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Organisational Branding, A Strategic Tool for Engineering Customer Satisfaction in Service Industry: A Study of Selected Banks

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Abstract-

Effective brand strategies cannot be developed without the customers in mind, hence the need to examine how brand strategies affect the behaviours of these customers to yield a good result. The objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of organisational branding on the levels of customer patronage. A descriptive and survey design was adopted for the study. The population for this study consist of customers from Wema and Zenith bank within Lagos metropolis. The questionnaire was used in eliciting information from respondents, which contained two sections. Two research questions and hypotheses were raised and tested. The data collected was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0), for frequency distribution. Further analysis was carried out using linear regression and correlation analysis. From the findings made in the study, there is a significant role played by brand identity in meeting customer expectation and there is a significant effect of brand culture on customer satisfaction. It was recommended that management should be conscious of their peculiar corporate identity once established in order to capitalize on their strengths and opportunities, as well as improve on their weaknesses and address their threats in good time and Managers should strive to create a peculiar brand culture in line with their given brand identity, as the creation of a strong brand culture will enable the staff of the organisation to deliver quality service for good customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Branding, organisational branding, customer patronage, service industry.

1.0 Introduction

Organisations try to establish standard brands in the minds of customers because it increases influence which is often evident in sales and revenue. According to Alamgir, Nasir, Shamsuddoha, Nedelea, in 2010 [1] these days, a brand is being used for separation yet in addition for justifying the choice of consumers unlike prior occasions where a brand mark was only a means to separate the output of one producer to another. Enlightened firms view branding as a pan-organisational activity that touches both functional areas and business units. This pan-organisational standpoint modifies organisational branding from an advertisement-centered activity into a strategic agenda, which gives firms a clear sense of direction and puts them at the cutting edge within the industry. The concept of organisational branding blends different areas such as core values, core business operations, marketing and business communications. Thus, organisational branding enacts a solid base for developing and delivering an attractive and coherent promise to all stakeholders. In increasingly over crowded markets, organisational branding gives a firm base for advancement and expression of its particularity. Adetiloye and Worlu in 2009 [2] proposed to the marketers of financial services within the Nigerian banking industry to advance into the global financial market with a strategy that incorporates both segmentation and globalization.

A respected brand can be a great resource or asset to a company, yet they may also hold various traps in the 21st century. Brands have gotten several critique throughout the years given the statement that brands depict an untruthful picture of themselves either as a unit or as a whole i.e. as an organisation. Hence, brands could impede the performance of organisations if not appropriately managed. Companies should of necessity draw up and run with a solid brand identity which should align with their internal processes in order to build and sustain a successful brand.

1.1 Related Studies

Daniel [3] defines brand to be a unique perception that the consumer makes of an organisation, its components or the services rendered based on his/ her experience. Brands are pivotal to organisational success today as they represent customer perception and opinion about the quality of service delivery a firm offers. The two main types of brand are personal brand and corporate brand. The corporate brand encompasses both the service brand and the product brand.

Dimensions of Organisational Branding

According to Nwachukwu, [4] an organisation can be said to be group of individuals who combine together to bring solidarity of action for the attainment of a planned corporate mission. The growth of an organisation is majorly measured on the seized market share. Organisational branding dynamics need to be well understood for companies to effectively communicate and deliver their distinct value to customers and other stakeholders.

Brand Identity: An integral element of organisational brand is its identity which is quite similar to individual identity. Identity is the integral frame of who we are as individuals, the cognizant understanding of the self-inside [5]. A whole brand identity includes a set of features that govern the brand's way of thinking and implementation of strategies. It is unique to each firm and it defines the essence of a brand and the directions to follow.

