consumers' responses, such as willingness to pay a price premium, positive attitude towards brand extension, preference for a brand and future purchase intention. They used these dimensions to measure brand performance in the context of product brands. This study used these dimensions to study the market performance of a service brand and formulated the following hypotheses:

H5: There is a positive relationship between overall CBBE and repurchase intention
H6: There is a positive relationship between overall CBBE and willingness to pay a price premium
H7: There is a positive relationship between overall CBBE and brand preference.
The hypotheses were delineated from the conceptual model in Figure

Figure 1: Conceptual model of the sources and outcomes of overall CBBE



3 Research Methods

3.1 *Sampling Procedure and Size*

Between April and June, 2017, data was collected from UBA customers, who were surveyed in 12 UBA branches in six of the seven provinces of Nigeria. Data could not be collected from one of the provinces because of the war against Boko Haram insurgents. A convenience non-probability sampling technique was adopted. A probability sampling method could not be used because there was no list of the number of customers who visited the banks during the period of study for random sampling. The selected non-probability sampling method chosen for this study made it easier to solicit participation from UBA customers who visited the bank and were willing to spare some of their time to be

surveyed. The customers were drawn from the retail, commercial, and corporate levels of the bank. The retail and commercial customers were approached in the banks, at the respondents' convenience, while the willing corporate customers were visited in their respective offices in the bank to participate in the study.
Out of the 200 customers surveyed, 178 fully completed responses were received, representing an 89% response rate. The researchers were directly involved in the collection of data, after obtaining an ethics clearance certificate from the university where one of the authors works.

3.2 *Measures*

The researchers adapted scales that have been previously used and found reliable and valid to measure the constructs of this study. However, since they were adapted to suit the banking sector, their reliability and validity were assessed. The scales of Buil *et al.* (2013) were used to measure overall CBBE, brand preference, repurchase intention and willingness to pay a price premium. Aaker's (1996a) CBBE sources—brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty—were adapted from Tong and Hawley's (2009) and Buil *et al.'s* (2013) scales. Each of these constructs was measured with a five-point Likert scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. Before administering the questionnaire, it was pre-tested with 10 customers. The reliability results from the pre-test were good with all the scales meeting the recommended threshold of 0.7 and above.

3.3 *Analyses and Results*

The analyses started with descriptive statistics to obtain the characteristics of the sample and constructs' mean. Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were then conducted to confirm the dimensions of the constructs, their reliability and validity. Structural equation modelling was thereafter conducted to assess the measurement model fit and the relationships in the path models.

3.3.1 *Descriptive statistics of UBA customers*

The gender ratio (male: female) was 58.4 : 41.6%. This probably reflects the higher male to female working, income-earning, and bank accountholding ratio in Nigeria. It was impressive to find that up to 74% of the respondents were within the ages of 20 and 39, young adults who are considered to be Generation Y. Norum (2008) reports that Generation Y consumers are one of the biggest, attractive (from their purchasing and spending power) consumer segments, who are a lucrative market for various goods and services. A high percentage (63%) of UBA customers do business with the bank for retail banking services. The commercial bankers were 19%, while the corporate bankers were 18%. The percentage of respondents from each of the six provinces were almost the same, with the South East province having slightly higher respondents with 23.6%. Majority of the respondents (55.6%) had postgraduate certificates, and thus the sample was made up of 71% financially well-off customers, since people tend to earn higher with postgraduate degrees. The characteristics of the constructs are described next.

