CORPORATE BRANDING AS A STRATEGIC COMPETITIVE TOOL FOR INDIGENOUS BANKS IN GHANA – A CASE STUDY OF UT BANK

BY

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(MARKETING OPTION) DEGREE

JUNE 2014
DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this work is the result of my own research and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in the work have been fully acknowledged.

I bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings.

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DATE

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the university.

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(SUPERVISOR)

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DR.BEDMAN NARTEH                                                                                      DATE
(SUPERVISOR)
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late parents Andrews Osei Kofi and Afua Brayie for the values that they instilled in me, and to my dear wife Ellen Sarfo Kantanka.

And above all to God, the ever present help in my life. Everything has been possible because of Him and from the bottom of my heart I say Glory and Honour be unto HIM. I am very grateful!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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To my classmates especially, Lauretta Tetteh who showed a lot interest in how I was doing with my work and Adam Dayawu for the many Assistance that he offered me.

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Also the staff of Marketing and Customer Management Department, University of Ghana Business School (UGBS) especially Auntie Salome.

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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BANK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMA</td>
<td>AMERICAN ASSOCIATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMALBANK</td>
<td>AMALGAMATED BANK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATM</td>
<td>AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2B</td>
<td>BUSINESS TO BUSINESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBG</td>
<td>BARCLAYS BANK OF GHANA LIMITED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>BANK OF CREDIT AND COMMERCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHC</td>
<td>BANK FOR HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAL</td>
<td>CAL MERCHANT BANK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIMG</td>
<td>CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF MARKETING GHANA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op</td>
<td>GHANA CORPORATIVE BANK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMD</td>
<td>DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECO</td>
<td>ECOBANK</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAMB</td>
<td>FIRST ATLANTIC MERCHANT BANK</td>
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<td>FINSAP I</td>
<td>FINANCIAL SECTOR ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME I</td>
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<td>FINSAP II</td>
<td>FINANCIAL SECTOR ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME II</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCB</td>
<td>GHANA COMMERCIAL BANK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIPC</td>
<td>GHANA INVESTMENT PROMOTION SECTOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFC BANK</td>
<td>HOME FINANCE COMPANY BANK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINE</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICB</td>
<td>INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL BANK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFC</td>
<td>INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION</td>
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<td>IPO</td>
<td>INITIAL PUBLIC OFFER</td>
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<td>MBG</td>
<td>MERCHANTS BANK OF GHANA LIMITED</td>
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<td>METRO</td>
<td>METROPOLITAN ALLIED BANK</td>
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<td>NIB</td>
<td>NATIONAL INVESTMENT BANK</td>
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<td>NPART</td>
<td>NON-PERFORMING ASSETS RECOVERY TRUST</td>
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<td>PBL</td>
<td>PRUDENTIAL BANK LIMITED</td>
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<td>SCB</td>
<td>STANDARD CHARTERED BANK</td>
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<tr>
<td>SG-SSB</td>
<td>SOCIETE GENERAL-SOCIAL SECURITY BANK</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE</td>
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<td>SSB</td>
<td>SOCIAL SECURITY BANK</td>
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<tr>
<td>TTB</td>
<td>THE TRUST BANK</td>
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<td>UB</td>
<td>UNIVERSAL BANK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unibank</td>
<td>UNITED BANK</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>UNITED NATIONS WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td>UNIFORM RESOURCE LOCATER</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>UNITED STATES OF AMERICA</td>
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<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION</td>
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ABSTRACT

In Ghana, the banking industry presents one of the most challenging industries. Since 2005, Ghana has seen a phenomenal increase in the number of foreign banks coming into the country especially from Nigeria because of the financial sector reform program embarked upon by the Bank of Ghana. Presently, there are about thirty (30) banks in Ghana out of which seventeen (17) indigenous banks. Whilst there is still the opportunity to extend banking services to the unbanked, banks that do not become sensitive to the changing competitive environment will go under. Thus, the astute management of bank and costumers who patronize same banking services has become very important in Ghana’s banking sector. This study however sought to explore the viability of corporate branding as a strategy to stay competitive. The study employed qualitative research methodology dwelling on single case design. UT Bank was selected as the case firm for the study because the bank seems to be one of the prolific indigenous banks in Ghana to implement and deploy an effective corporate branding strategy to reap the benefits identified in the literature and to use it as competitive tool in the banking industry. The findings further indicate that the mission statement of an organization is a driving force in the implementation of corporate branding. The management needs to be sensitive to the issue of how the market is getting more and more complex. With the Bank of Ghana minimum capital requirement, some local banks have received capital injection from foreign investors. The influx of these investors will mean new managerial competencies and ideas that could change the competitive nature of the market. The internal focus of the bank in their branding strategy formulation is good and has been beneficial, but management must begin to be more sensitive to the external environment to avert surprises and stay competitive.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter introduces the backgrounds to the study. It also brings to light the research problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, research gap, and scope of the study as well as chapter disposition of the entire research.

1.1 Background to the Study

“Differentiating and communicating your product’s unique value to your slice of the global marketplace is becoming more difficult and expensive every day. And with the rising costs of R&D and development necessary to create products that really do offer something exclusive and different, just one expensive, ineffective, branding or marketing campaign can mean death. But there is a way for companies to stack the deck in their favor – have a very strong corporate brand.” Scott D. White.

Allan(1996) associates the surge of corporate branding to the rising cost of advertising, retailer power, product fragmentation, new product development, cost efficiencies, and consumers’ expectations of good corporate credentials (Yu Xie and Boggs, 2006). It is very easy to equip a new product or service with an immediate reliability and significance that you could not have done with a product-centered marketing campaign. And this is precisely the reason it is important for a business that is very serious in remaining competitive in the market place to build and protect a good corporate brand. For example, consumers associate certain countries with the
best products: French wine, Italian sports cars, Swiss watches. Thus competitive products coming from elsewhere are perceived to be of lower quality. And that will be the reason why you would not buy a Venezuelan chocolate but rather go for the one from Belgium or Switzerland even though El Rey in Venezuela produces some of the best chocolates in the world. Another example is the Apple brand that offers a lot of products that have cutting edge design and innovation brand equities because of their corporate brand strategy. There are other examples like Microsoft, Intel, and Mercedes Benz among others who leverage their corporate brands to gain competitive advantage.

A corporate brand can be regarded as the sum of the corporation’s marketing efforts to present a controlled representation of the corporation’s value system and identity (ind, 1997; Balmer, 2001). It differs from a product brand in its strategic focus, and its implementation which combines corporate strategy, corporate communications and corporate culture (Balmer, 1995). Corporate branding also refers to the strategy in which brand and corporate name is the same (de Chernatony, 1977).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM / RESEARCH GAP

Several studies have examined the concept of branding in marketing, with most studies dominantly focusing on the product brand with lesser attention to the corporate brand. This high research concentration on product branding is due demonstrably to the direct visibility of product features in marketing programs and the practical relevance of product related features and
attributes in overall effective and strategic marketing activities. Recently however, due to fast product innovation that has reduced leverages firms gain on products, increased cost associated with product-related services, and customer diminishing loyalty to product brands which has become characteristic of today’s marketplace has led to corporate becoming a strategic marketing tool (Bogg and Xie 2006). Thus, research interest has shifted strongly in favor of corporate branding as both an alternative and complementary to product branding towards gaining competitiveness (Morsing and Kristensen, 2001). This development has led to corporate branding generating interest among both practitioners and academics alike. According to Ward and Lee (2000) firms are gradually shifting away from reliance on product brands to focusing on corporate brands. Moreover, Hatch and Schultz (2003) in another study also found that firms that are successful at establishing a corporate brand are perceived to be more competitive than firms relying on product branding in fragmented markets created by globalization. Similarly, other scholars have also argued that corporate branding has begun to gain high attention on the corporate agenda and is beginning to be increasingly recognized as a strategic tool that can generate and support value creation (Urde, 1999; Balmer, 1999; Macrae, 1999). Also, (Booker, 2002) predicts that globalization, interconnected markets, affiliations and associations will provide an impetus for the building of strong corporate brands in the coming years. In addition, Daffey and Abratt (2002) have stated that the acquisition of a favorable corporate brand is one of the strategic approaches to competitiveness.

Despite the paradigm shift from product to corporate branding, studies on corporate branding have been largely conceptual in nature (Xie and Boggs). Limited empirical investigation exists of the actual branding process and the elements of that process that enables an organization to fully develop a strong corporate brand. As a result, it is difficult to fully appreciate the empirical
relevance of building corporate brand. Yet, at the purely conceptual level, it emerged that establishing successful corporate brand management practices relies on the identification of two factors. First is the mix of variables that comprise the corporate brand. And secondly, the development of a brand management system for understanding the process of direction and control for the firm is needed.

Consequent to the limitation of previous studies on corporate branding being largely conceptual, yet providing critical process and elements to building corporate brand, this study situates itself by linking these merits of the conceptual studies and to an empirical study. This study therefore examines the conceptual process and key elements in building corporate brand within a fast emerging financial institution in a developing country environment. Thus, this study focuses on UT Bank in Ghana to determine the empirical relevance and applicability of the conceptual process of building its corporate brand and the utility of the elements of corporate branding to its corporate branding process.

In Ghana, the banking industry presents one of the most challenging industries. Since 2005, Ghana has seen a phenomenal increase in the number of foreign banks coming into the country especially from Nigeria because of the financial sector reform programme embarked upon by the Bank of Ghana. Presently, there are about 30 banks in Ghana out of which fifteen are indigenous banks. Whilst there is still the opportunity to extend banking services to a lot more people, the industry is so competitive that any bank that does not stay competitive will go under. Thus, the astute management of bank and the customers who patronize same, have become very important in Ghana’s banking sector (Hinson et al, 2010). ‘Ghana simply has too many banks’ in a statement by Public Affairs Dept., World Bank, Accra (www.myjoyonline, August 2009).
Interestingly, the banking sector is dominated by foreign banks that are well established, have stronger brands and are well capitalized with better international exposure. Also, with the changing banking regulations including the change in their capital requirement (sixty million Cedi), we will continue to see acquisitions and mergers leading to consolidations and a more competitive industry. Indigenous banks that will survive will therefore have to rethink their marketing strategy. From the marketing point of view, compelling reasons exist for Ghanaian indigenous banks to niche and build very strong corporate brands to benefit from these advantages:

• Empower and direct a further development of an already large portfolio

• Improved efficiency in budgeting - companies can leverage a single corporate branding strategy to do the work of many expensive marketing campaigns for separate products

• To use as a reliable indicator of the company’s financial value. Eg UT and its floatation on the stock exchange

• To give value and personality to company products as well as a manifestation of the company’s vision, values and culture

• Enhances smooth acquisitions and mergers.
1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To seek to establish that corporate branding is an effective tool for strategically dealing with an overcrowded market, and the overexposed marketing communications in the banking industry in Ghana

- To explore how corporate branding can be implemented by an indigenous Ghanaian bank

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research will seek to address the following questions:

- What branding strategy should indigenous banks deploy to stay competitive?

- How can some of the best practices be adopted by our local banks to consolidate their brands?

1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY

The research will focus on the Ghanaian banking industry and identify how indigenous banks are competing in the face of more established and stronger brands. It will also identify best practices in corporate branding around the world and the benefits that accrue to companies who apply them. The research will then look at the Ghanaian environment and explore how some of these best practices can be employed by indigenous banks to compete in the Ghanaian banking industry.
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Even though there are some studies on corporate branding and corporate image, I am yet to come across a study that links strategy to corporate branding and its application by indigenous banks as a competitive strategy in the face of competition from foreign banks that have strong brands backed by stronger financial resources. This study could therefore be a pioneering one that will engender interest in the need to take the issue of building strong corporate brands to the board room.

It will also contribute to academic work on corporate branding and even generate further interest in academia for further research to be done in that particular area.

It could also be a good resource for the banks especially the indigenous ones, and hence to local businesses.

1.7 RESEARCH APPROACH

Case study will be employed in this study. In his book, Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design (2007) John W. Creswell defines case study as a type of design in ‘qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (eg., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports)’. The banking industry in Ghana represents a bounded system and the means of collecting data is as identified by John Creswell.
1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organized into six chapters:

- Chapter 1 - Introduction and background study
- Chapter 2 - Existing literature
- Chapter 3 - Context of the study
- Chapter 4 - Research methodology
- Chapter 5 - Data analysis and discussions of findings
- Chapter 6 - Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation of this study was the dilemma of either selecting a single or multiple cases for study. Whilst a single study may have the limitation of general applicability because of differences in context, a multiple case may also not give the depth required (Creswell, 2007). This challenge however was dealt with when the researcher critically established the rational for the selection of boundaries that adequately surrounded the case (Cresswell, 2007).

The next limitation was access to adequate information since UT Bank was reluctant to relinquish private or confidential information. Explaining the benefits that could accrue to the organization, thus alleviated their fear and access was gained.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature to the study. The chapter looks at the concept of corporate branding and the mix of variables that comprise the corporate brand (corporate image, corporate personality, corporate identity etc), the need for banks to have a holistic view of corporate branding and to appreciate the need for the establishment of successful corporate brand management practices. The chapter also identifies how a strong corporate brand is very crucial in delivering value to the different stakeholders of banks.

2.1 What is a Brand?

Within the field of marketing, there are a number of generally accepted definitions of a brand (Knox, 2000) though conceptual terminology associated with branding is both diverse and complex (Upshaw, 1995). According to Wood (2000), the different approaches to defining the brand construct partly stem (originate) from differing philosophical viewpoints such as product-plus and holistic branding and from the stakeholder perspective, that is, a brand may be defined from the consumers’ perspective and/or from the brand owner’s perspective. Furthermore, Wood (2000) asserts that brands are sometimes defined in terms of their purpose or described by their characteristics.
The American Marketing Association (AMA) (2004) defines a brand as ‘a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies on sellers food or service as distinct from those of other sellers.’ Similarly Aaker (1991) described a brand as “a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as logo, trademark or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or group and to differentiate those goods or services from competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical.” (p.7). In their view, Hankinson and Cowking (1993) argue that a brand can be described as “a product or service made distinctive by positioning relative to the competition and by its personality, which comprises a unique combination of functional attributes and symbolic values.” (p. 10). To buttress Hankinson and Cowking’s proposal, de Chernatony and McDonald (2010) posit that a brand can be identified as a cluster of functional and emotional values that enables organizations to make a promise about a unique and welcomed experience” (p.31). The particular value of the various supply-driven, product-oriented definitions of a brand is that it focuses on a fundamental brand purpose which is differentiation (Wood, 2000), partly because it appears brands operate in a keenly competitive environment where differentiation is critical. Even where monopolies exist, Wood (2000) is of the view that companies may choose to position their brand(s) with a view to future competition. The second significant feature of this product’s centred definition is that it takes the corporate perspective rather than emphasizing consumer benefits. It is in this regard that the AA definition and the others that have followed this approach have been criticized for being too product-oriented with emphasis on visual features as differentiating mechanisms (Arnold, 1992; Crainer, 1995). According to Pike (2007), it is important to recognize that a brand is much more than simply the presentation of such symbols in promotions. Therefore Aaker (1991) suggested that a
brand should be viewed from both demand and supply perspectives. In other words, a brand should be defined based on its product and customer orientation.

Taking a cue from Aaker’s proposal, Ambler (1992) takes a consumer-oriented approach (demand side approach) to defining a brand as ‘the promise of the bundle of attributes that someone buys and provides satisfaction…. The attributes that make up a brand be it real or illusory, rational or emotional, tangible or invisible.’ In harmony with Ambler’s definition of a brand, Simeon (2006) described a brand as “a consistent group of characters, images or emotions that consumers recall or experience when they think of a special symbol, product, service, organization or location” (p.464). Contributing to the discourse for a customer-oriented definition of a brand, Wood (2000) asserts that, these attributes emanate from all elements of the marketing mix and all the brand’s product lines. Furthermore, the attributes of a brand are created using the marketing mix and are subject to interpretation by the consumer (Wood, 2000). Though highly subjective, they are essentially what are created through brand description. In contrast, Hankinson (2004) described the brand as a “relational brand network,” in which the brand is represented by the core brand and supported by brand relationships, consumers, primary service, infrastructure and media that enhance reality and brand experience (Wilkins et al, 2008).

Defining a brand from a holistic approach, Kapferer (2004) identifies a brand as ‘a name with power to influence buyers. Its source of influence is derived from mental associations and relationships a brand builds overtime among customers and stakeholders”.