Brand Culture: Kapferer [6] refers to the brand culture of an organisation as a set of principles that nurture the brand's inspiration, and expounds on the origin of its product or service. It is formed round three areas – assumptions, values and artefacts, all of which defines its philosophy. This is in line with Shroeder's [7] opinion that we live in a branded world and cultural programs have effect on the branding process and on the meanings fashioned by the brand. In relating the subject of organisational culture, business communications and brand reputation comes to play, because an organisation's identity and core values help in forming its reputation overtime. The reputation of an organisation is often confused with its brand but it is not because a corporate brand is much more encompassing and begins with its identity as earlier noted. In actual sense an organisation's reputation is as a result of fulfillment or non-fulfillment of the brand promise experienced by its customers which could either improve or deplete the brand's value.

As recommended by Olokoyo and Ogunnaike in their study on branding of banking services as a dependent variable [8], Brand owners therefore need to ensure that they deliver high-quality services that are aligned with a compelling vision and delivered with a genuine commitment to customer satisfaction. With the common view of corporate branding as the process of fashioning and upholding a favorable reputation of the organisation we can infer that the basis of an organisation's reputation is preceded by its identity and core values. Smart brand managers understand the value of brand reputation and often use it as a means of improving the brand performance to customers.

Business Communication: Virtually all aspects of human endeavors hinge on communication, this has necessitated the development and execution of lasting coherent communication strategies that demonstrates an organisation's brand equity to its target customers. According to Kotler [9], communication is the means by which firms inform, influence and re-instill their products and brands in the minds of customers- both current and prospective ones. In a way, communication represents the "voice" of the brand and a means by which an organisation can strike a dialogue and establish relationships with customers. Just few years into the 21st century, the service sector became strengthened as organisations began to audibly assess the likely immaterial value of their products and services to that of their competitors.

Significance of Organisational Branding

In this twenty-first century, brands symbolize one of the most captivating phenomena within the corporate world and it plays a key role in the performance of employees of an organization [10]. On the corporate level, the concept of branding now enjoys wide currency as there is an increasing realization of its inherent navigational power unto a miscellany of purposes. Organisational Branding offers several benefits, with three main ones outlined below:

- Instant recognition
- The Base of Marketing Efforts
- Credibility

Organisational Branding Strategies

Organisations are essentially in existence to actualize set objectives. These objectives should form the basis for selecting a given brand strategy. Brand strategy is the process whereby an organisation pinpoints the brand elements that are required to draft a fitting and feasible brand proposal to its target group [9]. There is no universal recommendation of a brand strategy, it differs based on the peculiarity of every organisation. Hence, the key point of branding is that it is impossible to have a strategy without a clear objective. There are four major brand strategies and they include: New Branding Strategy, Line Extension Strategy, Multiple Branding Strategy and Brand Expansion Strategy. One pivotal point to note is the industry environment of the business when selecting a given brand strategy. According to Ukenna and Okechukwu [11], the constant change in the environment is concomitantly influencing the need to strengthen strategies on customer retention because it is cheaper to retain existing customers than to woo new ones.

Customer Patronage

Patronage emanates from a longing to be committed to a particular organisation due to its perceived service quality. According to Daft [12], a brand refers to the distinct manner in which an organisation positions itself in the mind of customers with the potential to influence their purchasing behaviour and achieve its set objectives. Hence, the extent to which a customer will patronize the services of an organisation first depends on how the customer perceives its physical outlook and considers it compatible with his / her personality. From the angle of the customer, a brand is seen as an accumulation of all his/her experiences, which is built at all points of contact with the organisation (Kapferer, 2014). In the 21st century, service industries particularly banks strategically compete for customers in order to increase their market share. Common factors that secure customer patronage in the 21st century:

- Word of mouth referral by family, friends and associates
- Alluring advertisements
- Perceived capability of the company to satisfy their peculiar needs
- Social status for current financial position of the customer

However, customer patronage grows according to the coherent levels i.e. Customer Expectation and Customer Satisfaction.

Influence of Organisational Branding on Existing and Potential Customers

The ability of an organisation to satisfy its customers as well as create an emotional connection with them will deliver great returns for the organisation. From the angle of the customer, a brand is referred to as the sum of all his/her experiences, and is built at all points of contact with the customer [6]. A good branding technique will guide many marketing managers in their operations and dealings with customers.