3.3.2 *Constructs Mean, Reliability and Validity*

Table 1: Mean, Reliability and Validity Statistics

Research Construct		Descriptive Statistics				Cronbach's Test		C.R. Value	AVE Value	Factor Loading
		Items and constructs' mean values		Standard Deviation		Item-total	CA value			
BAW	BAW3	4.74	4.55	0.44	0.66	0.34	0.71	0.76	0.51	0.73
	BAW4	4.30		0.92		0.42				0.70
	BAW5	4.60		0.63		0.59				0.71
BAS	BAS1	4.06	4.24	0.89	0.89	0.81	0.82	0.91	0.64	0.87
	BAS2	4.26		0.89		0.87				0.79
	BAS3	4.32		0.98		0.82				0.76
	BAS4	4.34		0.82		0.84				0.78
PQ	PQ1	4.01	4.02	0.99	1.02	0.75	0.79	0.94	0.76	0.80
	PQ2	4.07		1.00		0.85				0.92
	PQ3	3.92		1.08		0.87				0.91
	PQ4	4.04		0.94		0.87				0.92
	PQ5	4.04		1.08		0.72				0.79
BLO	BLO1	4.30	4.11	0.83	0.97	0.71	0.90	0.90	0.65	0.73

	BLO2	4.08		1.07		0.80				0.85
	BLO3	3.74		1.25		0.71				0.79
	BLO4	4.30		0.71		0.62				0.79
	BLO5	4.16		0.85		0.85				0.88
OBE	OBE1	3.99	4.09	0.88	0.82	0.79	0.89	0.87	0.63	0.78
	OBE2	4.12		0.78		0.85				0.82
	OBE3	4.18		0.76		0.85				0.81
	OBE4	4.08		0.87		0.71				0.77
PP	PP1	3.67	3.71	1.01	1.00	0.77	0.92	0.91	0.71	0.84
	PP2	3.59		1.06		0.85				0.96
	PP3	3.82		0.98		0.83				0.82
	PP4	3.75		0.97		0.73				0.74
BP	BP1	4.12	4.20	0.90	0.80	0.74	0.79	0.86	0.67	0.83
	BP2	4.21		0.81		0.82				0.84
	BP3	4.27		0.69		0.67				0.79
PI	PI1	4.23	4.27	0.77	0.77	0.78	0.90	0.91	0.73	0.87
	PI2	4.28		0.74		0.86				0.86
	PI3	4.27		0.83		0.81				0.83
	PI4	4.29		0.73		0.80				0.85

Note: BAW = brand awareness; BAS = brand association; PQ = perceived quality; BLO = brand loyalty; PP = price premium; BP = brand preference; PI = repurchase intention, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extraction.

For the constructs' mean, it is essential to remember that a five-point Likert scale was used, where 1 represented strongly disagree, 2 indicated disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 agree and 5 stood for strongly agree. Looking at the constructs' mean figures in Table 1, it was expedient to find that all values exceeded 3; which means the respondents agreed to the statements measuring the constructs. It is good to note that the respondents strongly agreed that UBA is preferred (M=4.20), will be re-patronized (M=4.27) and overall, the customers would differentially respond to UBA with a good overall CBBE of (M=4.10).

The constructs' reliability was tested with Cronbach alpha and composite reliability. Table 1 shows that all the reliability values—Cronbach alpha ranging from 0.71 to 0.92 and composite reliability ranging from 0.76 to 0.94—were greater than the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2010). Construct validity was assessed for discriminant validity and convergent validity. With the factor loadings ranging from 0.71 to 0.96, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranging from 0.51 to 0.76 and all greater than the recommended 0.5, convergent validity was obtained (Hair *et al.,* 2010). The correlation results in Table 2 showed proof of discriminant validity. This was because all the correlation coefficients were less than 0.9, as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2012).

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

	BAW	BAS	PQ	BLO	OBE	PP	PI	BP
BAW	1							
BAS	.724**	1						
PQ	.462**	.593**	1					
BLO	.556**	.700**	.656**	1				
OBE	.464**	.649**	.540**	.788**	1			
PP	.230**	.320**	.359**	.491**	.463**	1		
PI	.506**	.674**	.594**	.726**	.692**	.395**	1	
BP	.582**	.721**	.627**	.874**	.806**	.495**	.829**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); PP = price premium; BP = brand preference;
PI = repurchase intention, PP = price premium; BP = brand preference; PI = repurchase intention,