Arguing from the perspective of the complex nature of the brand construct, de Chernatomy and Riley (1998) defined a brand as “a complex multidimensional construct whereby managers augment products and services with values and this facilitates the process by which consumers
confidently recognize and appreciate these values” (p. 436) It appears this definition encapsulates the various descriptions of a brand but incorporates a tinge of managerial oversight responsibility aimed at delivering a product or service with the “extra-added value”, which a satisfied customer is ‘willing to pay for’ (Davis, 1995).

According to Wood (2000) many other definitions and descriptions focus on the methods used to achieve differentiation and/or emphasize the benefits the customer derives from purchasing brands. These include (inter alia) definitions and descriptions that emphasize brands as an image in the minds (Keller, 1993), brand personality (Goodyear, 1993; Aaker, 1996), brands as value systems (Sheth et al, 1991) and brands as added value (de Chernratory and McDonald, 1992; Murphy, 1992; Wolfe, 1993; Doyle, 1994). However, Brown (1992) takes a broad approach to these concepts in defining a brand. Further, McGnally et al (1999) identified the post-modern approaches of “brand as company” (p. 2) and “brand as policy” (p.3): disseminating the dependence of applying branding concepts to consumer products to include all physical entities, hence the expanding application of branding to include corporation and destinations among others. The United Kingdom Chartered Institute of Marketing goes beyond the static definition of AA and links the product or service with the reaction it inspires in consumers as “the set of physical attributes of a product or service, together with the beliefs and expectations surrounding it - a unique combination which the name or logo of the product or service should evoke in the mind of the audience.”

A more dynamic definition offered by the UNWTO is that a brand is a dynamic relationship between the product and consumers. According to the authors, importantly the definition has
shifted from being defined by the producer or manufacturer to being defined by the consumer. This indicates that a brand is much more about how the consumer perceives the product, not what the manufacturer produces or the product a country creates. Further in their view, it is about the promise of an experience that a potential visitor anticipates, noting that it is therefore crucial for brand owners, or destinations to understand their target audience so that they can develop this dynamic relationship with their most valuable groups of consumers.

### 2.1.1 Branding

According to Keller (1998) the word “brand” is derived from the old Norse word “brandr”, which means to burn. Brands were used as a means by which livestock owners mark their animals to identify them. The origins of branding can be traced to the ancient civilisation of the Greeks and Romans and the concept has evolved over the years covering different epochs (Keller, 1993, 2003; Sarkar and Singh, 2005). This has resulted in different eras of focus such as the era of national manufacturer brands of the 1860s-1914 to the establishment of brand management standards from 1946 to the 1980s (Low and Fullerton, 1994). A brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Keller, 2003). Several views on brand management have been advanced by scholars in academia and practitioners which focus on how firms can build brand equity (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003).
Erstwhile studies have observed branding in emerging markets. Xie and Boggs (2006) revealed that these studies concentrate on Asia, mostly China, although they treat the market as one homogenous entity and in the process tend to focus on the high-income segments of these volatile markets (Jones, 2004; Temporal, 2005; Kumar et al., 2007; Ni and Wan, 2008; Jun et al., 2008; Magnusson et al., 2008; Guzman and Paswan, 2009). These studies cover broad issues such as branding for survival in Asia, emergence of cultural brands from emerging markets, branding strategy for emerging market firms entering developed markets and branding and culture Xie and Boggs (2006). D’ Andrea (2006) found that BOP consumers in South America had a strong preference for branded goods and purchased them when they could afford them because despite the price premium, branded goods were perceived as offering backing, confidence and quality. He found that brand loyalty (i.e. purchasing as opposed to intent) to be highest for staples like cooking oil and rice, followed by aspirational goods like soft drinks and self-esteem items such as soap powder.

Other studies by Chikweche and Fletcher (2010) and Fletcher (2006) have looked at understanding factors that influence purchase decision in subsistence markets, whilst Viswanathan et al. (2008, 2010) also study the behaviour of consumers and firms in subsistence markets. de Abreu Filo et al. (2003) argued that companies perform best in the vast low-income segment by adopting branding strategies that often run counter to established practice in more advanced regions. Peterson (2009), claims that a well-known brand name appeals to all groups in a market because it stands for something consistent and Colyer, (2005) also claims that brands should be geared towards the income level of the target group of customers. Urde (2003) asserts
that there are four basic “brand architectures”; available to firms: corporate, product, corporate-and-product (with dominant use of the corporate brand) product-and-corporate (with dominant use of product brands). Some firms (such as IBM) almost exclusively emphasize their corporate brand while others (such as Procter & Gamble) focus strategy on their product brands. Others actively deploy corporate branding and product branding simultaneously, shifting their emphasis between the product and the corporation in different markets and contexts. For example, Nestle markets its products under the master corporate brand but gives equal prominence to such individual brand names as Carnation, Nescafe, Nestea, Maggi, Perrier and San Pellegrino. Likewise, Intel promotes both its corporate brand and its Pentium and Celeron product brands.

**2.1.2 The Role of Brands**

“At the heart of every branding effort, there has to be a kernel of truth. The beauty of great branding is its ability to identify that truth, tell its story, make it look good and build it into a valuable, emotional bond between the producer and customer”, (Healey, 2008, p. 9). A true brand exists as a collection of enduring intangible values in the mind of the user (Southgate, 1994) but the resources, processes and management energy necessary to create the values are integrated into the overall marketing effort of the brand owner (Rubinstein, 1996). Attesting to this assertion, Keller and Kotler (2008) and Gartner (2002) point out that brands play different but complementary roles for both the producer and the consumer.
**Consumer**

**Identification:** To consumers, (which encompasses both individuals and organizations) brands identify the source or maker of a product and allow consumers to assign responsibility to a particular manufacturer or distributor Keller, (2008). For example, Rolex Watches can be traced to Switzerland.

**Simplification:** Because of past experiences with a product and its marketing programme, brand take on special meaning to consumers enabling them to find out which brands most satisfy their needs and wants (Keller, 2008). Thus, a shorthand device, that makes it simpler for customer’s product decisions.

**Search cost reducer:** According to Keller (2008), if a consumer recognizes a brand and have some knowledge about it, then they would not be compelled to indulge in a lot of additional thought or processing of information to make a product decision. The brand allows consumers to lower the search for products both internally (in terms of how much they have to think) and externally (in terms of how much they have to look around). Furthermore, based on what they already know about the brand – its quality and product characteristics among others – consumers can make assumptions and form reasonable expectations about what they may not know about the brand (Keller, 2008).

**Promise, bond or pact with the maker of product:** A brand represents a bond or pact between the brand owner and the consumer due to the meaning imbued in the brand (Kapferer, 1997; Keller, 2008). Consumers offer their trust and loyalty to a brand with an inherent understanding that the brand will perform, providing them with a consistent product and appropriate pricing,
promotion and above all distribution programs that make the product easily accessible (Feldwick, 2002; Keller, 2008; Healey, 2008).

**Symbolic device and communicators:** In addition, brands are often used as symbolic devices and non-verbal communication tools allowing consumers to project their self-image. They also grant consumers a sense of affirmation and entry into an imaginary community of shared values, associated with certain types of people and thus reflect different values and traits (Healey, 2008; Keller, 2008; Urde, 1997). Keller (2008) and Clarke (2000) further noted that consuming such products is a means by which consumers can communicate to others or even to themselves, the type of person they are or would like to be. Certain brands carry social value or social meaning (Clarke (2000)) and as described by de Chernatony (1993), “consumers enrobe themselves with brands, partly for what they do, but more for what they help express about their emotions, personalities and roles.”

**Signal of quality:** Power brands enable consumers to shop with world of products and services. They offer consumers an assurance of quality, and convey a perception of greater worth (Simeos and Dibb, 2001; Healey, 2008).

**Risk reduction:** Brands can reduce customer’s perceived risks in product decisions (Simeos and Dibb, 2001). Keller (2008) argued that consumers may perceive many different types of risks in burying and consuming a production including functional, physical, financial, social, psychological and time risks among others. Furthermore, one way to handle these risks is to buy well-known brands, especially those with which consumers are familiar with and have had favorable past experience with, thus making brand a significant risk-handling device (Keller, 2008).
Firms

Identification, handling and tracing: According to Keller (2008) brands fundamentally serve as an identification and differentiation tool for the brand owner among the myriad of brands in the same product category in the market. It also simplifies product handling or tracing and acts as a barrier to competition and reference in its category (Kapferer, 1997).

Legal protection of unique features: A brand also offers the owner legal protection for unique feature or aspects of the product (Keller, 2008) and can retain intellectual property rights, giving legal title to the brand owner (Bagley, 1995). For example, the name of the product can be legally protected as a registered trademark (Coca Cola); manufacturing process through patents and packaging protected through copyrights and design. These guarantee safe investment in the brand and enable the firm to reap the benefits of a valuable asset (Keller, 2008).

Signal of quality level and loyalty of customers: Brands serve as a hub of a certain level of quality that attracts and retains satisfied customers who do repeat business with the firm and become advocates for the firm’s product on the market (Stobart, 1994; Keller, 2008). Arguably, firms are able to predict the demand for their products based on brand loyalty. This creates barriers of entry that make it difficult for other firms to enter the market (Keller, 2008).

Source of competitive advantage: The lasting impression imprinted on the minds of consumers of a firm’s product or service may not be easily reproduced although manufacturing processes and product designs may be easily duplicated. Such loyal customers literally grow with the brand making branding to be seen as a powerful means of competitive advantage for the firm (Keller, 2008).
Source of financial returns and premium prices: Beil (1997) asserts that brands are problem-solvers that serve as shorthand for a bundle of both functional and emotional attributes. However, they can be developed into assets that generate steady and sustained future streams of cash flow for the firm (Stobart, 1994). For example, Coca Cola calculates that only about four percent of its value can be attributed to its plants, machinery and locations. The real value of Coca Cola therefore lies in the intangible assets and first among these is the brand (Knox, 2004). Strong brands benefit from a high level of loyalty and stability of sales accruing from investments put into them, thus such valuable brands are still reaping large multiples of brand earnings (Kapferer, 1997; Stobart, 1994; Keller, 2008). The value of strong brand also allow products to be sold at premium prices or a product of equal price to sell more (Simeos and Dibb, 2001), hence, affording the firm the opportunity to earn and sustain extra profits from their brands (Keller, 2008).

Communication: Finally brands are of strategic significance to their owners as they enable firms to communicate directly with consumers regardless of the action of middlemen Knox, (2004); Beil (1997); Kapferer, (1997); Stobart, (1994)).

2.2 Differing Views of the Concept of Branding

Though many scholars are of the view that branding is used as a tool for differentiating products or services from the competition, Schmitt and Simonson (1997) indicate that the concept of branding ‘is a thing of the past’ arguing that because of the advancement in communication technology and the media, there was the need for the development of marketing strategies that appeal to all senses. Thus, the process of appealing to all the senses is what these scholars define
as marketing aesthetics – “marketing sensory experiences in corporate or brand output that contributes to the organization or brand’s identity.” Furthermore, the authors postulate that brand aesthetics can be defined as “attractive visual and other sensory markers and symbols that represent the organization and its brands appropriately and dazzle customers through sensory experiences (Schmitt and Simonson, 1997). This discussion depicts one objective underpinning the concept of branding. However, it appears they have only re-labeled branding as ‘marketing aesthetics.’ This definition, though, underscores the significance of image and identity and highlights the importance of experiences as a basis of attraction to the marketer’s product or service.

2.3 Keller’s Strategic Brand Management Process

According to Keller (2008) the strategic branding process involves the design and implementation of marketing programmes and activities to; build, measure and manage brand equity. The process identifies four main steps by which brands are built and managed. These steps include: Identifying and establishing brand positioning, Planning and implementing brand marketing programmes, Measuring and interpreting brand performance, and Growing and sustaining brand equity.

2.3.1 Identifying and establishing brand positioning

Keller (2008) asserts that the starting point of any successful brand is the clear understanding that one must have of what the brand represents and how it should be positioned in customers’ minds with regards to the competition. Brand positioning is the heart of any marketing strategy
and is well defined by Kotler and Keller (2006) as the “act of designing the company’s offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customer’s mind.” Positioning implies finding the proper “location” in the evoked set of customer’s minds so that the continually think about a product or service in the ‘right’ or desired way to maximize potential benefit to the firm. In other words positioning to gain a competitive edge is all about creating brand superiority in the minds of the target audience. The role of brand positioning according to Keller is to convince target audiences and potential consumers of the advantages a product has over what the competition offers by creating a point of difference or uniqueness of a product. Barwise and Meeham (2004) describe point of difference as the attributes or benefits that consumers strongly associate with a brand positively evaluate and believe that they could not find to the same extent with a competitive brand. It defines a product unique selling proposition (USP).

Positioning can also establish a point of parity at the same time in order to alleviate concerns about the possible disadvantage a product might have, these are necessary unique to the brand but may in fact be shared with other brands. Furthermore, positioning also specifies the appropriate core brand associations and brand mantra. Core brand associations according to Keller are the attributes and benefits or abstract associations that are characteristics of a brand. They are the most important aspects or dimensions of a brand and can be the basis of brand positioning in terms of how the brand’s point of parity and points of difference are created; and ultimately draw the consumer to the brand. In conjunction with specifying the brand association, positioning also specifies the brand mantra, which is also known as a brand essence or core brand promise. In essence it is a short three-to-five-word expression deemed by the marketer as the most significant aspect of the brand and its core brand associations that are communicated to
the target audience to create awareness in the customers mind about the brand. Further, the mantra can be identified as the enduring “brand DNA” which is the most significant aspect of the brand to both consumers and the company.

Keller argues that the point of difference, point of parity, core brand associations and a brand mantra though valuable ingredients in brand positioning, will be non-functional unless a target market is identified and a mental map constructed in the minds of the audience for effective positioning of the product. This mental map represents a visual depiction of the different types of associations linked to the brand in the minds of consumers. The right mental structures are built when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and holds some strong, favourable and unique brand associations in memory. However, this to a larger extent depends on how well the uniqueness (points of difference or unique selling proposition) has been built into the brand and communicated through selected brand elements to stand out from the competition to fill the evoke set of the consumer’s mind. Thus, core brand associations, points of parity, points of difference and brand mantra though articulation of the heart and soul of the bran, need to be well crafted and positioned with the aid of brand elements and appropriately communicated to capture the heart and soul of the target audience.

2.3.2 Brand elements and choice criteria

According to Keller (2008) brand elements also known as brand identities are described as those trademarkable devices that serve to identify and differentiate the brand from the competition. Notable among these include the brand name, logo, symbol, slogans, (Uniform Resource Locators (URLs), character, jingles, packages and signage. The role of these elements is to
enhance brand awareness and facilitate the formation of strong, favourable and unique brand associations to elicit positive brand judgments and feelings from the target audience. Keller asserts that brand elements that provide positive contribution to brand equity convey certain valued associations or responses hence need to be carefully based on certain criteria. These include: memorability, meaningfulness, likability, transferability, adaptability, and protectability. He describes the first three criteria (memorability, meaningfulness and likability) as the marketers offensive weapon or strategies used to build brand equity, while the last three (transferability, adaptability and protectability) play a defensive role, by leveraging and maintaining brand equity.

Memorability: Awareness creation is the pivot of brand equity building. To achieve this goal, brand elements should be inherently memorable, easy to recognize, easy to recall and have the ability to get the attention of the target audience. Thus, whatever brand element or combination of them must be memorable for easy recall and recognition.

Meaningfulness: Though brand names may take all kinds of meaning, that is, either being descriptive or have persuasive content, they should be inherently meaningful to communicate information about the nature of the product category. The attributes and benefits of the brand. The meaning determines brand awareness and salience; brand image and positioning of the brand in the minds. Thus, the elements must be meaningful to the type of person who might use the brand and reflect brand personality usage or feeling for the brand. Likability: For a brand to get the attention of consumers, it must be aesthetically appealing, visually and verbally likeable.
Further, Keller argues that consumers do not often examine much information before making a product decision, thus a memorable, meaningful and likeable set of brand elements that is rich in imagery and exudes fun and interest will persuade customers to patronize that brand.

Transferability: According to Keller, a brand that is memorable, meaningful and likeable has the capacity of transferring brand elements within and across product categories to support line and brand extensions and across geographic and cultural boundaries and market segments.

Adaptability: Brand elements need to be updated to the changing values and opinions of the consumers to be relevant in these contemporary times. Therefore, the more adaptable and flexible the brand element, the easier it is for the marketer to update. Such elements as the logo and symbols can be given a new looking and design to give them a contemporary touch.