Service Industry

The service industry is made up of businesses that render services customers. It is also referred to as the tertiary sector and is the third of the classified three- economic sectors, i.e. primary/extraction, secondary/manufacturing and tertiary/service sectors. In line with a similar study by Bartol [13] we see that service surroundings play a crucial role in arousing high expectations, formalizing and coordinating management designs, distinguishing service firms from their counterparts, enabling the accomplishment of customer and employee goals, and determining the type of customer experience. According to a recent report by PwC in 2018 [14], Nigeria's service sector has the potential to generate employment for its population. The Nigerian banking industry particularly, can be said to have contributed meaningfully to the growth of her economy. Growing the service industry of any nation is a more germane concern now than in previous times and is crucial for improving the wellbeing of her citizens [15].

Theory of Symbolic Interactionism

The idea of symbolic interactionism is built on the premise that men and women have interaction with their sphere of influence and society at large to decide on the structuring of conduct. They are likely to relate with objects or happenings in accordance to the already established symbolic interpretations given by the society. The historical underpinnings of symbolic interactionism can be found in Charles Horton Cooley's theory of society and John Dewey's concept of habit. According to symbolic interactionist, the behavior of an individual is totally guided by structures with limited freedom and choice of actions [16]. Symbolic interactionism is exhibited in customer behavior with symbolic structures. In line with this view, the objects have blank significance, except the significance attached by social representatives. With a marketing approach to the subject, we can infer three sheltered assumptions of symbolic interaction [17]:

1. The customer's behaviour is as a result of the perceived reactions of other people the customer holds in high esteem.
2. The character of the customer is a function of the direct behaviours.
3. The opinions of the customers regarding the reactions of others mirror those reactions to an extent.

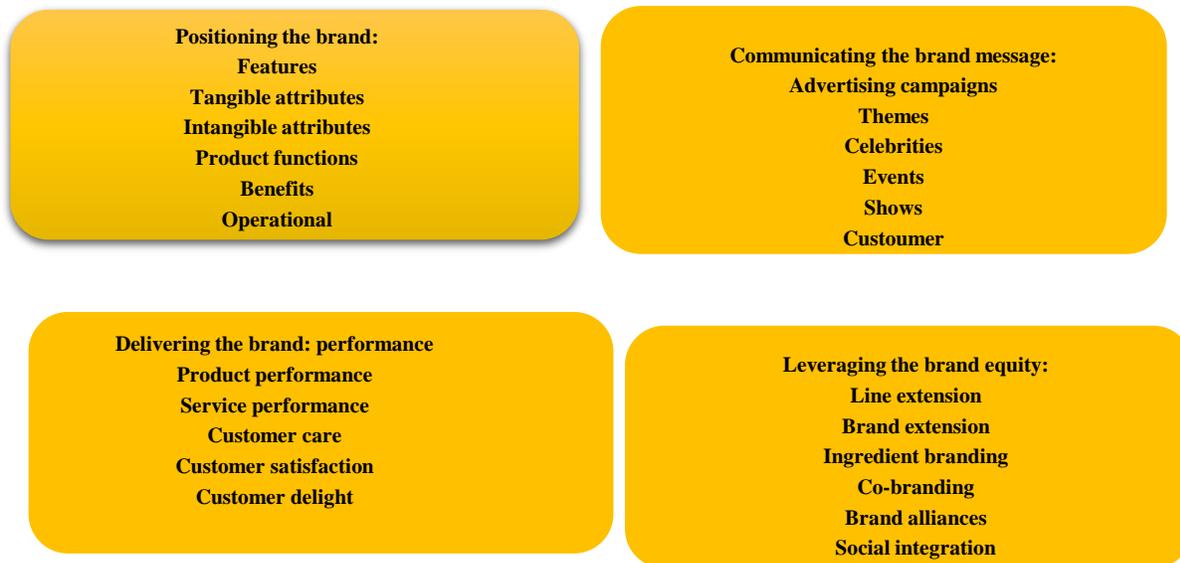
This theory applies specifically to the brand culture and brand image. The attitude and actions of the staff towards the customers in service delivery reveals the brand culture of that particular organisation.