3.3.3 *Measurement model*

For the assessment of the measurement model, through the goodness-of-fit tests, this study obtained chi-square (χ^2/df = 1.491), goodness-of-fit index (GFI) (0.816), comparative fit index (CFI) (0.959), Tucker Lewis index (TLI) (0.940), incremental fit index (IFI) (0.961), relative fit index (RFI) (0.838), norm fit index (NFI) (0.890), and random measure of standard error approximation (RMSEA) (0.053). These results all show acceptable fits. After ascertaining the data fit, the structural model was tested and the results are shown in Table 3.

3.3.4 *Structural or path model results*

Table 3: Structural Model Results

Relationship	**Standardized coefficients**	**P-values**	**Outcome**
BAW → OBE	0.05	0.143	not significant
BAS → OBE	0.18	0.000	significant at p<0.01
PQ → OBE	0.03	0.394	not significant
BLO → OBE	0.56	0.000	significant at p<0.01
OBE → PI	0.76	0.000	significant at p<0.01
OBE → PP	0.60	0.000	significant at p<0.01
OBE → BP	0.80	0.000	significant at p<0.01

Note:BAW = brand awareness; BAS = brand association; PQ = perceived quality; BLO= brand loyalty; OBE = overal brand equity; PP = price premium; BP = brand preference; PI = repurchase intention

Hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H4 posited that there is a positive relationship between CBBE sources and UBA's overall CBBE. The results from Table 3 indicate that out of the four sources—brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty—only brand association and brand loyalty significantly influenced overall brand equity with (β=0.18, ϱ<0.01) and (β=0.56, ϱ<0.01), respectively.

Hypotheses H5, H6 and H7 posited that there is a positive relationship between UBA's overall CBBE and its customers' repurchase intention, willingness to pay a price premium and brand preference, respectively. The results in Table 3 show that all three hypotheses were significant with (β= 0.76, ϱ<0.01), (β= 0.60, ϱ<0.01) and (β= 0.80, ϱ<0.01), respectively. Hence H5, H6 and H7 were all accepted. The implications of these results are discussed next.

4. Discussions and Implications

UBA Nigeria has been thriving, despite operating in a highly competitive banking sector. With this performance by a service brand and the fact that the market performance outcome of brand equity has mainly been assumed without empirical testing, especially in a service sector, it was necessary to examine the sources of UBA's CBBE using Aaker's (1996a) model. It was also important to measure the market performance outcome of UBA's CBBE in terms of their customers' brand responses. It was found that even though UBA's customers strongly agreed that they were aware and perceived the service quality of the bank to be adequate (M=4.55) for brand awareness and (M=4.02) for perceived quality, these sources were not the determinants of UBA's CBBE. This contradicts Balaji's (2011) findings in the service sector and Londono *et al.* (2016) in the retail sector, who found that brand awareness and perceived quality drive CBBE. With a product brand, Sasmita and Suki (2015) also contrarily found that brand awareness and perceived quality drive overall brand equity. One thing common to these studies, which found significant relationships between brand awareness, perceived quality and overall brand equity, is that data were collected from students.

For our current study, which obtained data from bank customers and not students, it can be inferred that since the customers are already doing business with the bank, awareness and perceived quality are not important to their differential and positive response (i.e., CBBE) to UBA. It is brand association and customer loyalty to the brand that drive the bank's CBBE. Using a non-student sample too, Asamoah (2014) found that brand equity is driven by brand association and brand loyalty, both of which can guarantee market performance. Since the associations customers hold of UBA brand are strong and favourable enough to grant brand equity, this indicate that UBA customers can potentially accept new and other products the bank provides. UBA should therefore develop new products and cross-sell existing ones. Considering that brand loyalty also drove overall CBBE, UBA managers and other practitioners should seek to identify motivators of customers' brand loyalty and do all they can to satisfy customers for sustained loyalty.