Protectability: Brand elements should be protectable and as much as possible, competitively defensive locally and internationally. If a name, package or any other attribute can easily be copied, much of the uniqueness of the brand may disappear.

2.4 The brand elements

The brand name is the name given to a product that aids identification, recognition and recall of a particular brand in a product category. It is primarily significant because it captures the central theme or key associations of a product in a very compact and economical fashion. According to Keller, brand names serve as a shorthand means of communicating and can become closely tied to the product in the mind of the consumers. Like any brand element, brand names must be
chosen with the six general criteria in mind. Although it must be simple, the brand name chosen must be easy to pronounce, familiar and meaningful to improve recallability and recognition to enhance greater brand awareness. Further, the brand name should be different, distinctive and unusual to make it easier for consumers to learn intrinsic product information (Warlop et al, 2005). Because the brand name is a compact form of communication the explicit and implicit meaning consumers extract from it are significant. In essence, the brand name reinforces an important attribute or benefit association that make up its product positioning.

2.4.1 Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)

The URLs also referred to as domain names indicate how a brand can be located on web pages. Brand names are registered online to create awareness of the brand to catch the attention of consumers who often visit web pages online. However, brand recall is crucial for URLs as consumers must essentially remember the URL to be able to get the site. These brand names need to be protected from unauthorized use in other domain names.

2.4.2 Logos and Symbols

Visual elements represented by logos also play a critical role in building brand awareness though a brand name is the central element of a brand. Logos specify the origin of the product, its ownership of association. They come in different forms from corporate names or trademarks (word marks with text only, like Coca Cola) written in a distinctive form to entirely abstract designs that may be completely not related to the word mark, corporate name or corporate
activities. On the other hand, symbols are designs that take the shape of objects and are non-word mark logos that represent the company’s brand. For example, the crown of Mercedes Benz represents that brand. Logos and symbols enhance brand meaning and awareness and are valuable means of identifying products.

2.4.3 Characters

Brand characters are special kind of brand symbol that take human or real-life characteristics. These are often introduced in adverts through animation or real-action figures and play a control in ad campaign and package designs. They tend to be attention-getting and are useful for the creation of brand awareness because they are often colorful and rich in imagery. Very often, they enable marketers communicate key product benefits and break through marketplace. Clutter marketers use animations because of character flaws. The human element can enhance likeability and help create perceptions of the brand as fun and interesting. Its fictitious and animated appeal makes it more enduring and timeless that that of real people.

2.4.4 Slogans

According Keller, slogans are short phrases that communicate descriptive or persuasive information about a brand. They are powerful branding devices and like brand names, slogans are very efficient shorthand means of building brand equity. They enable consumers have a clear understanding of what a brand is and what makes it special. They are a marketers strategy of summarizing what the brand stands for in a few short words or phrases in a marketing program
to create brand awareness. They are often closely tied to advertising campaigns that serve as tag lines to summarize the descriptive or persuasive information conveyed in the advertisement and can become public catch phrases.

2.4.5 Jingles

Jingles are messages created in the form of music written around the brand. They are crafted with catchy hooks and choruses aimed at permanently registering them in the minds of listeners. They are sometimes referred to as extended musical slogans that are able to communicate brand benefits and are most valuable in enhancing brand awareness. Its ability to repeat the brand name in clever and amusing ways, allows multiple encoding opportunities with consumers likely to mentally rehearse or repeat catchy jingles after the advertisement is over. This provides even more encoding opportunities and increasing memorability.

2.4.6 Packaging

Keller noted that packaging is the activities of designing and producing containers or wrappers for a product. It is used to identify a marketer’s brand, convey descriptive and persuasive information and facilitate product transportation and protection. Further, it assists at – home storage and aids product consumption. Packaging also creates brand recognition and conveys information to build or reinforce valuable brand associations and its aesthetic value can create strong appeal for a brand. It is sometimes known as the “last five seconds of marketing,”: permanent media” or the last salesman.
Brand elements play different roles in building brand equity. However, because they have different strengths and weaknesses, marketers “mix and match” to maximize their collective contribution to brand equity. (Source: Keller, 2008).

### 2.5 Leveraging secondary brand associations

According to Keller (2008) brand associations are information linked to the brand held in consumer’s memory that essentially contains the meaning of the brand for consumers. Associations vary and may reflect the features of a product or aspects of the product. They reflect the image held in a consumer’s mind about a brand. These include associations such as convenience, reliability, serviceability, durability, trustworthiness, sincerity, ruggedness, liveliness, exotic, excitement and sophistication among others. Marketers employ these in marketing programmes to position the brand in the minds of consumers.

However, if existing brand associations are deficient in eliciting positive responses, other entities that are credible may be employed to create strong, favorable and unique association to generate the right responses from consumers. The means by which other entities are used to build brand equity is referred to as leveraging secondary brand associations. As noted by Keller, brand themselves may be linked to other entities that have their own knowledge structures in the minds of consumers and because of these linkages, the consumer may assume or infer that some of the associations or responses that identify entities may also be true for the brand. In other words, the brand “borrows” some brand knowledge from these entities to strong, favourable and unique associations to elicit the right responses from the target consumers. Further, connecting the brand to some other entity, such as a person, place or thing may help consumers form a mental
association from the brand to that entity, and subsequently, to any or all associations, judgments, feelings among others linked to that entity. The various ways by which secondary associations are leveraged include:

Companies (through branding strategies)

Countries or other geographical areas (through identification of product origin)

Channels of distribution (through channel strategy)

Other brand (through co-branding)

Characters (through licensing)

Spokesperson (through endorsement)

Events (through sponsorship)

Other third-party sources (through awards or reviews)

When consumers do not have sufficient knowledge to choose a suitable brand to meet their needs, they may be more likely to make brand decisions based on secondary considerations such as what they think, feel or know about the country of origin from which the product came, the distribution channel or the store in which it is sold, the celebrity who endorses the product, sponsorship of an event or through awards the manufacturer might have participated in.
A company’s brand may be linked to the corporate brand. If the brand is linked to an existing brand, the knowledge of the existing brand may also become linked to the brand. Thus, a corporate brand may evoke associations of common product attributes, benefits or attitudes and corporate credibility/ country of origin or geographic location may also be connected to the brand to generate secondary associations.

Some consumers patronize certain products based on perceptions held in their minds about the expertise and quality of products produced by those countries or image that these brands or products communicate. Other consumers will only purchase products from certain designated retail outlets they can associate certain product characteristics with, such as, quality, product assortment, pricing and credit policy among others. Keller also noted that co-branding also known as brand bundling or brand alliances can also be used in leveraging associations. This occurs when an existing brand is combined with other brand from the same or different company. The main advantage of co-branding a product uniquely or convincingly positioned by virtue of the multiple brand used in the campaign. To leverage secondary associations to a brand, a firm can ‘rent’ another brand to contribute to the brand equity of its own product through licensing the logos, names and characters among others of other brand can be used to market a firm’s brand. Celebrity endorsement is the ability of a firm to used well-known, credible and admired individuals to promote a brand. Firms believe that a famous personality has the ability of drawing much attention to a brand and shape the perceptions of the brand as consumers knowledge about the brand are based on the inferences or past knowledge they have about that celebrity. Therefore Keller argues that a celebrity endorser should have high level visibility and a
rich set of potentially useful associations, judgments and feelings. Further, to be an effective endorser for the brand, the celebrity should have some level of credibility in terms of expertise, trustworthiness and likability or attractiveness that improves awareness, image and responses for the brand. Sporting, cultural or events can also be used as secondary associations for a brand, through sponsored programs. Sponsored events can improve brand awareness, adding new associations or improving the strength, favorability and uniqueness of existing associations. However, credibility stands as a vital ingredient for transferring associations from events to the brand. Keller asserts that, the extent to which this transfer can be effective will depend on which events are selected and how the sponsorship program to build brand equity. Secondary associations can also be created linking the brand to other third-party sources such as featuring the awards won by the firm in advertising campaigns and selling efforts. The extent, to which any of these entities can be leveraged as a source of equity according to Keller, depends on the knowledge consumers already have about the entity and how easily the associations it has can be transferred to the brand.

Though a vulnerable way of creating strong, favorable and unique brand associations, marketers may lose some control in the transfer process as they lose some control in the transfer process as they endeavor to link only the relevant secondary associations to the brand. This calls for care and tact to choose and implement the desirable entities in marketing programs to derive the right effects on the firm’s brand.
2.6 CORPORATE BRANDING

Corporate branding has received more and more attention from both experts and academics. The work has primarily been led by experts, such as Bernstein (1984) and Olins (1989) and academics such as Abbrat (1986), Dowling (1986), Gray and Smeltzer (1985), Kennedy (1977), Van Riel (1995) and Balmer (1995a, b), among others (Daffey and Abratt, 2002). This increase in interest has been necessitated by a range of contributory factors such as the need to differentiate because of increased competitive rivalry; the increased recognition of the value of integrated marketing communications and the shortening of product life-cycles (Markwick and Fill 1997). Aaker, (1991) and Keller, (1998), revealed that both the academic literature and the experience of marketers emphasize the important influence of brands in product recognition, premium pricing, resistance to competition and creation of barriers to market entry by competitors. Ward and Lee (2000) found that there was a shift by firms away from reliance on product brands to reliance on corporate and service brands. Others have also recently found the use of corporate branding to be on the rise (Aaker, 1996; Balmer, 1995, 2001).

Corporate brand architecture can be conceptualised by core values shared by different products with a common and overall brand identity, which play a decisive part in coordinating the brand-building process. The role of the corporate brand is to give credibility in cases such as communications with government, the financial sector, the labour market, and society in general (Urde, 2003). Organizational values, core values and added values are the foundation of a corporate brand. The interaction among them forms the value-creating process of the corporate brand (Urde, 2003). Companies are faced with the challenge of organizing their resources and
internal processes so that the core values for which the corporate brand stands can be
strengthened, differentiated and expressed as added value for consumers. The linkage between
core values and corporate brand is decisive for a firm’s brand equity and competitive position.

Management and organization-wide support is crucial in this process (Urde, 2003). A corporate
brand is not necessarily limited to a single corporation. It can also apply to a variety of corporate
entities, such as corporations, their subsidiaries, and groups of companies (Balmer and Gray,
2003). Balmer (1998) states that corporate identity, as an important corporate asset, represents
the firm’s ethics, goals and values, to differentiate the firm from its competitors. Because
markets are becoming more complex and products and services are quickly imitated and
homogenized, maintaining credible product differentiation is increasingly difficult, requiring the
positioning of the whole corporation rather than just its products. Thus, the corporate values and
images emerge as key elements of differentiation strategies (Hatch and Schultz, 2001). The
assumption for creating a corporate brand is that a corporate brand will support all aspects of the
firm and differentiate it from its competitors (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Ind, 1997;
Balmer, 2001). Corporate branding enables firms to use the vision and culture of the whole
organization explicitly as part of its uniqueness (Balmer, 1995, 2001; de Chernatony, 1999).

de Chernatony (2001) calls for firms to integrate their strategic vision with their brand building.
Corporate brands can increase the firm’s visibility, recognition and reputation to a greater extent
than can product brands. Balmer and Gray (2003) maintain that one of the benefits of strong
corporate brands is that investors may seek them out deliberately. They furthermore offer more
chances for strategic or brand alliances, and play an important role in the recruitment and retention of valuable employees. Alan (1996) attributes the surge of corporate branding to the rising costs of advertising, retailer power, product fragmentation, new product development cost efficiencies, and consumers’ expectations of corporate credentials.

2.7 CORPORATE VERSUS PRODUCT BRANDING

Product branding has been contended to yield different advantages for firms. McDonald et al. (2001) argue that, a firm using a product-brand strategy rather than corporate branding will experience less damage to its corporate image if one of its individual brands fails. When the Tylenol brand was under siege in the USA because of tainted batches, Procter & Gamble’s name and reputation were somewhat shielded by the product-branding strategy, leaving Pampers and Tide undamaged by the Tylenol scare. A product brand is also flexible, allowing firms to position and appeal to different segments in different markets. Budweiser beer, for example, is sold in the USA as a broadly appealing, quality beer that is solid value for money. In contrast, it is marketed in some overseas markets as a premium product, and its product image is linked to the American lifestyle. A challenge with product branding is that targeting different small segments through different brands can result in high marketing costs and lower brand profitability. The role of branding and brand management is primarily to create differentiation and preference in the minds of customers. The development of product branding has been built around the core role of maintaining differentiation in a particular market (Knox and Bickerton, 2003). Corporate branding builds on the tradition of product branding, seeking to create differentiation and preference. However, corporate branding is conducted at the level of the firm instead of the product or service, and furthermore extends its reach beyond customers to
stakeholders such as employees, customers, investors, suppliers, partners, regulators and local communities (Hatch and Schultz, 2001).

A corporate brand can be regarded as the sum of the corporation’s marketing efforts to present a controlled representation of the corporation’s value system and identity (Ind, 1997; Balmer, 2001). It differs from a product brand in its strategic focus and its implementation, which combines corporate strategy, corporate communications and corporate culture (Balmer, 1995, 2001). Balmer and Gray (2003) and Hatch and Schultz (2003) argue that corporate branding differs from product branding in several other ways.

First, the focus shifts from the product to the corporation. Corporate branding therefore exposes the corporation and its members to a larger extent. Second, managerial responsibility for product brands usually rest in the middle-management marketing function, while corporate brands usually involve strategic considerations at a higher executive level. Third, product brands typically target specific consumers, while corporate brands usually relate all of the firm’s stakeholders and products and services to each other. Fourth, product-brand management is normally conducted within the marketing department, while corporate branding requires support across the corporation and cross-functional coordination. Fifth, product brands are relatively short-term, compared to corporate brands, with their heritage and strategic vision. Therefore, corporate branding is more strategic than the normally functional product branding. Hatch and Schultz (2003) further argue that it engineers interactions among strategic vision, organizational
culture and corporate image, to position the firm in its marketplace, and sets up internal support arrangements appropriate to its strategic importance.

Similarly, Ind (1997) identifies three key differences. First, corporate branding acquires a certain degree of tangibility through the messages the firm delivers and the relationship it establishes with various stakeholders. Second, corporate branding is more complex than product branding because of the variety of messages and relationships, and the potential subsequent confusion. Third, it tends to demand greater attention to issues of ethical or social responsibility. The focus of a product brand is on customers while that of a corporate brand is on stakeholders. Therefore, corporate brands can provide a sense of trust and quality for the firm in extending a product line or diversifying into other product lines (Balmer and Gray, 2003).

An effective corporate brand also has an inherent “excess capacity”; or “leverage”; potential, in that it can be translated to other markets (Peteraf, 1993). It is observed that corporate brands are extensively used to launch new products in new markets. Corporate branding typically uses the total corporate communication mix to engage target audiences who perceive and judge the company and its products or services. The overall image of the firm is therefore expected to generate brand equity at the corporate level (Keller, 2000). The core company values and heritage largely influence the image the firm is expected to have. In addition, strategic vision also contributes to the image, in the sense that stakeholders normally seek and use information about the firm beyond what it routinely provides. Hatch and Schultz (2003) conclude that firms successful in establishing a corporate brand are more competitive than firms relying only on
product branding in the fragmented markets created by globalization. On the other hand, corporate branding is also more complex than product branding in that it requires simultaneous and effective interaction of strategic vision, organizational culture, and images. de Chernatony (1999) holds that it facilitates customers’ desire to look deeper into the brand and evaluate the nature of the firm. Trust in the products and brand the firm offers predispose customers to accept its claims about other products and services.