PCDL Model: a conceptual model for building brands

Ghodeswar in 2008 [18], conducted a research on Building brand identity in competitive markets: a conceptual model. In this conceptual study, brand identity is referred to as a unique set of brand associations implying a promise to customers and includes a core and extended identity. He reviewed relevant literature by renowned scholars of the brand concept.

A brand is a distinctive identity that offers a relevant, credible and enduring promise of value associated with a product, service, or organisation and indicates the source of that promise [19]. Customers use brands as resources for the symbolic building of the self, both for social identity and self-identity. He concluded by stating that among other alternatives available to managers, brand positioning in line with the customer priorities can help in building superiority of corporate brands in the minds of customers.

The PCDL model relates specifically to brand identity as an integral part of an organisation.



Source: PCDL Model adopted from Journal on building brand identity in competitive markets, 2008.

Effect of Culture on Customer Loyalty of Target Markets

Tarhani & Janfadaei in 2017 [20], research study on Effect of Culture on Customer Loyalty of Target Markets. The authors emphatically posit that “Success in business is linked with cultural backgrounds and traditions of each nation”. According to them, certain cultures such as politeness, integrity, modesty if institutionalized can lead to individual success and collective business success. As these virtues go a long way to create loyal customers for any given organisation and nation. This means that the organisations embarking on branding must have a working knowledge of the fundamentals of the process and the best way to go about it. They must understand and skillfully apply the elements entailed in branding in order to create a positive reputation for the organisation. This research was carried out with a descriptive design using a valid questionnaire method and the result of the structural equations analysis showed a relationship between the cultural dimension, cultural beliefs and cultural values and traditions of an organisation or nation with customer loyalty at target market.

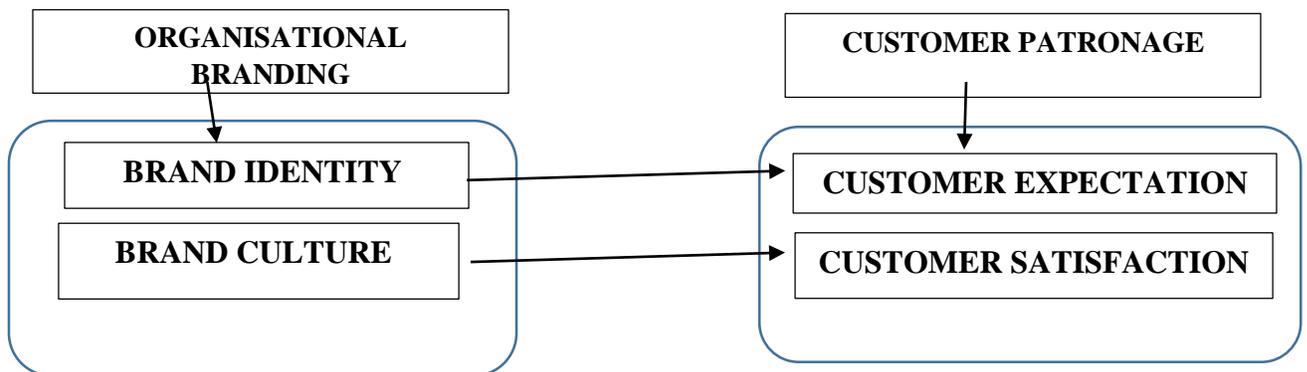
2.0 Methodology

The broad objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of organisational branding on the given levels of customer patronage. The two sub objectives involve determining the role that brand identity plays in meeting customer expectation, investigating how brand culture affects customer satisfaction. This study will benefit the banking industry by enlightening them on the brand concept and the 21st century strategic demands of branding. According to the researcher's best knowledge, very few studies have linked brand identity with customer expectation, very few studies have expounded on building brand identity within the banking sector of the Nigerian economy. As observed from the reviewed literatures, very few studies link brand culture with customer satisfaction. Other studies on culture were carried out using the structural equation model of the LISREL software, whereas this study makes good use of a user friendly application known as Statistics Packages for Social Sciences- SPSS, made specifically for the analysis of social and behavioral science research data and information.