Our empirical testing of whether overall CBBE can actually drive market performance revealed significant impact of UBA's overall CBBE on the customers' brand preference, willingness to pay a price premium and repurchase the brand in the future. This supports Buil *et al.'s* (2013) findings conducted with durable product brands. The power of CBBE to drive market performance in terms of consumers' favourable responses in various domains, as the current study has confirmed, has also been proven by Swoboda, Weindel and Halsig (2016) in the retail sector. It can therefore be concluded that for both a product brand and a service brand, companies that build strong CBBEs will perform well in the market in terms of their customers' willingness to pay higher for their product and services, their brand preference and plan to patronize the business in the future.

5 Theoretical and Managerial Contributions

This research contributes to the marketing and brand management literature. It contributes to the brand management literature by empirically testing the extent to which customer-based brand equity drives three market performance indicators. With the exception of Buil *et al.* (2013), researchers who have tested the famous Aaker's (1996b) and Keller's (1998 and 2013) CBBE models in various industries and countries have rarely empirically examined the impact of CBBE on market performance outcomes. This study contributes by testing the impact of overall CBBE on three market performance indicators in a service sector and therefore confirming Buil *et al.'s* (2013) findings obtained in a product sector. Mohan and Sequeira (2016) worry that the measurement of market performance has been left in the hands of financial researchers and practitioners. Since financial performance measures rarely guide organizations on how to dominate the market, the authors recommended additional use of non-financial performance measures. The current study contributes in this regard by not only highlighting which aspect of a brand will lead to brand equity, but by also measuring the market performance outcome of brand equity.

In today's highly competitive marketplace, Sadek, Redding and Tantanwi (2015) suggest that strong brands and brand equity play crucial roles in gaining competitive advantage. This study practically contributes by identifying CBBE sources that drive brand equity in the banking sector. Brand managers in other sectors can use the simple tested model from this study to examine not only the sources of their brands' equity from a consumer perspective but to also determine whether their brand-building efforts are paying dividends in terms of market performance. The market performance variables—consumers' willingness to pay a price premium, brand preference and repurchase intentions—measured in this study are according to Buil *et al.*'s (2013) important indicators of a firm's financial performance. The identification of the market performance driver in this study can guide marketing strategy development.

6 Limitations, Future Research and Conclusion

Even though this study made some important contributions, it is not without some limitations. These limitations also offer some avenues for future research. The first limitation is that even though Aaker's (1996b) and Buil *et al.'s* (2018) models were tested in a service sector to confirm CBBE sources and market outcomes, the models were tested in only one service sector (banking) and in only Nigeria. Further studies should extend and test the models in other service sectors and countries. The testing of the extended model with even product brands is needed in emerging markets, because Buil *et al.* (2013) tested their model in Europe. Another limitation is the adoption of a self-administered questionnaire which provided data collected since 2017 and with a cross-sectional design. Some personal or situational factors, such as respondents' probable limited time to participate in the study because they were in the bank to transact and not to additionally respond to questionnaire, may influence opinions. A longitudinal study or experimental design, whereby respondents are specially recruited for the study may be needed to validate the current findings. More so, the collection of recent data, especially after the difficult COVID-19 may produce a different result.
In the building of brand equity, Kwon (2013) and Vomberg, Homburg and Bournemann (2015) suggest the measurement of employee contributions in terms of employee-based brand equity (EBBE). Future studies should measure and compare the contributions of both CBBE and EBBE sources to overall CBBE of service and product brands.