2.8 THE MANAGEMENT OF A CORPORATE BRAND

A review of the theoretical literature indicates that a variety of models (de Chernatony, 1999; de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley, 1999; de Chernatony, 2001; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Leitch and Richardson, 2003; de Chernatony and Segal-Horn, 2003; Urde, 2003; Uggla, 2006) that seek to guide the management of a corporate brand have been put forward by several academic and practitioner authors. While the rise in the volume of academic and practitioner contributions to corporate branding might have helped to raise the profile and importance (Knox and Bickerton, 2003) of this phenomenon within the business studies paradigm, it appears that there is a lack of universal agreement on how this phenomenon can be managed. Consequently, work on corporate brand management is fraught with uncertainty (Knox and Bickerton, 2003) and ambiguity (Lane Keller, 1999). The lack of universal agreement on this issue presents academics and practitioners who wish to pursue the management of a corporate brand with a challenge in terms of decision making – and this study is by no means an exception to this challenge. An examination of de Chernatony, 1999 corporate brand model gives an insight into how experts conceptualised corporate brand management.
2.8.1 de CHERNATONY’S CORPORATE BRAND MANAGEMENT MODEL: A REVIEW

In conformity with some corporate branding models, de Chernatony’s (1999) viewpoint on the management of a corporate brand begins with corporate visioning, which sets and articulates expressly or impliedly where the firm is going. This is followed by the definition of the organisational culture, including but not limited to visible artefacts, employees’ and managers’ values and so on. The next stage in de Chernatony’s (1999) model highlights the nature of the firm’s desired positioning, identifying whether the desired positioning approach matches the firm’s vision and core business values. As de Chernatony (1999) argues, a firm’s core values should not only influence a corporate brand’s functionality, but they must also be personified. At this stage, a firm’s personality must be comprehensively defined. Following the successful determination of the firm’s personality, the firm must now decide on the nature of the relationship it seeks to develop, nurture and maintain with stakeholders. Arguably, this will evolve through continued interactions between the firm and its stakeholders, firmly supported by a variety of presentation approaches that the firm may deem appropriate or suitable to its personality. Essentially, de Chernatony’s (1999) model ends with stakeholder interpretation of all activities, and the development of a corporate reputation ensues.

Viewed objectively, it appears that the deconstruction of de Chernatony’s model reveals the preponderance of a number of mandatory components (including corporate personality, corporate positioning, interactions, corporate communications and stakeholders), whose absence may circumvent the development of corporate reputation. Given the important role of these
mandatory components, it is important to examine these elements fully to develop further insights into what makes the development of corporate reputations heavily reliant on them.

**Components in de Chernatony’s (1999) corporate branding model.**

*Firm’s personality –* Corporate personality in de Chernatony’s (1999) work implies an amalgamation of a variety of characteristics that define a business organisation. These characteristics include corporate traits such as a corporate vision, which could be interpreted as where the firm is going (Melewar, 2003). It is also an embodiment of corporate culture and values, which in addition to visible organisational artefacts (de Chernatony, 1999) could be approached as a signification of what the firm is (Gioia et al., 2000) and what it stands for (Melewar, 2003). Beyond de Chernatony’s (1999) work, corporate personality could be viewed as a representation of a firm’s history or where it is coming from and an explication of the core competencies or what the firm is best at doing. It signifies what the firm makes, where it makes and sells its goods and services, and how the firm pursues its business activities. It is about how a firm is organized, how it behaves, and how it conveys information about itself to internal and external stakeholders (Melewar, 2003).

*Corporate positioning –* Corporate positioning addresses how the real and desired personalities of a firm, including the vision, mission, objective, corporate history and heritage, corporate culture, business guidelines, naming policies, corporate values and so on, are formally determined, established and constructed in the mind of customers and other stakeholders (see de
Chernatony, 1999). The important thing to note under corporate positioning is that it is deliberately, formally and purposefully communicated and it provides a veritable channel through which a firm’s corporate personality or corporate identity (Urde, 2003) can be conveyed effectively. Although there are very many methods that can be used to identify and determine a firm’s desired corporate identity, it would appear that Rossiter and Percy’s (1997) IDU (important, delivered and unique) method is popularly drawn to diagnose a firm’s corporate identity (van Riel and Balmer, 1997).

Interactions – Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue that men together produce the human environment based on continuing psychological formations or mental representations (i.e. meanings) of actors’ actions and interactions. Similarly, business organisations work interactively and collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a corporate image or corporate reputation. The development of corporate image or corporate reputation is often accomplished through sustained relationships that develop through continued and continuing interactions (de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley, 1999; de Chernatony, 1999; Leitch and Richardson, 2003; Urde, 2003; Uggla, 2006) between firms and stakeholders.

Corporate communications – Corporate communications represents the variety of approaches – including corporate advertisements, corporate visuals or corporate symbols, corporate behaviour, corporate events and so on – that are commonly drawn on by business organisations to present their corporate personality to stakeholders. Corporate communication activities provide the channel through which the corporate personality messages conveyed by firms are expressed to
stakeholders (see de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley, 1999; de Chernatony, 1999; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; de Chernatony and Segal-Horn, 2003; Urde, 2003; Uggla, 2006). The expression of corporate personality through corporate communications results in the development of a corporate image when interpreted by stakeholders.

**Stakeholders** – Stakeholders are discussed in the corporate branding models (de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley, 1999; de Chernatony, 1999; Urde, 2003) reviewed in this study. Stakeholders refer to individuals or groups that are likely to be affected by the activities of an organisation (Freeman, 1984, 1994; Clarkson, 1995). They include a wide variety of interests which in Mullins’s (2002) view may be grouped under six main headings. These include employees, shareholders, consumers, government, community and the environment and other organisations or groups such as suppliers, trade unions, business associates and even competitors. Stakeholders are crucial. Their interpretations of a firm’s personality lead towards the development of corporate image or reputation.

**Corporate reputation/image** – Corporate reputation or image develops following the interpretations and perceptions (de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley, 1999; de Chernatony, 2001; Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) and meanings that stakeholders make of the personality messages conveyed via a variety of corporate communications activities or one or more of the elements of the CI mix (Melewar and Jenkins, 2002; van Riel and Balmer, 1997). There is a shift in the branding literature from brand image (Boulding, 1956) to brand identity (Kapferer, 1997). While image focuses on consumers' perceptions of brand differentiation, identity is more
concerned with how managers and employees make a brand unique. Managers first need to define a brand's identity. Following the International Corporate Identity Group's statement on corporate identity (van Riel and Balmer, 1997), corporate identity is interpreted as an organisation's ethos, aims and values that create a sense of individuality which differentiates a brand. Building on Kapferer's (1997) brand based view of identity, de Chernatony (1999) proposed a model of brand management, which is conceptualised as the process of narrowing the gap between a brand's identity and its reputation, values and then ensure employees' values and behaviour are consistent with them. Brand identity consists of six components: vision and culture, which drive the brand's desired positioning, personality and subsequent relationships, all of which are then presented to reflect stakeholders' actual and aspirational self-images. The components of the model interact and are mutually reinforcing.

2.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Considering the company - wide implications of pursuing a corporate brand strategy as well as the environmental influence on corporate competiveness, the study adapt a framework by Henry Yu Xie and David J Bloggs on evaluating corporate branding versus product branding. Figure 1 shows the framework of the factors that affect a firm’s choice of branding strategy, and forms the basis of the research conceptualisation. The elements of the framework are: Stakeholder interest, Marketing costs, Market Complexity, Corporate Image, identity and reputation. All these factors will ultimately inform a firm to select corporate brand as a strategy to operate within a developing country context like Ghana. Corporate branding as a strategy results in greater shareholder value.
Figure 1. Conceptual framework of factors affecting branding strategy of firms.

Source: Adapted from Xie and Boggs, 2006

2.9.1 Stakeholder Interest

Product brands usually need to appeal only to a limited group of stakeholders, mostly customers who purchase and use the product. On the other hand, corporate brands may need to take account of the larger group of internal and external stakeholders identified earlier. Therefore, corporate brands have more significance for the firm’s wellbeing than product brands (Davies and Chun, 2002). The value of a corporate brand is based on its recognition by both customers and shareholders, which adds value to the reputation of the firm. Influential authors hold that corporate branding should be adapted to satisfy the needs of various stakeholders (Balmer, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2001). Van Riel and van Bruggen (2002) argue that decision makers
operating at the business-unit level may nevertheless see the benefit in taking full advantage of corporate branding. It is suggested that four factors will affect management’s attitudes towards the corporate brand at this level: corporate strategy (related or unrelated); internal organization (degree of centralization); driving force (organizational identification within the unit); perceived external prestige (Van Riel and van Bruggen, 2002, p. 242). Van Riel and van Bruggen, 2002 define a corporate branding strategy as “a systemically planned and implemented process of creating and maintaining a favourable reputation of an organization and its constituent elements, by sending signals to stakeholders using the corporate brand”.

2.9.2 Corporate Image, identity and reputation

Corporate image is the sum of impressions and expectations of an organization built up in the minds of its stakeholders and the public (Topalian, 2003). Many recent works in the organizational field argue that it is imperative for firms to effectively and properly manage the corporation’s reputation: for instance, Fombrum and Van Riel (1997). From the organizational perspective, Hatch and Schultz (1997) contend that branding is a tool that needs to be managed, to create alignment between the internal culture and the external image of the firm. The organization’s vision is thus the key starting point in the management of its brand or brands. The rise of concern for corporate image or corporate reputation, has mirrored the development of the study of corporate branding (Abratt, 1989). Aaker (1996) argues that a brand serves to differentiate the product from its competition by means of a set of consumer perceptions. According to both Kelly (1998) and Sharp (1995), many firms have realized that a strong corporate brand can lead to competitive advantage in the presence of increased competition. In
order to improve brand strength, firms need to shape positive customer perceptions. Reputation has been recognised as one of the key foundations on which to build corporate success (Key, 1995) and is a valuable, critical and intangible asset (Dolphin, 2004). Vercic and Vercic (2007) make the distinction between reputation and brand with the latter being a customer-centric concept that represents the implicit promise that a company makes to its customers about a specific product or service.

Corporate identity and brand identity utilize a systematic approach to give meanings to symbols and visualized concepts, although the starting points of corporate identity and brand identity are different. Corporate identity considers the enterprise perspective and emphasizes the performance and management of the company, while brand identity takes into account the customer perspective in order to specify how customers perceive the functions of the brand. Ideally, brand identity adds value to a firm’s products and services. It is the sum of all tangible and intangible characteristics of the products and services offered by a firm and are identified by certain essential product labels, such as names, brand symbols, and colors. Color is a particularly effective way to manifest brand identity. Any brand can use a color as the focus of its brand identity, making it the major focus of brand identity by utilizing a single distinctive color or color palette (Schmitt and Simonson 1997). If a color is consistently used across a variety of identity elements, it becomes part of a company’s signature: Kodak’s yellow, IBM’s dark blue, Coca-Cola’s red, and Acer’s green. More than the symbol of a brand, color is a source of information.
A study by the Institute for Color Research revealed that people make a subconscious judgment about an item within 90 seconds of initial viewing and that 62–90 per cent of that assessment is based on color alone. Marc Gobé (2004) observed that color is powerful and represents emotions and not only provides the skeleton of brand identity but also the traits of the brand personality. In the perceptions of human beings, visualization is the most common way to appeal to consumers’ sense organs; in fact, Aristotle indicated that all recognition is triggered by vision, and Lindstrom (2005) specified that vision is primary among all human sense organs. Thus, a visual symbol of vision has the capability to draw consumers’ attention. This research utilizes Birren’s color theory (1961) to identify the characteristics of colors and interpret the traits of brands and the colors they use in terms of perceptual stimulus and psychological recognition, and Aaker’s Honeycomb model to interpret the customers’ perceptions of a firm’s brand identity. The purpose of the study is to identify whether the traits of corporate identity indicated by the colors used match the key concepts delivered by the enterprise into customer perceptions.

The positions, key concepts, and intents of the enterprises will be manifested if they use appropriate colors. This study showed that color traits can deliver the messages of brand identity and build an emotional connection between consumers and brands. In particular, consumers first react to a brand based on their perception of the traits associated with a color. Corporate identity results in corporate images and associations, such as the cheerful and lively Ronald McDonald representing McDonald’s. Appropriate colors can deliver accurate messages and visions of the enterprise and its identity. While corporate identity represents the external image and reputation that the company attempts to deliver, color delivers its own traits and helps consumers to
interpret the meaning of a brand by communicating the corporate identity. Corporate branding can also attract consumers by using color traits that stimulate the memories of brands. Hence, this work provides preliminary evidence that color traits affect brand identity and corporate identity and that the impact of color on corporate branding is both significant and essential to enterprises. The connection between corporate/brand identity and corporate branding is also built to demonstrate that color traits may affect corporate branding. This study provides a preliminary analysis based on color traits and clues to help companies obtain a better understanding of corporate branding. Finally, we hope that other cases across different industries (instead of eight brands) can be examined for future study in order to build a comprehensive understanding of the impact of colors traits on corporate branding.

A company’s reputation is company-centric, they suggest, and is focussed on the credibility and respect that the company has among a range of stakeholders and is supported by Logsdon and Wood (2002). This suggests that brand is about relevancy to customers whereas reputation is about legitimacy of the organisation with respect to the stakeholders. It can then be inferred that reputation is a necessary condition for corporate success because companies also need strong brands. A study by Cretu and Brodie (2007), in the context of business to-business (B2B) markets, found that the brand’s image has a more specific influence on customers’ perceptions of specific product and service quality while the company’s reputation has a broader influence on perceptions of customer value and customer loyalty. In the circumstance where a company has only one product or service and associates its company name with its sole marketplace offering, company reputation and brand will be synonymous (Aaker, 1991).
2.9.3 Market Complexity

Griffin (2002) asserts that the antecedents of branding strategy are both external and internal. External factors such as environmental uncertainty and the institutional environment can create expectation. Internal factors such as business exposure and top management attitudes can affect managerial decision-making capability. Many firms find the uncertain environments difficult to predict or control, so they typically create strategies, including corporate branding strategies, to ease that uncertainty. Griffin (2002) also argues that corporate branding strategy aims to identify and maximize the actual and perceived “fit” between the firm and its environment, in response to an uncertain environment and its perception of its internal capability to manage the uncertainty. There is the need not only to coordinate internal decision-making process effectively, but also to meet the needs of various external stakeholders at the same time. Economic growth and liberalization create enormous new opportunities, but market transition and transformation are accompanied by great structural uncertainties and regulatory interference (Luo, 2003). However, a corporate brand is difficult to imitate because its intangibility is exclusively protected from imitation by law and regulation (Balmer and Gray, 2003). Nakata and Sivakumar (1997) also point out that less-developed infrastructure and indirect, fragmented distribution channels are likely to increase operating and distribution costs. Factors such as a relatively poorly developed retail sector, lack of available media or distrust of messages conveyed through the system have contributed to the difficulties in effective marketing. Obtaining market information and locating suitable distributors is more difficult than in developed countries (Batra, 1997). Political instability and limited or non-existent trademark and intellectual property protection also increase operating costs and consequently reduce economic advantages for incoming firms.
Moreover, cultural, political and economic constraints in a developing country like Ghana can also obstruct the implementation of a standardized strategy (Douglas and Wind, 1987).

2.9.4 Marketing Costs

Berry, (1993), observed that it is very costly to establish a new brand today, and expensive to maintain an existing one. However, Booker (2002) predicts that globalization, interconnected markets, affiliations and associations will provide an impetus for the building of strong corporate brands in the coming years. The increased exposure of worldwide consumers to global media has increased their desire for quality branded goods and services (Batra, 1997). McDonald et al. (2001) argue that targeting different brands at separate small segments can incur high marketing costs and consequently result in lower brand profitability. As an integrated and coordinated brand building process, corporate branding is efficient in conveying market and product information. Corporate brands are capable of increasing the firm’s visibility and recognition to a greater extent than product brands can (de Chernatony, 2001). Multiple advertising and promotion campaigns for a variety of product brands are usually substituted by an integrated marketing communication programme, thus reducing the considerable marketing cost.

2.10 Components of the Conceptual Framework

The major components of the conceptual framework for this study include the Stakeholder interest, Corporate Image, identity and reputation, Market Complexity, Marketing costs, Corporate Brand and Greater stakeholder value. The researcher therefore posits that, for an
organization to effectively and efficiently implement Corporate Brand strategy to attain greater
stakeholder value the factors adduced must be a prevailing within the firm. Again, the framework
provides an appropriate model for implementing and evaluating Corporate Brand strategy.
CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXT OF STUDY

3.0 Introduction
This chapter discusses issues concerning the industry within which this study is conducted. The chapter discusses the industry information. This includes discussions on the banking industry in Ghana. It also discusses the firm (UT Bank) with regards to its mission, vision, products and services as well as the management team.

3.1 Overview of the Banking Sector
The banking sector in Ghana has traditionally been segmented into merchant, commercial or retail and development banks. While merchant banks have been restricted to corporate clients, the commercial and development banks conventionally had customers across the entire financial market sections. It is against this backdrop and the need to create a level playing field for all banks that the idea of Universal Banking (Bank of Ghana, 2004) was adopted.