For this study, the research design was descriptive, the quantitative method was used involving survey streamlined to customers of selected banks because it is in line with the subject matter, which is customer patronage. The selected banks used for the study was Wema Bank and Zenith Bank. Finally, in determining the result of the respondents' view, regression and correlation analysis was used. Primary data was used because it consists of original information for specific purpose of study. The secondary information sources consulted for this study include online journals, previous similar research work consulted from Covenant University Library.

The geographical location for this study is streamlined to the Lagos metropolis because it currently stands as the commercial nerve center of Nigeria. Furthermore, the industry scope is centered on services, precisely banking service and it was selected because it gives a good measurement of branding beyond a tangible product to an intangible yet effective element in ensuring increased customer-patronage for organisations.

2.1 Organisational Branding Model Development



3.0 Results and Discussion

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of organisational branding on the levels of customer patronage. In achieving this objective, four sub objectives and research questions were raised and a 5-point likert scale was raised to collate data from respondents in answering the research questions. It different responses are analyzed in the tables below:

3.1 Descriptive Summary Analysis of Results on Role of Brand Identity and Customer Expectation:

RQ One: What role does brand identity play in meeting customer expectation?

3.2 Descriptive Summary Analysis of Results on Role of Brand Culture and Customer Satisfaction:

RQ Two: How does brand culture affect customer satisfaction?

Table 3.1

Brand Identity		Frequency	Percentage
As a customer of this bank, I know about its brand identity (such as its vision/mission/core values)	Strongly disagree	8	1.7
	Disagree	32	6.7
	Indifferent	60	12.5
	Agree	132	27.5
	Strongly agree	248	51.7
	Total	480	100.0
I have seen a positive correlation of my bank's core values with their service delivery style	Strongly disagree	8	1.7
	Disagree	32	6.7
	Indifferent	56	11.7
	Agree	184	38.3
	Strongly agree	200	41.7
	Total	480	100.0
My bank gives enough information about herself on its website	Strongly disagree	8	1.7
	Indifferent	28	5.8
	Agree	228	47.5
	Strongly agree	216	45.0
	Total	480	100.0
Customer Expectation		Frequency	Percentage
At my first contact/ transaction with this bank my expectations were met	Strongly disagree	4	.8
	Disagree	48	10.0
	Indifferent	32	6.7
	Agree	216	45.0
	Strongly agree	180	37.5
	Total	480	100.0
My bank has made a good effort to consistently deliver their brand promise to me in particular	Strongly disagree	4	.8
	Disagree	52	10.8
	Indifferent	28	5.8
	Agree	256	53.3
	Strongly agree	140	29.2
	Total	480	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Interpretation:

Table 3.1 shows that 79.2%(n=380) of the total respondents agreed to the first item while 8.4% (n=40) disagreed and 12.5%(n=60) of the total respondents were indifferent in their views. Hence, majority of the customer of the bank, know about its brand identity (such as its vision/mission/core values).

In addition, 80%(n=384) of the respondents agreed to the second item, 8.4% (n=40) disagreed and 11.7%(n=56) were indifferent. Hence, majority of the bank customers have seen a positive correlation of their bank's core values with its service delivery style.

Further still the table shows that 92.5% (n=101) of the respondents agreed to the third item, 1.7% (n=8) disagreed and 5.8% (n=28) were indifferent. Hence majority of the respondents considers the information of their bank on its website sufficient.

The first item on Customer Expectation in table above shows a total of 82.5% (n=396) of the respondent agreed, while a total of 10.8% (n=52) disagreed and the remaining 6.7% (n=32) were indifferent. Hence majority of customers had their expectations met at their first contact with the bank.

On the second item within table, 82.5% (n=396) of the respondents agreed both strongly and casually, while 11.6% (n=56) disagreed and 5.8% (n=28) were indifferent. Hence most customers admit that their bank has made a good effort to consistently deliver their brand promise to them particularly.