In conclusion, since "financial measures of performance alone cannot guide an organization to market dominance" as Mohan and Sequeira (2016, p. 14) report, this study examined the sources and non-financial performance outcomes of UBA Nigeria's CBBE. Brand loyalty and perceived quality were the source of UBA's CBBE. The bank's overall CBBE predicted its non-financial performance outcomes of customers' brand preference, willingness to pay a price premium and repurchase intention. These outcomes provide a justification for the amount of money and efforts spent on building brand equity. So, in the competitive Nigerian banking sector, instead of engaging in price competition, which erodes profits in attempts to generate brand preference, UBA Nigeria should improve the quality of their services, develop loyalty programmes and provide other customer values. These would not only increase overall brand equity, but a stream of benefits will flow as this study found. Additionally, brand preference generated from overall brand equity is, according to Li, Hua and Zhu (2021) a tool for building sustainable competitive advantage, brand loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, purchase intention and other positive customer behaviours. The willingness to pay a premium price, which is generated from overall brand equity, is an important predictor of financial profits (Buil *et al.,* 2013). Marketing and brand management academics and practitioners will be interested in this study's contributions.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1991), *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name,* The Free Press, New York.

Aaker, D. A. (1996a), *Building strong brands*, The Free Press, New York.

Aaker, D. A. (1996b), "Measuring brand equity across products and markets" *California Management Review"* Vol. 38, No. 3, pp: 102-120.

African Business Magazine (2019), *Special Report: Africa's Top 100 Banks 2019.* Available at: https://africanbusinessmagazine.com/africas-top-100-banks/special-report-africas-top-100-banks-2019/. [Retrieved on March 22, 2020].

Altigan, E., Aksoy, S. and Akinci, S. (2005), "Determinants of the brand equity: A verification approach in the beverage industry in Turkey" *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, Vol. *23*, No. 2/3, pp: 237-249.

Asamoah, E. S. (2014), "Customer based brand equity (CBBE) and the competitive performance of SMEs in Ghana" *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, Vol. 21, No.* 1, pp: 117-131.

Balaji, M. S. (2011), "Building strong service brands: The hierarchical relationship between brand equity dimensions" *Journal of Brand Management, Vol. 8, No.* 3, pp: 7-24.

Biscaia, R., Correia, A., Ross, S., Rosado, A. and Maroco, J. (2013), "Spectator-based brand equity in professional soccer" *Sport Marketing Quarterly, Vol. 22, No.* 1, pp: 20-32.

Buil, I., Martinez, E. and De Chernatony, L. (2013), "The influence of brand equity on consumer responses." *Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 30*, No, 1, pp: 62-64.

Calvo-Porral, C., Martinez-Fernandez, V. A., Juanatey-Boga, O. and Levy-Mangin, J. P. (2015), "Measuring the influence of customer-based store brand equity in the purchase intention." *Cuadernos de Gestion, Vol. 15, No.* 1, pp: 93-118.

Elabbasy, E. (2021), "The Impact of External Personnel Marketing Strategy on Brand Awareness of Customers: The Case of Technological Universities in Egypt" *International Journal of Customer Relationship Marketing and Management*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp: 1-21.

Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B. and Anderson, R. (2010), *Multivariate Data Analysis: A Global Perspective.* Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

Hussain, I., Mu, S., Mohiuddin, M., Danish, R.Q. and Sair, S.A. (2020), "Effects of Sustainable Brand Equity and Marketing Innovation on Market Performance in Hospitality Industry: Mediating Effects of Sustainable Competitive Advantage". *Sustainability*, Vol. *12, No.* 7, p: 2939.

Jia, Y. and Zhang, W. (2013), *Brand Equity Valuation: An Optimized inter-brand Model which is based on the consumer perspective.* Paper presented at the International Academic Workshop on Social Science (IAW-SC-13).

Karadeniz, M. (2010), "The importance of customer-based strategic brand equity management for enterprises" *Journal of Naval Science and Engineering*, Vol. *6*, No. 2, pp: 117-132.

Keller, K. L. (1998), *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity,* Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

Keller, K. L. (2013), *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring and managing brand equity,* 4th ed., Pearson Education International, UK.

Keller, K. L. (2020), "Leveraging secondary associations to build brand equity: theoretical perspectives and practical applications" *International Journal of Advertising, Vol. 39, No.* 4, pp: 448-465.