The aim is to allow all banks that comply with the prescribed capital requirements, the freedom to engage in permissible banking business without restrictions and thereby eliminate the compartmentalization. Hinson (2004) noted that “before the passage of the Universal Banking Law, banking was conducted along such narrow scopes as commercial, developmental or merchant banking. With the passage of the Universal Banking Law however, all types of banking
can be conducted under a single corporate banking entity and this greatly reorganizes the competitive scopes of several banking products in Ghana” (Hinson, 2004). He further noted that banks in Ghana have been thrust “firmly into the competitive arena in terms of customers and products” and also that banks throughout Ghana are also “seeking unique ways of differentiating their offering”. The banking system in Ghana consists of a national network of licensed and statutory financial institutions engaged in the business of banking under the banking laws of Ghana. Bank of Ghana is the central bank and it regulates the activities of all the banks.

The banking sector over the last decade has seen appreciable growth and improvements in performance as a result of reforms instituted by governments before this period. Some of the reforms implemented include the Financial Sector Adjustment Programme (FINSAP I and II), Non-Performing Assets Recovery Trust (NPART) and the Foreign Exchange Bureau legislation. As a result of a new Banking Law which was promulgated the Bank of Ghana was strengthened to enhance its capacity to play its regulatory role. These reforms have:

a) strengthened the banks in terms of their capital base and managerial competence;

b) enhanced supervisory capabilities of Bank of Ghana;

c) improved the quality of assets being held by banks;

d) increased profitability of the banks.

From independence to 1983, there were twelve (12) banks. These banks were Standard Chartered Bank (SCB), Barclays Bank of Ghana Limited (BBG), Ghana Commercial Bank (GCB), Bank
for Housing and Construction (BHC), Agriculture Development Bank (ADB), Bank of Credit and Commerce (BCC), Universal Merchants Bank Limited (UMB), Social Security Bank (SSB), National Investment Bank, Ghana Corporative Bank (Co-op), Cal Merchant Bank (CAL) and Ecobank (ECO). Over the last decade (1993-2003) and beyond eleven (11) new banks have been incorporated namely: Prudential Bank Ltd (PBL), Metropolitan Allied Bank (METRO), First Atlantic Merchant Bank (FAMB), The Trust Bank (TTB), International Commercial Bank (ICB), Stanbic Bank, Amalgamated Bank (AMALBANK), HFC Bank, Unibank, Prestige Bank and Standard Trust Bank, Sahel Sahara Bank and Royal Bank. Some significant events have occurred during this period such as mergers (SG-SSB, and National Savings and Credit Bank), liquidation (BHC, Co-op), privatization of state owned banks and change of ownership (GCB, SSB, NIB).

Competition in the banking sector has escalated over the period. Commercial and development banks have gone beyond their limit and have ventured into international trade financing, commerce and corporate lending, treasury services payment financing, syndication, etc., which used to be the preserve of merchant banks. One area that has seen fierce competition in the banking industry is the area of product development. New products such as international funds transfer, school fees loan, negotiable certificate of deposit, car loans, consumer/hire purchase loan, travellers’ cheque, etc. have been developed. Another development that has occurred over the last decade is computerization and networking of branches. Some of the banks have a nationwide network whilst others have reached an advanced stage of networking all their branches. Banks operations and information processing have vastly increased. Automated teller
machines (ATMs) have become common, giving clients the freedom to transact business at their own convenience. Also home banking, for example telephone banking, SMS banking, etc. have been introduced. The banks have pursued consistent programmes of sponsorship, promotion, advertisement of services and products in the print and electronic media, etc. The banking sector landscape can be said to be evolving, competitive and promising in terms of savings mobilization, development financing and service delivery.

3.2 Universal Banking

Universal Banking (UB) has been in existence for a very long time in several countries. Countries such as France, Germany were the pioneers of what has become known as Universal Banking (Gockel, 2003)

Some of the definitions of universal banking are as follows:

- Banking that includes investment services in addition to services related to savings and loans (investopedia.com).
- Banks offering entire arrays of banking services (Rich and Walter, 1993).
- A one-stop supplier of all financial products and activities like deposits, short term and long term loans, insurance and investment banking, etc.

A corporate structure where large banks operate extensive network of branches, providing many different services, hold several claims on firms (including equity and debt), and participate
directly in the corporate governance of firms that rely on banks for funding or as insurance
underwriters (Addison, 2003). Although universal banking is practiced in several countries, there
are basically three forms: in-house, separate subsidiaries or holding company. In Germany,
investment and commercial banking are allowed in-house but separate subsidiaries are required
for certain other activities. In the UK, the banks are allowed to conduct a wide range of financial
activities through separate subsidiaries. The United States has adopted the holding company
model and it requires separate capitalized subsidiaries (Bokhari, 2004). From the fore-gone
exposition, the concept of universal banking is clear.

However, the scope and implementation are different from one country to another. By taking
cognizance of the laws and regulations governing banking, the Ghanaian model of universal
banking focuses on money markets activities. Therefore capital market activity and insurance
business are excluded from universal banking in the country. The definition of universal banking
in the Ghanaian context is: The businesses of accepting deposits and other repayable funds from
the public, lending, investments in financial securities and money transmission services, the
issuance and administration of means of payment, including credit cards, travellers’ cheques and
bank drafts; the issuance of guarantees and commitments trading for own account or for account
of customers in money market instruments, foreign exchange or transferable securities, provision
of advice on capital structure, acquisitions and mergers; portfolio management and advice; safe
custody of valuables; electronic banking and any other services that the Bank of Ghana may
determine.
A legal requirement for a bank to be issued with a universal banking license is a minimum paid up capital of seventy billion cedis (now seven million Ghana cedis). Existing banks can satisfy this requirement through paid up capital, reserves and retained earnings. Therefore, banks with net worth of or in excess of seventy billion cedis are eligible to apply for a universal banking license. Merchant banks namely Ecobank, Merchant Bank Ghana Ltd and CAL Bank have fulfilled the Bank of Ghana requirement and have been issued with a UB license. Also, two development banks namely ADB and NIB have satisfied the requirement. Although commercial banks have been practicing universal banking, legally only GCB, BBG, SCB, and SG-SSB are qualified.

Accordingly, universal banking has relaxed restrictions and provided equal market opportunities for banks and maintained a fair competition. As a result, all the banks can operate merchant, retail and development banking. The benefit of this policy (law) is that a bank will determine the area it wants to focus on based on its competence and competitive advantage. With the passage of the Universal Banking Law however, all types of banking can be conducted under a single corporate entity and this greatly reorganizes the competitive scopes of several banking products in Ghana. The years of reform and deregulation have brought the banking sector firmly into the competitive arena in terms of customers and products. A mutual fund product from a Non-Bank Financial Institution for example would compete with a mutual fund product from a traditional bank. A traditional brokerage firm would have to compete for Initial Public Offering (IPO) business with several subsidiaries that exist under traditional banking umbrella brands. In the light of all these interesting developments in Ghana’s banking industry, it becomes necessary to
ask what role corporate branding plays in this new banking paradigm. Banks throughout the country are constantly seeking unique ways of differentiating their offerings. The willingness and ability of managers in Banks to respond to changes in the service economy will determine whether their own organizations survive and prosper. With so many changes occurring in the Ghanaian banking sector, including an expansion and intensification of competition and increasing customer sensitivity, the issue of corporate branding has gained considerable currency.

3.3 Overview of UT Bank

UTB is a medium-sized financial services provider headquartered in Ghana with subsidiaries in West Africa and Western Europe. The bank's total assets in December 2011 were valued at approximately US$378.4 million (GHS: 712.9 million), with shareholders' equity of approximately US$32.5 million (GHS: 61.23 million). UT Financial Services was a non-bank financial services provider (NBFI), in Ghana, which was incorporated in 1997. Over time, the NBFI acquired subsidiaries and was listed on the Ghana Stock Exchange, under its holding company, UT Holdings Limited. In 2008, UT Holdings Limited acquired majority shareholding in a Ghanaian commercial bank called BPI Bank. The bank was re-branded as UT Bank Ghana Limited and opened for business in May 2009. In June 2010, UT Bank and UT Financial Services Merged into one new company called UT Bank Ghana Limited. Through a reverse listing on the GSE, the new bank's shares became listed and those of UT Holdings were de-listed. In effect, the bank became the new holding company. Its shares trade under the symbol: UTB. The bank owns the following subsidiary companies:
1. UT Logistics - Headquartered in Tema, Ghana

2. UT Properties - Real estate development and management

3. UT Collections - Debt Recovery

4. UT Private Security - Armed and unarmed private security service

5. UT Financial Services Nigeria - Loans and Lease financing solutions

6. UT Financial Services South Africa - Headquartered in Johannesburg

7. UT Life Insurance - Life Insurer

The shares of the bank's stock are listed on the Ghana Stock Exchange, where they trade under the symbol: UTB. The five (5) largest shareholders in the bank are listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name of Owner</th>
<th>Percentage Ownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>UT Holdings Limited of Ghana</td>
<td>61.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>London Investec Premier Funds of the United Kingdom</td>
<td>05.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kura Africa Fund of Mauritius</td>
<td>04.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SSB London Investments &amp; Asset Management of the United Kingdom</td>
<td>03.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Epack Investment Fund</td>
<td>02.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>23.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UT Bank Branch network
As of May 2012, UT Bank maintains a network of twenty-six (26) interlinked branches across all regions of Ghana.

Vision
“Redefining Banking”

Mission
“the preferred bank for businesses and individuals providing quality and outstanding products with speed and efficiency to delight customers and build shareholder value.”

The initial focus of UT was centred on servicing the “unbanked” informal sector, but over the years, UT’s services have extended to cover the formal sector. What set’s UT apart in the financial services market is its solid business structure, flexibility and timely delivery of financing to clients whilst maintaining the promise of providing business loans in less than 48 hours.

Achievements

After a short time of operating as a commercial bank in Ghana, UT Bank breaks Ecobank Ghana’s monopoly and becomes the second bank listed on the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE) to win the Bank of the Year category at the Ghana Banking Awards since 2001.

The Bank of the Year is an award category that goes to the bank with the highest weighted scores for the customer survey, corporate social responsibility and financial performance. The race to the top in the Banking industry has been tough now that there are a lot of Banks in the system most of which are foreign banks with huge capitals. Since 2001, no bank listed on the Ghana
Stock Exchange apart from Ecobank Ghana (EBG) and the most recent winner, UT Bank, has ever won this prestigious category.

Profile of CEO of UT Bank- Prince Kofi Amoabeng.

Prince Kofi Amoabeng is the Chief Executive Officer of UT Bank and the UT Group. He is a retired military officer (Captain) and an investment consultant. He graduated from the premier Business School in Ghana-University of Ghana Business School with a B.Sc Admin (Accounting). He is a fellow of the Chartered Institute Management Accountants (CIMA-UK) and a member of Chartered Accountants CA (GH). From 1992-2003, he lectured at the Ghana Stock Exchange. He has extensive experience in managing businesses through excellent customer relations, strategic and tactical business planning as well as strategic partnerships. Mr Amoabeng and his partner Joseph Nsonamoah (Chairman of the UT Board) in 1997 started the UT Bank (formerly UT Financial Services) in a one-room office in Accra with a staff of four (4). Today UT is a Holdings company with eight subsidiaries; including a Bank, a Life Insurance Company, a Logistics company, a Properties Company among others with staff strength of over 1000 people and 26 bank branches scattered over seven out of the ten regions of Ghana and others in Nigeria, Germany and South Africa. Mr Amoabeng’s sterling leadership and entrepreneurial skills has won him and his company a number of laurels. Among his awards are: Overall Best Entrepreneur in the Maiden Ghana Entrepreneurs Award (2011). One of two Ghanaians profiled in Moky Makura’s book on “Africa’s Greatest Entrepreneurs” which profiles 16 of Africa’s top entrepreneurs. (2009). Two
times running Ghana’s Most Respected CEO (2008/2009) National Honours for an Order of the Star of the Volta- Officer’s Division presented by the President of Ghana (2007). Marketing Man of the Year (2006). Mr Amoabeng is a member of the Board of Directors of the Ghana Interbank Payment Settlement System (GHIPSS); a member of the Council of Enablis Ghana (Canadian Entrepreneurial NGO) and a member of the International Advisory Board of China Europe International Business School (CEIBS), in Ghana.

Profile of Deputy Managing Director of UT Bank- Mrs. Pearl Esua-Mensah

Mrs. Pearl Esua-Mensah is the Deputy Managing Director of UT Bank. She holds an MBA in International Business Strategy from the Manchester Business School and is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA). She joined UT Bank (then UT Financial Services) in 2004 as the Financial Controller rising to the position of General Manager and then to Director of Finance and Administration until December 2010. Mrs. Esua-Mensah has extensive experience in accounting and financial management. She worked as a Group Financial Accountant and Group Reporting Accountant for Parity Group PLC and Kantar Group both in the UK. She holds a BSc. Administration degree from the University of Ghana Legon. She was appointed to the Board in 2011. She is a member of the Council of the Global
Marketing Network, Ghana. She is a mentor and speaker on a number of youth related programmes including platforms like Foundation for Future Leaders and Waves International. She was voted the Young Professional Role Model 2011 (Female Category), organized by the Young Professionals & Youth Coalition Initiative.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the entire research method for the study and gave details about each step of the research process. According to Saunders et al. (2007), methodology is the theory of how research should be conducted, including the theoretical as well as the philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and the implications of these for the method or methods adopted.

With guidance from several qualitative researchers like Yin, Cresswell, Cooper and Schindler, (2001), Hussey and Hussey’s (1997) etc. I developed a research method for this study that helped me to bring to bear an understanding of the strategic branding stance of UT Bank, why and how the bank is a success story within a short time of its inception as a Ghanaian bank. The chapter is thus organized under four main sections: the first section deals with the rational for the research approach, the second section looks at the justification for the case selection, the third is on the data gathering methods and finally, the data analysis procedures.

Rational for the Research Approach

This study seeks to establish that branding at the corporate level is more advantageous compared to branding a product. There are several approaches to carrying out research and the choice of one’s approach usually must conform to certain variables. Bearing in mind the purpose of this study, this is to make a strong case for preference to corporate branding as a better competitive
tool for indigenous banks in Ghana in the face of intense foreign competition. Generally there are two approaches to research according to some scholars of research (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, Porter, 1996). These are quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Engstrom and Salehi-Sangari, 2007) For the purpose of this study, the qualitative approach was adopted. Qualitative researchers usually use multiple sources of data collection. Again it is known that qualitative research approach by its very nature has the tendency of serendipitously discovering and bringing to light some inherent underlying factors. Again observing the case firm (UT Bank) from afar critically, it is very easy to see that there are some attempts to promote the UT brand as a brand that symbolizes the entire UT gamut of its product offerings. The use of another research method, for instance quantitative method is likely to generate figures that may not be able to explain the complex issues of corporate branding. But the choice of the qualitative approach will enable the researcher find out whether the case bank (UT Bank) has a well-designed marketing strategy tied around corporate brand that has made the bank a successful Ghanaian bank. The qualitative stance, for that matter the case study design offers me a more descriptive space to place words on phenomenon to bring illumination to them. Corporate branding from the extant literature has a very scanty attempt both in academia and especially in practice at the industry level. Such a phenomenon with a dearth in its practice and understanding in Ghana requires an approach like the qualitative method that has some level of flexibility but at the same time methodologically grounded.
Justification for case selection

4.5 Selection of the case study organisation

UT Bank was chosen for this study because it presents an extreme case. UT bank presents a classic case of entrepreneurial success in Africa. From a very humble beginning, the company has grown to be a recognizable brand with a very credible leadership. In this part of the world (Ghana), it is very difficult to start a business, and nurturing to a level where its shares were oversubscribed when it was floated on the Ghana stock exchange. It has also maintained an indigenous ownership and has remained a majority owned indigenous company even after foreign institutions have invested in it in order to meet the Bank of Ghana minimum capital requirement. The bank therefore deserves to be investigated to serve as a case for the benefit of the academia and the industry. Also, the selection of the case company is in line with Hussey and Hussey (1997:67) who proposed that, “you may wish to select a critical case which encompasses the issues in which you are most interested.” This was in line with the advice of Yin (1994:38), who suggests that the use of only one case can be justified if at least one of the following criteria is met;

- The case is a critical one for confirming, challenging or extending a theory, because it is the only one that meets all the conditions
- The case is rare or extreme and finding other cases is highly unlikely
- The revelatory case provides unusual access for academic research
At least two of the three above criteria are met in the current study, as the subject organisation (UT Bank) showed absolute willingness to participate in the study. The selection of a single case also complies with Cavaye (1996:236) who stated that the “study of a single case enables the researcher to investigate a phenomenon in depth…enabling a rich description and revealing its deep structure.”