Test of Hypothesis:

Q1: What role does brand identity play in meeting customer expectation?

H₀: There is no significant role played by brand identity in meeting customer expectation

Table 3.1b: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.590 ^a	.348	.347	1.40984

The model summary above revealed that there is relationship between brand identity and customer expectation at $r=0.590^a$, R-Square is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable, which can be predicted from the independent variable. This value indicated that there is variance of 0.348% between informative advert and sales volume. Brand identity was found making significant contributions to customer expectation (sig=0.000). Based on the statistical results, the relationship is found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance ($P \leq 0.1, = 0.590$).

Table 3.2

Brand Culture		Frequency	Percentage
There is a good reflection of my bank's brand culture across its various branches	Disagree	12	2.5
	Indifferent	24	5.0
	Agree	296	61.7
	Strongly agree	148	30.8
	Total	480	100.0
Whenever I come into my bank, I receive hospitable attention from the staff beginning with the security	Strongly disagree	4	.8
	Disagree	12	2.5
	Indifferent	28	5.8
	Agree	284	59.2
	Strongly agree	152	31.7
	Total	480	100.0
Carrying out transactions within the banking hall of my bank gives me good vibes	Disagree	32	6.7
	Indifferent	52	10.8
	Agree	288	60.0
	Strongly agree	108	22.5
	Total	480	100.0
Customer Satisfaction		Frequency	Percentage
The tellers in my main transacting branch are smart in their dealings with customers	Disagree	8	1.7
	Indifferent	28	5.8
	Agree	280	58.3
	Strongly agree	164	34.2
	Total	480	100.0
At the customer service unit in my main transacting branch, my issues are well resolved	Strongly disagree	4	.8
	Disagree	28	5.8
	Indifferent	28	5.8
	Agree	256	53.3
	Strongly agree	164	34.1

	Total	480	100.0
I have also had unpleasant experience(s) in my dealings with this bank	Strongly disagree	8	1.7
	Disagree	112	23.3
	Indifferent	100	20.8
	Agree	132	27.5
	Strongly agree	128	26.7
	Total	480	100.0
I am satisfied with my bank's online banking service	Strongly disagree	20	4.2
	Disagree	28	5.8
	Indifferent	68	14.2
	Agree	216	45.0
	Strongly agree	148	30.8
	Total	480	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Interpretation:

Table 3.2 shows that 92.5% (n=444) of the respondents agreed to the first item, while 2.5% (n=12) disagreed and 5% (n=24) of the respondents were indifferent. Hence there is a good reflection of each bank's brand culture across its various branches.

In addition, the table shows that 90.9% (n=436) of the respondents agreed to the second item, 3.3% (n=16) disagreed and 5.8% (n=28) were indifferent. Therefore, whenever majorly of customers come into the bank, they receive hospitable attention from the staff of the bank beginning with the security.

For the third item, the table shows that 82.5% (n=396) of the respondents agree while 6.7% (n=32) were of contrary opinion and 10.8% (n=52) were indifferent. In conclusion, majority of customers get good vibes when transacting within the banking hall of their respective banks.

On Customer Satisfaction, table above shows that a total of 92.5% (n=444) respondents agreed, 1.7% (n=8) of the respondents disagreed and while 5.8% (n=28) were indifferent. Hence majority of customers affirm that the tellers in their main transacting branch are smart in their dealings with them.

The second item on customer satisfaction shows that a total of 87.4% (n=420) agree, 6.6% (n=32) disagreed and 5.8% (n=28) of respondents were indifferent. Hence, for most customers their banking issues are well resolved by the customer service unit of their respective banks.

From the third item within this section, we see that 54.2% (n=260) of the respondents agree, 25% (n=120) had a contrary opinion and the other 20.8% (n=100) were indifferent.

Hence more than half of customers claim to have had unpleasant experience(s) in their dealings with their respective banks.

The last item in the table shows that 75.8% (n=364) of the respondents agree, 10% (n=48) are disagree and the remaining 14.2% (n=17) were indifferent. Therefore, majority of customers are satisfied with the online banking service of their respective banks.