Kwon, Y. (2013), *The Influence of employee-based brand equity on the Health Supportive Environment and Culture: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Relation, (*PhD thesis), University of Michigan, USA.

Lewis, B. (1993), "Service Quality Measurement" *Marketing Intelligence & Planning, Vol. 11*, No. 4, pp: 4-12.

Li, M., Hua, Y. and Zhu, J. (2021), "From Interactivity to Brand Preference: The Role of Social Comparison and Perceived Value in a Virtual Brand Community" *Sustainability*, Vol. 13, pp: 625-642.

Londono, J. C., Elms, J. and Davies, K. (2016), "Conceptualising and measuring consumer-based brand–retailer–channel equity" *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, Vol. 29*, pp: 70-81.

Morgan, N. A. and Rego, L. L. (2009), "Brand portfolio strategy and firm Performance" *Journal of Marketing, Vol. 73, pp*: 59–74.

Mohan, B. C. and Sequeira, A. H. (2012), "Brand equity and business performance: Towards a conceptual framework" *Indian Journal of Marketing*, Vol. *43, No.* 2, pp: 8-10.

Mohan, B. C. and Sequeira, A. H. (2016), "The impact of customer-based brand equity on the operational performance of FMCG companies in India" *IIMB Management Review*, Vol. *7*, No. 1, pp: 1-7.

Norum, P. S. (2008), "Student Internet Purchases" *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal, Vol. 36, No.* 4, pp: 373-388.

Oliver, R. L. (1999), "Whence consumer loyalty?" *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. *63*, pp: 33-44.

Research and Markets. (2015), "United Bank for Africa Plc (UBA)" - *Financial and Strategic SWOT Analysis Review, ID: 1322043.* Retrieved from: http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/1322043/ Accessed on March 15, 2016.

Sasmita, J., and Suki, N. M. (2015), "Young consumers' insights on brand equity. International" *Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. *43*, No. 3, pp: 276 – 292.

Sadek, H., Redding, P. and Tantanwi, P. (2015), "Investigating the major marketing communication tools and their impact on building bank brand equity in the Egyptian context: A customer perspective" *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, Vol. *10, No.* 1, pp: 13-33.

Swoboda, B. Weindel, J. and Halsig, F. (2016), "Predators and effects of retail brand equity: A cross-sectoral analysis" *Journal of retailing and consumer services*, Vol. 31, pp: 265-276.

Tabachnick, B. G. and Fidell, L. S. (2012), "Using Multivariate Statistics, 6th ed., Pearson Education Limited, New York.

Tolba, A. H. and Hassan, S. S. (2009), "Linking customer-based brand equity with brand market performance: A managerial approach" *Journal of Product and Brand Management, Vol. 18*, No, 5, pp: 356-359.

Tong, X. and Hawley, J. M. (2009), "Measuring customer-based brand equity: Empirical evidence from the sportswear market in China" *Journal of Product and Brand Managemen*t, Vol. *18, No,* 4.

United Bank for Africa, (2011), *Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements for the year ended 31, December 2011.*

United Bank for Africa, (2012), *Annual Report as at December 31, 2012.*

United Bank for Africa, (2013), *Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements for the year ended 31, December 2013.*

United Bank for Africa, (2014), *Media Report*. Retrieved from:www.ubagroup.com Accessed July 10, 2016.

United Bank for Africa, (2015), *Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements for the year ended 31, December 2015*.

United Bank for Africa (2016), *Corporate Communications*. Retrieved from: www.ubagroup.com Accessed June 15, 2017.

Verma, P. (2021), "The Effect of Brand Engagement and Brand Love upon Overall Brand Equity and Purchase Intention: A Moderated – Mediated Model" *Journal of Promotion Management, Vol. 27*, No. 1, pp: 103-132.

Vomberg, A., Homburg, C. and Bournemann, T. (2015), "Talented people and strong brand: The contribution of human capital and brand equity to firm value" *Strategic Management Journal, Vol. 36, No. 13, pp: 1939-2131*.