Data gathering methods

As this study sought to find out the branding strategy of the case firm (UT Bank), the sample selected comprised top executives of the company who are responsible for policy formulation and implementation. Four top executives were thus selected for this study in order to help find answers to the research objectives and questions stated in the chapter one of the study due to their deep insight with regards to the phenomenon being studied. Thus, the selected sample included the founder and CEO of the bank who is also the president of the UT group, the Deputy Managing Director, the Corporate Brand Manager and the Corporate Affairs manager of the bank. These individuals are directly responsible for the strategic direction of the bank. Their knowledge and insight is deemed to be very essential for this study.

Also, to bring objectivity and balance to the study, I interviewed two customers of the bank. This brought an external perspective and depth to the study. One of the customers who wanted to remain anonymous is the CEO of a pharmaceutical wholesaling and importing company, and the other is Dr Oko Abednego, a lecturer in marketing who doubles as an acting CEO of a roofing company. I purposefully chose them because of their profiles as customers, as well as their
personal knowledge that brought to bear on this research the critical balance and objectivity I sought to achieve in the findings.

The CEO of the pharmaceutical company described himself as an unconventional client who does not hold any account with the bank. He falls on the bank as a stop-gap measure on regular basis when the need arises to augment his capital. He has dealt with the bank for about three years.

Dr Okoe Abednego has been with the bank for four years. He has a personal account with the bank. His company also operates a corporate account with the bank. He describes himself as a very difficult customer and asserts that UT bank is the only bank that has been able to hold his account for four years.

Typical of a case study design is the use of multiple sources of gathering data. This study attempted to use the five sources of collecting data; documentation, archival records, interviews, observation, and physical artifacts. However, the in-depth interview method was used as the primary source to obtain more information to answer some of the major research questions.

The interview questions were open-ended to allow me flexibility to probe further in order to solicit the right responses from the respondents. The interviews were recorded. Audio recording was also used for the interview session to enable the researcher have a documentary evidence for the study as well as for easy analysis of the research findings.

With the exception of the corporate affairs who initially turned down the request for an interview, all the other five people readily granted me the interview. The corporate affairs manager later obliged after persistent calls.
Conducting the Interviews

The interviews were conducted in the offices of the participants both at the Airport City office, the Adabraka office and the corporate affairs office at East Legon all in Accra. The founder and the brands manager were interviewed at the Adabraka Holdings office whilst that of the deputy managing director of the bank was conducted at the bank head office at the Airport City. The format for the interviews were conversational and in a very relaxed atmosphere. There was no official letter to ask for the interview. I first met the CEO who had asked me to walk into his office anytime I wanted to interview him after I had mentioned it to him. He then recommended I speak to the rest of the participants as they will give me additional insight into the issues.

The constant visits to the offices of the case firm (UT Bank) has given me a unique opportunity to observe the way the firm is run and how they relate to customers. It seems to me that there is some single mindedness on how to relate to customers and this directly reflects in the promise of speed banking which is unique to the UT Bank. The dressing and the entire demeanor of all the workers portray some uniqueness that is hoped to reflect in the promise of the bank. And even their adverts on all forms of media seem to be directed in that respect.

In addition to the interviews and the personal observation, the study also made use of annual reports, information about the firm in an electronic form (mainly the internet) and brochures. These documents augment and serve as additional sources of information for the study and they were very useful.
Data analysis procedures

The in-depth interviews were first and foremost transcribed, sorted and classified according to the major headings of the questionnaire in a systematic and iterative manner. The verbatim words of the respondents were used to form the themes that emerged out of the data provided.

Inductively, the emerging pattern gave credence to the theme of the study indicating that corporate branding strategy was not accidental in the running of UT Bank. This method of analysis has some backing from Amaratunga et al. (2002) stating that a case study research is able to draw on inductive method because of the opportunity for open-ended enquiry. The inductive method is a data analysis technique that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis emerge out of the data provided by respondents rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis (Patton, 1991). Guba (1986), and several other researchers (Feldman, 1995; Harris and Watkins, 1998; Shaw, 1999; Blankson and Omar, 2002), have shown the way, thus the inductive method was used in this study for coding, categorizing, and identifying the themes from the audiotapes and transcripts.
CHAPTER FIVE
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.0 Introduction
This chapter presents the findings in relation to the questions raised in the research questions. Analysis will be done by looking at the conceptual framework of the study and to identify whether the branding strategy being employed at UT Bank conforms to that framework. The first part of this chapter will report on the findings. After the reportage, a succinct discussion on the findings will be followed.

5.1 Findings on the Firm

It must be noted that the brand strategy of UT bank is corporate branding.

‘Our brand sets us apart- our success or failure depends on our brand’

- Prince Kofi Amoabeng, Founder

He also asserts that what makes brand is what sets you apart, thus:

‘In business you sell the same thing, but people will come to you when they believe you mean well’.

Our brand is very key to our strategy – Pearl Essua-Mensah, DMD, UT bank

‘The differentiation is by ensuring that the service is good, its fast, its quick, its efficient’ – Corporate Affairs Manager, Rami Baitie

This is also re-echoed by the brands manager, Litia Ohene-Effah who says:
'We all do the same banking- the difference is the ‘experience’ which we have deployed resources to make possible’

The CEO of the pharmaceutical company even though was not happy with the high interest rate that the bank charges his company on their loans, was very unequivocal about how confident he is in the brand of UT. He thus said: ‘I believe in the UT brand for what it does, what it stands for. It is a solid brand. To me, they are fulfilling a certain need in the economy that the conventional banks are not providing but what we need them to do, and I don’t know if the central bank can do something about it, it is their interest rate. If they can provide the same interest rate that the normal banks are charging, I would move my entire business to them’.

Dr Oko Abednego had this to say to a follow up question on why he described the brand as an ‘assuring one’: ‘A competing bank came here yesterday and said he has heard about us and wanted us to subscribe to them. I used these words: “for me the UT bank has assured me”. I told the person that you only divorce your wife when something fatal or something you think you can’t reconcile happens. So far I have not seen that with UT so it will be difficult for me to say I am leaving UT, the brand is just reliable. It is a reliable brand’.

It must however be noted that the brand also has some problem with how its identity is perceived by some stakeholders. Indeed this is reflected in the reference to other banks as ‘conventional banks’ by the CEO of the pharmaceutical company in talking about the interest rate of UT bank.

In the opinion of the CEO of the pharmaceutical company, he does not perceive UT as a bank in an answer to a question as how he sees the bank: ‘Naah, I don’t see it as a bank, I see it as a financial institution that offers quick loans or that will offer you a loan in less than 48 hours’.
Dr Abednego had to say when I asked him about his impression about the identity of the bank:

‘Maybe for me because I am too knowledgeable I see them as a bank. But I intentionally use these as examples in class and a lot of students still struggle with that. They still don’t see them as a bank. There is this perception about them being too hard on their customers. People still think that UT charges are very high and that they will sanction you severely if you go for a loan, so that perception is there. I personally don’t have that experience’.

However it must be noted that these perceptions may not be entirely true as revealed in the statement by the CEO of the pharmaceutical company: ‘I think that the perception I had about UT bank was that when you go to the UT bank you are digging a hole for yourself…… That was the kind of perception but it was surprising when I started dealing with UT bank. I find them to be very friendly. Even at the end of the month if you cannot pay your loan, you can call them and reschedule. To me you can call them and say this month my cheque cannot go through can we reschedule? And they open up and accept. I had a very bad experience lately. I had a loan that was not going very well because of the bad economic situation. I had been thinking for three to four sleepless nights. What is going to happen to me? Are they going to seize my car? I had the courage to call the relationship manager for a meeting in my office. The relation manager walked into my office and I said: I have a problem. I would not be able to honor my cheque can you suspend it and every week I will try and pay a certain amount and she willingly obliged.

Interestingly the bank is very aware of these perceptions and they seem to working to correct it.

There are those who still think that guys, if you need a loan just go there……. do they see as a bank? Maybe not! Our job is to make everybody understand that we are no longer a non-bank
financial institution. There are two ways that we are dealing with that: through formal and informal ways. Formally we communicate what we do through our adverts and public relations. Informally, I think the best form of advertising in this country is word of mouth. How? By getting it right on the job in terms of service – Rami Baitie, Corporate Affairs manager

Thus on a continuous basis a lot is being done to protect and nurture the corporate brand. Also, the corporate brand has profoundly been influenced by the founder, Kofi Amoabeng who said:

‘At the beginning it was not difficult to recognize that I was the company and that made me very careful’

Coming from the background of the military, he brought to bear on the company the values of efficiency, discipline, straightforwardness, speed, ethics, and authenticity among others. Liticia Ohene-Effah, the corporate brands manager recognizes this and said:

‘UT has been a strong brand and has been personified with the founder. That is one of the challenges- to separate the brand from him’.

Again, underlying the corporate brand is the founder’s philosophy about time. To him, ‘Time is life’ and so when one wastes another person’s time, part of that person’s life has been murdered. Thus, every effort is made to create a comfortable atmosphere to make the time that people spend with them a worthwhile experience. To the bank, time is of essence and so clients’ time is not wasted.

‘Time is life so if you care about people you do not waste their time’ – Kofi Amoabeng, Founder.
It is therefore interesting to note that the bank has put in place processes to conform to the brand. ‘Processes are in conformity to the brand - speed’

- Kofi Amoabeng, founder

It is also worthy to note that the products of the bank reflect the values of the brand. For example – ‘Phone for loan’ (a product that makes it possible for customers to secure loans without personally being at the bank, including those who do not have account with the bank) and ‘loan in less than 48 hours’ are some of the products that reflect an attribute of speed of the UT bank brand.

‘We wanted to create a bank that will act as non-bank- we are the only bank in the world to deliver loan without an account’ the UT bank founder retorts, to reflect on a brand that is efficient in delivering products in a unique way. Indeed this is the experience the brands manager made reference to as a differentiating factor from their competitors.

5.2 findings on Mission Statement

The mission of UT bank is:

“The preferred bank for businesses and individuals providing quality and outstanding products with speed and efficiency to delight customers and build shareholder value”

Vision:

“Redefining Banking”
'The differentiation is by ensuring that the service is good, its fast, its quick, its efficient'. This assertion by the corporate affairs manager sums up the finding that the bank uses the mission/vision as the underlying force to drive their corporate brand.

5.3 Findings on Stakeholder Interest

Corporate brands may need to take account of the larger group of internal and external stakeholders identified earlier. Stakeholders’ perceptions of a corporate brand are mainly developed through an accumulative process, in which they interact and communicate with the firm. The value of a corporate brand is based on its recognition by both customers and shareholders, which adds value to the reputation of the firm. Influential authors hold that corporate branding should be adapted to satisfy the needs of various stakeholders (Balmer, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2001). Van Riel and van Bruggen (2002) argue that decision makers operating at the business-unit level may nevertheless see the advantage in taking full advantage of corporate branding.

This need to satisfy the different stakeholders is very much appreciated by the bank and this is seen in the interview with the founder of the bank and the corporate brands manager.

‘We try to add value to our stakeholders, both internal and external. Internally, we are very heavy on people through our selection process – interviews, a look at their upbringing among others as well as training to give them the orientation to live our values’ – Kofi Amoabeng, Founder
On clients, the founder said: ‘our clients know what to expect (fast responsive loans) so we have put in place measures to monitor delivery. We have the CEO’s phone number at every branch and we say call if you are dissatisfied’

On government as a stakeholder the bank recognises the need to be transparent and operate with integrity. This therefore emboldened them to go to IFC (International Finance Corporation) to buy shares in UT bank to meet the Bank of Ghana capital requirement for banks in Ghana.

‘Integrity motivated us to go to IFC because we are transparent. Part of our DNA enables us to take on huge challenges’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

The bank is also passionate about their shareholders. This passion is in part due to their contribution to the growth of the business from their humble beginnings. However this passion is frustrated by the economic conditions that according to the CEO are eroding the gains that the bank would have otherwise made. To him the value of the bank is not different from what it was about two years ago due partly to inflation and the depreciation of the cedi.

‘The shareholders are very difficult to please’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

As very important stakeholder of the bank, the bank is also always in consultation with their major shareholders to make an input into decision making. The brands manager, Liticia Ohene-Effah had this to say on shareholders:

‘We hold investors forum to make an input when we are going for shareholders’ meetings’
5.4 Findings on Corporate Image, Identity and Reputation

IMAGE

Corporate brand images typically result from customers’ interaction with the firm’s employees, physical presence and overall marketing efforts. A degree of intangibility and complexity is considered to be a central characteristic of a corporate brand (Ind, 1997). According to Kofi Amoabeng, the founder, the company strives to create an image of genuine, authentic, and ethical bank. This therefore explains their investments in the training of their people, the implementation of good processes and the creation of good environment for banking activities. For example, the company recently acquired the Manet building at the Airport City to enhance its image.

‘We were considered an underdog, and we needed to make a statement and it worked – nobody can ignore us!’ – Pearl Essua Mensah, DMD, UT bank

IDENTITY

The core of corporate branding consists of two important concepts: corporate identity and corporate associations (Dacin and Brown, 2002). “Corporate identity”; refers to the characteristics or associations that strategists in an organization want to implant in the minds of their internal and external constituencies. Dacin and Brown (2002) argue that decision makers in a firm will decide on an intended corporate identity and promote it to various audiences, who will form corporate associations and respond accordingly. When products vary and change over
time and across markets, customers usually use corporate brand names and corporate identities to recognize and comprehend products or services.

At UT bank internal reinforcement of the corporate identity is done by brand ambassadors who are sent to the branches to remind people of the brand values of the company.

‘We have brand ambassadors who on continuous basis go round to remind people about our values – we are very mindful of new comers’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

On creating an identity externally, the bank has succeeded in doing that through the creation of products like ‘phone for loan’ and ‘loan in less than 48 hours’ that are consistent with their values.

‘Our clients know what to expect - fast responsive loans’ Kofi Amoabeng, founder

This identity is consistently communicated to the external stakeholders through their advertising and sponsorship programmes. For example, the bank sponsors Maa Nkommo (discussion by women) as a platform to communicate their financial literacy programme.

REPUTATION

Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2002) maintain that outside perception of a firm’s organizational culture may influence its reputation. Therefore, firms should recognize that maintaining a favourable public perception of that culture to the public can have a positive impact on reputation.
UT bank is aware of some unfavourable perception about the bank as a loan shark. For the bank however, this perception is not true and the founder for example is unapologetic about that perception.

‘You cannot lie and take somebody’s money’, and added: ‘Being good means being mean to the bad people for the sake of the good people’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

‘It is rather other people who are saying things about our reputation that is not true, even in the industry’ – Pearl Essua Mensah, DMD, UT Bank

‘People are seeing us a loan shark but that is not true’ – Liticia Ohene-Effah, brands manager

Recognising that perception is very difficult to change overnight, the bank is deploying strategies to deal with that negative reputation by making a lot more people experience the brand.

‘We have moved from awareness to the level where people need to experience the brand. People use to come to us but now we are going to people. Our strategy is to activate the brand. For example, we have set up a booth at the mall to interact, chat and try and get business from people. We have also embarked on financial literacy program to train our clients and also to educate the public through sponsored programmes’ – Liticia Ohene-Effah, brands manager.

According to Peal Essua Mensah, the DMD, the bank as part of its strategy to erode this negative perception has developed a strategy to win an award every year to enhance their legitimacy and to be perceived as a good and excellent bank.

‘The bank of the year (2011) award means a lot to us’ – Pearl Essua Mensah, DMD, UT Bank
5.5 Findings on Market Complexity

Griffin (2002) asserts that the antecedents of branding strategy are both external and internal. External factors such as environment uncertainty and institutional environment can create expectation. Internal factors such as business exposure and top management attitudes can affect managerial decision-making capability. Many firms find the uncertain environments in emerging markets are difficult to predict or control, so they typically create strategies, including corporate branding strategies, to ease that uncertainty.

It is interesting to note that from the interviews conducted and observations made, market complexity does not influence the corporate branding strategy at UT as espoused in the framework. Even though the bank’s research and development department actively check what is happening in the environment, market complexity is not seen as an important factor in the formulation of their corporate branding strategy.