Test of Hypothesis

Q2: How does brand culture affect customer satisfaction?

H₀: There is no significant effect of brand culture on customer satisfaction

Table 3.2b: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.191 ^a	.037	.035	4.05007

a. Predictors: (Constant), BRAND CULTURE

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The model summary above revealed that there is relationship between brand culture and customer satisfaction at $r=.191^a$, R-Square is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable, which can be predicted from the independent variable. This value indicated that there is variance of 0.037% between informative advert and sales volume.

From the results, the model in this table is statistically significant (Sig =.000) and hence the null hypothesis should be rejected. Therefore, there is a significant role played by brand culture in customer satisfaction at $F = 18.167$. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Brand culture was found making significant contributions to customer satisfaction (sig=0.000). Based on the statistical results, the relationship is found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance ($P \leq 0.1, = 0.191$).

3.3 Discussion of the Findings

In determining the role that brand identity plays in meeting customer expectation, the five questions raised within this section of the study were answered majorly in the affirmative. Also, from the regression analysis used, it is evident that there is a significant role played by brand identity in meeting customer expectation.

In investigating how brand culture affects customer satisfaction, the seven questions raised within this section of the study were answered majorly in the affirmative. From the regression analysis used, it is evident that there is a significant effect of brand culture on customer satisfaction.

The study adopted two theories relating to the brand concept as it relates to customers. The followings are the findings: The symbolic interactionism theory establishes that the behaviour of an individual is largely determined by societal frameworks. Its main assumption is that the customer’s personality depends on perceiving reactions of others that are important for the customer. Over time people consciously/ subconsciously create a reality covering the moral rules, ethics, attitudes and perceptions by socially interacting with one another. This theory is relevant to the concept of branding and customer patronage it relays the impact of brand reputation on the purchase behaviour of a group of friends or associates and it helps customers express themselves to their social circle based on their formed perceptions of a given brand.

The PCDL Model theory for building brands posits that an organisation can successfully build a strong brand identity only by following the given model in a sequential order. It starts with positioning of the brand in the minds of its target audience, communicating the brand message, delivering the brand performance declaring the fact that operational standards give the target customers an assurance that the brand promise will be delivered to them; lastly leveraging the brand equity. This four coherent steps are relevant to the companies because it reveals strategies for a good brand positioning in ensuring a good brand performance within a given market.

All of these findings are central to the view of Dowling (2014), who states that Proper brand managers understand the value of strategic reputation management as a pivotal tool that transcends beyond business communicating, to a brilliant way of appraising, improving and monitoring the perceived brand performance and experiences by customers.

3.4 Summarized Profile of Selected Banks

Wema Bank: Wema Bank Plc is a Nigeria's longest surviving indigenous commercial bank licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria and was established on May 2, 1945.

Zenith Bank: Zenith Bank is a Nigerian multinational financial services provider. It was established in May 1990 and licensed as a commercial bank by the Central Bank of Nigeria.

4. Conclusion

A solidified corporate personality that is consistent with the organisation's values and drives appropriate employee behaviours will deliver sustainable brand success. As such, an organisation's brand personality traits as seen by customers and the general public should be aligned with its internally established values.

This research admits that incorporating organisational branding asides being a rigorous internal process, demands a significant financial input, whatever financial demands guarantees great returns on the long-run. The returns of a solid investment in organisational branding is quantified with improved productivity, growth of customer base and increased profitability.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made with respect to the findings of the study;

Managers should be conscious of their peculiar corporate identity once established in order to capitalize on their strengths and opportunities, as well as improve on their weaknesses and address their threats in good time.

Managers should strive to create a peculiar brand culture in line with their given brand identity. Creating a strong brand culture will enable the staff of the organisation to deliver quality service for a good customer satisfaction.

Managers should ensure a coherent and consistent corporate brand projection from inside-out in order to establish a good brand reputation. This can be done through effective business communications because it wheels virtually all given branding processes. In all Organisational branding is a great management tool that service companies should employ in ensuring sustained customer patronage.

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