5.6 Findings on Marketing Cost

It is very costly to establish a new brand today, and expensive to maintain an existing one (Berry, 1993). There is always scope for tension between proponents of corporate and product branding. Firms may gear up for short-term, tactical choices that maximize revenues in a period of economic downturn, and many might build product brands at the expanse of the corporate brand. However, Booker (2002) predicts that globalization, interconnected markets, affiliations
and associations will provide an impetus for the building of strong corporate brands in the coming years.

As noted by the brands manager Liticia Ohene-Effah that: ‘We all do the same banking’, UT focuses on the corporate branding to give a difference to customers.

‘We are focussed on what we do, so we control expenditure’ – Liticia Ohene-Effah, brands manager

The bank also control marketing cost by putting in place processes that conforms to the brand,

And that has also lead to the creation of products that are not different from the corporate brand value, for example, ‘loan in 48 hours’, and ‘phone for loan’.

‘The products must reflect the values’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

‘We do very little programme sponsorship and I try to deal directly with the TV stations to control cost’ – Sophia lissah, UT bank assistant corporate affairs manager.

5.7 Findings on choice of corporate brand strategy

After studying the variables in the framework and comparing it with brand strategy of UT bank, one can conclude that to a very extent, UT bank practices corporate branding as these variables have very great impact on the formulation of the corporate branding strategy. That is, stakeholder interest, corporate image, identity and reputation, and marketing cost impacted on the formulation of the corporate brand strategy.
In analysing the choice of corporate branding strategy as portrayed in the framework, I would like to identify the brand elements or brand identities of the UT bank brand. According to Keller: brand elements are those trademark devices that serve to identify and differentiate the brand. The main ones are the brand names, URLs, logos, symbols, characters, spokespeople, slogans, jingles, packages and signage. It must also be noted that the criteria for selecting brand elements are the following:

- Memorable – must facilitate recall or recognition in purchase or consumption setting.

- Meaningful – general information on product category as well as particular attributes or benefits of the brand

- Likeable - Is it likeable visually, verbally and in other ways?

- Transferable – measures the extent to which the brand elements adds to the brand equity of new products for the brand.

- Adaptable – the brands elements must be adaptable to meet the changing needs of consumers and the market.

- Protectable – the elements must be protectable both legally competitively.

The choice of brand elements is very important in building brand equity, and according to Keller ‘the test of the brand-building ability of brand elements is what consumers would think or feel about the product if they knew of only the brand name, associated logo, and other characteristics. A brand element that provides a positive contribution to brand equity conveys or implies certain valued associations’
The brands manager, Leticia, explains their logo that represents the brand of the bank:

- **The colour** yellow represents wealth and signifies the prosperity that the bank seeks to contribute to their shareholders.

- **Green** – represents growth

- **The square** that surrounds the logo represents strength and structure. Thus, as observed by the DMD of the bank Pearl Essuah-Mensah *we are very careful about governance issues*

- **The circular** features of the logo represent unity, solidarity and universality.

- **The arcs** represent forward, energetic and dynamic movement.

In explaining how the logo will communicate and have meaning to external stakeholders,

Pearl Essush Mensah, the DMD Said: *we live the values expressed in the logo*. 

This assertion by the DMD is captured in a more dramatic way by the corporate affairs manager, Rami Baitie: *When I get ready in the morning to come to work and I look at myself in the mirror, I see the UT brand*

Thus, the bank through orientation and training as well as constant reminders through brand ambassadors, imbibe these values in their employees. Therefore, as these employees interact with customers and other stakeholders, the experience they give make them have a sense of what the bank stands for.
'We have brand ambassadors who on continuous basis go round to remind people about our values – we are very mindful of new comers’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

‘We try to add value to our stakeholders, both internal and external. Internally, we are very heavy on people through our selection process – interviews, a look at their upbringing among others as well as training to give them the orientation to live our values’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

UT bank has benefited from its strong brand in its dealings with the government, financial sector, labour market and the general public.

5.8 Findings on outcomes of corporate brand strategy of UT Bank

Government

In dealing with the government, UT bank has benefited from having a strong brand. For example, for the second time, the bank recently benefited from a Japanese contract to handle their rice import into the country, according to the DMD of the bank.

‘The Nigerian central bank came to Ghana to asses us when we applied for licence to operate there, and they were impressed’ - Pearl Essua- Mensah, DMD, UT Bank.
Financial Sector

With the financial sector, the bank was able to secure investment from the International Finance Corporation to enable it meet the bank of Ghana capitalisation requirement, and that was the first time that an indigenous bank got that investment from such an institution. Balmer and Gray (2003) maintain that one of the benefits of strong corporate brands is that investors may seek them out deliberately.

‘When IFC was investing in us, they were buying into a story – the UT story’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

‘We attracted a lot of investors when we were raising capital. The difficulty was that they were offering us lot more money than we needed’ – Pearl Essua Mensah, DMD, UT Bank.

Labour

On the labour market, the bank is attracting more competitive labour force of because of the brand. For example, the current head of corporate affairs manager was an employee of Ecobank but left to join the bank.

Balmer and Gray (2003) maintain that one of the benefits of strong corporate brands is that they play an important role in the recruitment and retention of valuable employees.
'We used to do blind advertisement and we were not getting good CVs. Then we started to add UT bank to our adverts and we started getting good CVs’ – Pearl essuah Mensah

Public

There is also goodwill from the public:

‘Even when we make mistakes we are excused because people trust us even though we don't tolerate mistakes internally’ – Pearl Essuah-Mensah, DMD, UT Bank

SHAREHOLDER VALUE

Although the bank recognises the importance of its shareholders, they have not been able to deliver value as expected.

‘The shareholders are very difficult to please’- Kofi Amoabeng, founder

The shares of the bank that started at 30 pesewas is 33pesewas after two years. To the founder, the value of the company two years ago is almost the same today because of the depreciation of the cedi and other economic challenges. However, the bank is working very hard to improve the situation.
5.9 Discussion

As seen in the previous section, UT bank seems to have a corporate branding strategy that accompanies items embedded in the framework (as adapted from Xie and Boggs, 2006) formulated in the literature. To better visualise this attribute of the study’s result, this section is aimed at discussing findings with respect to reviewed literature. In this section, emphasis is placed on the framework of corporate branding formulated in the literature.

5.9.1 The Firm

It is made evident that the UT Bank uses corporate branding as its branding strategy. In practice, this situation harmonises with the universal corporate branding options of commercial banks and other firms in the financial services sector. The bank’s branding option sets it apart from being a product-centric organisation that often uses product branding as a branding strategy. Moreover, the study’s literature largely agrees with the adoption of corporate branding strategy by banks and service-oriented firms. For instance, Brodie and de Chernatony (2009) provides a theoretical framework that recognises commercial banks as part of the global circle of businesses that require the corporate branding strategy instead of product branding, to hedge market competition of the highest intensity. It is also argued in the light of empirical evidence that service firms such as banks are better grounded in their markets in the light of a corporate branding strategy (Schultz and Hatch, 2003; Alizadeh et al., 2014). Logically therefore, management of UT Bank makes the right choice of branding strategy, a situation that possibly forms the basis of the satisfaction of its customers and other stakeholders about its service approach and reputation.
From the viewpoint of its senior management members, the UT brand is superior on the basis of being distinguished in terms of service excellence. The UT brand is seen by senior management members as one which stands apart from other conventional banks. In essence, some or all of the things the bank does for customers and its shareholders are not defined by the corporate strategy of other banks in Ghana, especially the indigenous ones. According to Alizadeh et al. (2014), the quality of banking services, or the effectiveness of corporate branding largely depends on what customers say about the bank. In this study therefore, customer opinions form part of the perceived superiority of the UT brand and its corporate branding strategy. All responding customers vehemently agreed that they had no doubt about the reliability of the UT brand. Moreover, the corporate branding strategy of the bank virtually sits well with customer demands and expectations. Yet this is not a new scenario and development since many theoretical and empirical studies (e.g. Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Motion et al., 2003; etc.) suggest that a bank’s option of a corporate branding strategy is the best to yield market performance and corporate expectation.

Nonetheless, both management members and customers of the bank acknowledge some ugly spots on the UT brand. Critically thinking, all the negative aspects of the brand such as highly charged interest rates on loans and the strong attachment of the brand by the public to its CEO, Prince Kofi Amoabeng, takes its root in the corporate branding strategy of the banks mother company, UT Financial Service Limited. In this respect, the high interest rate element was evidently borrowed from UT Financial Services Limited, which is part of the non-bank financial services sector characterised by highly charged interest rates on loans. Also, the public’s attachment of the brand to Prince Kofi Amoabeng can be traced back to the period before UT Bank was established, when activities of UT Financial Services Limited were aired alongside the
name of Kofi Amoabeng. This importation of features and perceptions on the mother company into UT Bank has a bearing with part of the literature on corporate branding. Hatch et al. (2001) are of the view that the development of a business into another, or the merging of two or more businesses comes with this consequence. Invariably, when a business is developed from one or more businesses, it would have all or part of public perceptions associated with the original business or businesses. This idea strongly applies to businesses retaining part or the entire name of the original business. With respect to UT Bank, its prefix “UT”, which is the bank’s trademark, comes from the mother company, UT Financial Services Limited.

Fortunately, management of the bank have recognised this anomaly, and how its dents their corporate branding strategy. Strategies are therefore being implemented in accordance to policies to remedy the situation. It is believed that this remedial initiative and step of the bank would yield good results. As Asikhia and Binuyo (2013) put it, replicas of businesses or businesses bearing names and reputations of other businesses would be better-off in the market if they counter the negative aspect of their image-sharing status. In the case of UT brand, efforts seem to be channelled towards separating it from the personality of its CEO and the image of UT Financial Services Limited.

The logo and values of UT Bank play a significant role in the corporate branding strategy of the institution. This situation is in harmony with the assertion of Motion et al. (2003), who argues that the logo could be the central symbol of what a company represents in the market place. Moreover, the approach to service delivery and what the firm does in entirety is expressed in the logo. As admitted by a senior member of the bank’s management, the bank lives the values expressed in the logo. Moreover, the multicolour nature of the logo reflects the dynamism in the
bank’s values. The colours green signifies growth, and the bank is motivated by it to provide services that warrant continuous growth. Also, such features as the square, circular and arcs play major roles in service packaging and corporate behaviour.

As acknowledged by some writers (e.g. Motion et al., 2003; Schultz and Hatch, 2003) the logo of UT Bank ought to be unique so customers and members of the general public can readily make it out. Abimbola and Vallaster (2007) also suggest that features of business logos must be understood, if possible, by customers since the logo is a symbolic way of making promises to external stakeholders. There is however uncertainty as to whether customers understand features of the bank’s logo. Yet, the bank’s brand elements are satisfactorily based on memorability, meaningfulness, likeability, transferability, adaptability, and “protectability”, a strategy that conforms to recommendations from Motion et al. (2003) and Schultz and Hatch (2003).

5.9.2 Mission Statement

The literature is replete with the need to have a strong relationship between the mission/vision of an organisation and its corporate brand. de Chernatony’s(1999) viewpoint on the management of a corporate brand begins with corporate vision). de Chernatony (2001) calls for firms to integrate their strategic vision with their brand building. Corporate branding enables firms to use the vision and culture of the whole organization explicitly as part of its uniqueness (Balmer, 1995, 2001; de Chernatony, 1999.

Indeed UT bank’s corporate brand strategy is driven by the mission/vision of the bank as expressed by the top management interviewed. The bank has aligned its people, system and behaviour to its mission/vision statement to deliver fast and efficient services to its customers. Its vision to redefine baking is captured in the statement by the CEO, ‘We wanted to create a bank
that will act as non-bank- we are the only bank in the world to deliver loan without an account’. The CEO statement is also a reflection on the bank’s reliance on its mission/vision statement as the driving force behind its brand thus,

‘Our clients know what to expect (fast responsive loans) so we have put in place measures to monitor delivery. We have the CEO’s phone number at every branch and we say call if you are dissatisfied’, the CEO asserts. This assertion reflects their mission to be the “The preferred bank for businesses and individuals providing quality and outstanding products with speed and efficiency to delight customers and build shareholder value”.

5.9.3 Stakeholder Interest

Corporate brands may need to take account of the larger group of internal and external stakeholders. This is because the nature of corporate brands intersects with perceptions of internal and external stakeholders. The value of a corporate brand is based on its recognition by customers, management and shareholders. It is in view of this that many writers (e.g. Balmer, 2001; Davies and Chun, 2002; Hatch and Schultz, 2001) agree that corporate branding should be adapted to satisfy the needs of various stakeholders. UT Bank prides itself with its accolades from all stakeholders. Firstly, activities of recruitment, training, motivation and performance evaluation are result-driven and are satisfactory to employees. Management of the bank is much dedicated to the provision of a congenial work environment that is beyond “chilled” banking halls and offices. Van Riel and van Bruggen, (2002) posit that the nature of the environment in which employees work in a bank is contingent on stakeholders’ satisfaction. It is found in this study that the bank’s working environment is much of a social environment defined by virtue,
and embraces much of organisational justice. This kind of work environment has been recognised as supreme in terms of impact on external and internal stakeholders (Amini et al., 2012; Asikhia and Binuyo, 2013).

Shareholders are the reasons for the existence of the bank. As a result, corporate branding is geared towards shareholder satisfaction through the maximisation of shareholder returns. In practice, the corporate branding strategy itself is subject to what shareholders want to gain from their investment (Balmer, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 2001), and findings of this study reveal that corporate strategy in UT Bank forms the embodiment of principles that bear the fertility of the financial expectations of shareholders. There is therefore no doubt that corporate branding in UT Bank squares with internal stakeholders. However, concerns have been made about the need to improve upon current state of the bank’s corporate strategy. Of course; rational thinking embraces demand to go beyond the status quo; so the fact that the corporate strategy of UT Bank needs improvement does not discredit corporate branding in the organisation. Though the CEO mentioned that shareholders are hard to please, the bank is said to make various avenues for living up to their expectations and incorporating their inputs in decision making.

Findings of this study portray customers as stakeholders with the highest value relative to the rest of bank’s stakeholders. Many writers (e.g. Abimbola and Vallaster, 2007; Alizadeh et al., 2014) similarly recognise customers as “assets” that must be managed, satisfied and retained. As seen earlier, customers of UT Bank are not only satisfied with the bank’s services, but also recognise it as a “reliable” and “unfailing” brand. One business customer revealed that he is unwilling to have a replacement for UT Bank because he is sure of what he gains from the bank. According to Brodie and de Chernatony (2009), such customer decisions are only made for exceptional
brands. Exceptionality in this context does not necessarily mean that UT Bank is the best in Ghana, but as the CEO of the bank puts it, customers know management of the bank mean well in terms of its promises to them. In a nutshell, the UT brand is well positioned to address the needs of its external and internal stakeholders.

5.9.4 Corporate Image

Corporate brand image naturally results from customers’ interaction with the firm’s employees, physical presence and overall marketing efforts. A degree of intangibility and complexity is considered to be a central characteristic of a corporate brand (Ind, 1997). According to Kofi Amoabeng, the founder of UT Bank, the company strives to create an image of genuine, authentic, and ethical bank. This therefore explains their investments in the training of their people, the implementation of good processes and the creation of good environment for banking activities. For example, the company recently acquired the Manet building at the Airport City to enhance its image. According to Pearl Essua Mensah, the deputy managing director of the bank, UT Bank is considered an underdog, and its management needed to make a statement to support this public view. She adds that nobody can ignore them now owing to management’s effort to build its image.

There is uncertainty about what the brand image of UT Bank is in terms of public perceptions. One customer admitted that he and a lot of people he knows do not see UT Bank as a bank. The organisation is rather seen as a financial institution that offers loans when needed within the shorted possible time. The general public is also deterred from being associated with the bank because it is perceived as an institution that is hard on its default customers, and mostly unreasonable with its borrowers. Conversely, a customer disagreed with this stance based on
personal experiences with the bank. From a personal standpoint, the public’s recognition of UT Bank as a full-fledged bank is debatable. It is also doubtful whether customers and members of the general public are comfortable with the lending and other services of the bank. Topalian, (2003) recommends that a critical analysis be made to determine the nature of the firm’s corporate image in this situation.

5.9.5 Corporate Identify

The core of corporate branding consists of two important concepts: corporate identity and corporate associations (Dacin and Brown, 2002). “Corporate identity” refers to the characteristics or associations that strategists in an organization want to implant in the minds of their internal and external constituencies. Dacin and Brown (2002) argue that decision makers in a firm will decide on an intended corporate identity and promote it to various audiences, who will form corporate associations and respond accordingly. When products vary and change over time and across markets, customers usually use corporate brand names and corporate identities to recognise and comprehend products or services.

Management of UT Bank endeavours to create a favourable corporate identity that agrees with its corporate branding expectations. For instance; the bank uses brand ambassadors who are sent to the branches to remind people of the brand values of the company. Moreover, some advances in lending in Ghana are only associated with UT bank. The bank has succeeded in doing that through the creation of products like ‘phone for loan’ and ‘loan in less than 48 hours’ that are consistent with their values. Also, this identity is consistently communicated to the external stakeholders through their advertising and sponsorship programmes. For example, the bank sponsors Maa Nkommo (discussion by women) as a platform to communicate their financial
literacy programme. But the influence of these products on the identity of the bank is rather a form of infiltration from the activities of UT Financial Services Limited. In relation to the arguments of Amini et al. (2012) and Harris and de Chernatony (2001), one can be certain about the current identity of UT Bank depending on the influence made on its identity by UT Financial Services Limited and the extent to which its management currently distinguishes the bank from its mother company, UT Financial Services Limited.

As discussed earlier, much of the identity of UT Financial Services Limited reflects on UT Bank; hence the bank’s corporate identity is adulterated. As posited by Abimbola and Vallaster (2007), this situation is mendable if not in support of corporate growth. Evidently, the types of products natured by the bank (e.g. ‘phone for loan’ and ‘loan in less than 48 hours’) form an embodiment of remedies to whatever negative effect UT Financial Services Limited makes on the bank’s identity.

5.9.6 Corporate Reputation

Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2002) maintain that public perception of a firm’s organisational culture may influence its reputation. Therefore, firms should recognise that maintaining a favourable public perception of that culture can have a positive impact on reputation. UT Bank is aware of some unfavourable perception about the bank as a “loan shark”. To senior management members of the bank however, this perception is not true and the CEO for example is unapologetic about it. But it was admitted that this perception prevails, and management of the bank is consequently making efforts to refute it and undo its negative effect on the bank’s reputation. For instance; the bank has moved from awareness creation to the level where people need to experience the brand as a basis of proving critics wrong.
In practice, being unresponsive to misconception on a brand is woeful. This is because refusal to respond to public misconceptions about a brand implies that what they public thinks about the brand are factual. It is in view of this that some writers (e.g. Abimbola, 2001; Abimbola and Vallaster, 2007) have encouraged organisations to quickly launch an open response to public misconception to avoid its repercussions. As results indicate, management of UT Bank is making a response to the public’s perceptions about the brand. Yet, there is uncertainty about the openness of this response. Abimbola (2001) argues that a directly open response is needed to refute public misconceptions about a brand, depending on the gravity of the effect made by the misconception on the brand’s reputation. Personally, UT Bank has done little in this respect.

5.9.7 Market Complexity

Increasingly, the market of UT Bank gets complex. Market complexity is defined by entry of more banks in the sector, sensitivity of regulations, delicacy of customer demand, and exposure to infrastructure (Motion et al., 2003; Griffin, 2002; Balmer and Gray, 2003). Generally, market complexity affects individual banks in terms of market share and financial performance. One of the results of this study touches on how the complexity of the market in Ghana influences UT Bank.

Griffin (2002) asserts that the antecedents of branding strategy are both external and internal. External factors such as environment uncertainty and institutional environment can create expectation. Internal factors such as business exposure and top management attitudes can affect managerial decision-making capability. Many firms find the uncertain environments in emerging markets are difficult to predict or control, so they typically create strategies, including corporate branding strategies, to ease that uncertainty. It is interesting to note that from the interviews
conducted and observations made, market complexity does not influence the corporate branding strategy at UT as espoused in the framework. Even though the bank’s research and development department actively check what is happening in the environment, market complexity is not seen as an important factor in the formulation of their corporate branding strategy.

The result that UT Bank is unaffected by the complexity of its market supports a result of the study. This result has to do with the fact that UT Bank has quite an outstanding corporate branding strategy that empowers it to stand against market shocks. According to Motion et al. (2003), firms rising above market complexity are those with a superior brand. It is therefore worth saying that UT Bank is more comfortable in its market relative to others as a result of its corporate branding strategy.

5.9.8 Market Cost

According to Berry (1993), it is very costly to establish a new brand today, and expensive to maintain an existing one. This fact sensitises corporations to optimise market spending as much as they can. There is always scope for tension between proponents of corporate and product branding. Firms may gear up for short-term, tactical choices that maximize revenues in a period of economic downturn, and many might build product brands at the expanse of the corporate brand. However, Booker (2002) predicts that globalisation, interconnected markets, affiliations and associations will provide an impetus for the building of strong corporate brands in the coming years.

The management of the UT Brand is associated with a strong policy for market cost control. It is revealed that the bank adopts market cost optimising strategies that make the best of the UT brand. The bank also controls its market expenditure by making limited use of sponsorship and
engagement in corporate social responsibility programs. Several empirical evidences indicate that engagement in corporate social responsibility (CSR) makes a positive effect on business performance (Brodie and de Chernatony, 2009). By implication, UT Bank partially relishes CSR because it minimally engages in its activities. Though adverts are often used to promote the brand and its associated products, strong negotiations are used as a basis of doing so at the most optimum cost. The CEO admitted that he personally engages in negotiating for advertising. Results generally show that UT Bank owns a good strategy for avoiding excessive market expenditure. This corporate capability is identified in the literature as a strategy for maximising financial returns and avoiding financial shocks in periods of recession (Booker, 2002; de Chernatony, 2001; Brodie and de Chernatony, 2009).

5.9.9 Outcomes of Corporate Brand Strategy

The corporate branding strategy of UT Bank would be adjudged effective, at least on the basis of the bank’s breakthroughs in government, the financial sector, labour market and the general public. UT Bank has benefited from having a strong brand. For example, for the second time, the bank recently benefited from a Japanese contract to handle their rice import into the country. Secondly, the Nigerian Central Bank was impressed after assessing UT Bank in Ghana when it filed an application for operating in Nigeria. According to Harris and de Chernatony (2001), such milestones in the face of government are a perfect indicator of market superiority and remarkable corporate image, where market superiority and remarkable corporate image are basic features of a good brand.
With the financial sector, UT Bank was able to secure investment from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to enable it meet the Bank of Ghana’s capitalisation requirement. This was the first time an indigenous bank got that investment from such an institution. Balmer and Gray (2003) maintain that one of the benefits of strong corporate brands is that investors may seek them out deliberately. On the labour market, the bank is attracting more competitive labour force because of the perceived value of the UT brand. For example, the current head of corporate affairs management was an employee of Ecobank but left to join UT Bank. His resignation from Ecobank to UT Bank was influenced by his recognition for the standard of the UT brand. Balmer and Gray (2003) make the submission that one of the benefits of strong corporate brands is that they play an important role in the recruitment and retention of valuable employees.

The value of the UT brand is also expressed in managers’ perceived customer loyalty. One senior management member commented that even when the bank makes mistakes it is excused by customers because people trust the reputation of the bank and hold its promises sacred. When customers tolerate and endure mistakes from a firm, this reflects their recognition of something desirable in the services of the firm (Abimbola, 2001; Alizadeh et al., 2014). Similarly, Asikhia, and Binuyo (2013) posit that customers holding on to a firm even in the face of service challenges is a sign of utmost customer loyalty, which is a long-term benefit of superior brands (Abimbola, 2001; Alizadeh et al., 2014). It is evident that the corporate branding strategy of UT Bank is yielding results. According to Hatch et al. (2001), a brand associated with such a strategy is outstanding and superior.
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

The final chapter seeks to evaluate and interpret the outcome of the study in relation to the study’s research objectives and the research questions. It will also discuss contributions of the present study, implication for management and recommendations for future studies.

6.1 Summary of Findings

6.1.1 Research Question One

The first research question relates to the branding strategy that indigenous banks should deploy to stay competitive. In a developing or emerging economy like Ghana, that is experiencing a relatively rapid pace of economic development, and has initiated economic liberalization and a market economy, policies result in many players offering similar products and services in the banking sector. Since 2005, Ghana has seen the influx of a lot of foreign banks.
‘Ghana simply has too many banks’ (Public Affairs Dept, World Bank, www.myjoyonline 2006, Accra). Interestingly, the banking sector is dominated by foreign banks that are well established, have stronger brands and are well capitalized with better international exposure. Also, with the changing banking regulations including the change in their capital requirement (sixty million Cedis), Ghana will continue to see acquisitions and mergers leading to consolidations and a more competitive industry.

Indigenous banks that will survive will therefore have to rethink their marketing strategy. From the marketing point of view, compelling reasons exist for Ghanaian indigenous banks to niche and build very strong corporate brands.

Alan (1996) attributes the surge of corporate branding to the rising costs of advertising, retailer power, product fragmentation, new product development cost efficiencies, and consumers’ expectations of corporate credentials. Corporate brands can increase the firm’s visibility, recognition and reputation to a greater extent than can product brands. Balmer and Gray (2003) maintain that one of the benefits of strong corporate brands is that investors may seek them out deliberately. They furthermore offer more chances for strategic or brand alliances, and play an
important role in the recruitment and retention of valuable employees. This increase in interest has been necessitated by a range of contributory factors such as the need to differentiate because of increased competitive rivalry; the increased recognition of the value of integrated marketing communications and the shortening of product life-cycles (Markwick and Fill 1997). Both the academic literature and the experience of marketers emphasize the important influence of brands in product recognition, premium pricing, resistance to competition and creation of barriers to market entry by competitors (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998).

Three years after its inception, UT bank has been identified as one of Ghana’s Superbrands for the year 2012 (according to Daily Graphic’s May 29, 2012 advertiser’s announcement by Superbrands). The bank also won the 2011 best bank award by the Ghana banking Awards. The bank has also benefited from government, financial industry, labour market and the public because of their strong brand.

The success of UT bank therefore attest to the fact that in the face of rising costs of advertising, retailer power, product fragmentation, new product development cost efficiencies, and consumers’ expectations of corporate credentials, corporate branding can be a competitive tool for indigenous banks in Ghana.
6.1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2

The second question relates to how some of the best practices of corporate branding can be adapted by our local banks to consolidate their brands?

Even though some work has been done on corporate branding, much has been conceptual and to date, there has been only limited empirical investigation of the process that enables an organization to engage successfully in corporate brand management. Establishing successful corporate brand management practices relies on the identification of two factors. First, the mix of variables that comprise the corporate brand, and second, the development of a brand management system for understanding the process of direction and control.

However, it must be noted that the study on UT bank based on the conceptual framework adapted from the work of Xie and Boggs (2006) shows that UT bank has a corporate strategy that fits the variables and the expected outcome in the framework. The study shows that corporate strategy is value driven and that the mission of the organization must be the driving force of the branding strategy.
According to Kofi Amoabeng, the founder of the bank: ‘*We wanted to create a bank that will act as a non-bank*’. And this is re-echoed by the DMD, Peal Essuah who said:’ Our tagline ‘redefining banking’ speaks to our brand’. Therefore, their intention to create a bank that will act differently informed the management to internally focus on training and developing people within the organization to live their values and in turn communicate the brand to the outside stakeholders.

‘*We live our values*’ – Pearl Essuah, DMD of UT bank

The assertion by the DMD that they live their values is affirmed by the CEO of the pharmaceutical company.

*A loan in forty hours means that everybody in UT needs to be up and going. When you go there you will see that everybody is up and going; they have to do a valuation of your car you don’t need to goto the license office, there is an office right in there....... Everything that you need follows. That is how they live it. You can see that the human resource strategy fits directly into their corporate branding. If there is one particular organization that when you talk about a brand, the brand runs through the entire organization, from the top to the down it is UT. Everywhere you go everybody is active. They have it at the back of their minds that they have 48 hours to deliver this loan. They don’t delay unnessarily!* – The CEO of the pharmaceutical company
Being aware of diluting their values as they continue to expand, the bank is on continuous basis, sending brand ambassadors to their branches to remind employees of their values.

‘We send brand ambassadors who go round to remind people about our values – we are mindful of new comers’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder.

Balmer (1998) states that corporate identity, as an important corporate asset, represents the firm’s ethics, goals and values, to differentiate the firm from its competitors. Because markets are becoming more complex and products and services are quickly imitated and homogenized, maintaining credible product differentiation is increasingly difficult, requiring the positioning of the whole corporation rather than simply its products. Thus, the corporate values and images emerge as key elements of differentiation strategies (Hatch and Schultz, 2001). The assumption for creating a corporate brand is that a corporate brand will support all aspects of the firm and differentiate the firm from its competitors (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001; Ind, 1997; Balmer, 2001). Corporate branding enables firms to use the vision and culture of the whole organization explicitly as part of its uniqueness (Balmer, 1995, 2001; de Chernatony, 1999). de Chernatony (2001) calls for firms to integrate their strategic vision with their brand building.
Also, the bank deliberately aligns their processes with their values. Thus, the deployment of information technology, training, banking hall design and products among others, are all in conformity to the strategic goal of the organisation to ‘redefine banking’.

‘Processes are in conformity to the brand – speed’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

‘The products must reflect the value’ – Kofi Amoabeng, founder

It can be seen that UT bank offers a very good example of best practices in the formulation and implementation of the corporate branding strategy.

6.2 Corporate Branding Framework
Fig 2: Post study framework

Mission statement

Corporate Image, identity and reputation

Marketing costs

Choice of Branding Strategy:
Corporate Brand
Brand element;
Logos, colors, symbols, characters, URLs, etc.

Greater stakeholder value:
Public, government, labor, financial sector and high profitability
After testing the framework against the corporate strategy of UT bank it was realized the company do not consider market complexity as an important variable to influence the formulation of their corporate branding strategy. One of the limitations of the original framework was the fact that it was in the contest of a multinational company from a developed economy moving into an emerging economy. Thus, whilst market complexity may be very important for such an organization, it may not be very important for an indigenous company. The literature identifies market complexity as the influence of regulators, infrastructure and laws among others, these may not necessarily influence an indigenous company in the formulation and implementation of corporate branding strategy. The revised framework therefore do not have market complexity as a variable in the context of an indigenous company.

The study however found the mission of the company as the driving force of the corporate branding strategy. According to the founder and CEO of the group, they wanted to ‘create a bank that will act as a non-bank. Therefore, systems and values developed were deployed to meet the stated objective. The DMD of the bank, Pearl Essuah Mensah confirms this assertion by saying that: ‘we live the values of the brand. The brands manager, Litizea Ohene-Effah also emphasizes on giving customers experience and thus their deployment of resources to meet that objective. The recognition of the mission as the starting point of the strategy is confirmed in the literature. Corporate branding is more strategic than the normally functional product branding. Thus
according to Hatch and Schultz (2003) corporate branding engineers interactions among strategic
vision, organizational culture and corporate image, to position the firm in its marketplace, and
sets up internal support arrangements appropriate to its strategic importance.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS
One fundamental conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that, it is possible for an
indigenous bank in Ghana to implement and deploy an effective corporate branding strategy to
reap the benefits identified in the literature, and to use it as competitive tool in the banking
industry.

Using the framework developed, the study found out that the mission /vision, values and culture
drive the corporate branding of the bank; UT bank uses it and this influences the actions and the
processes of the bank to deliver a unique stakeholder experience, thus the bank wanted a
differentiated strategy, and resources and products were deployed to achieve that objective

The striking alignment of the formulation and the implementation of the bank’s corporate
strategy with that of the revised framework used by Xie and Boggs (2006) shows that UT bank is
using some of the best practices in the implementation of corporate strategy as practised
anywhere in the world. With the exception of the market complexity which does not influence
the formulation of the bank’s corporate branding strategy; all the other elements are relevant.
The bank also considers branding as strategic responsibility of the senior executives as prescribed in the literature.

The founder has a deep sense of responsibility for the nurturing of the brand and sees the corporate brand as the most valuable asset of the organization. That sense of responsibility permeates the senior management as deduced from interactions and the interviews conducted.

6.4 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study shows that senior managers have a sense of responsibility towards the brand and that is very good for the organization. What the organization should continue to do is to sustain the practice of training and orienting employees to the values of the brand.

The second managerial implication is the need for management to be sensitive to the issue of how the market is getting more and more complex. With the bank of Ghana minimum capital requirement, some local banks have received capital injection from foreign investors. And it is expected that this trend will continue for a while. The influx of these investors will mean new managerial competencies and ideas that could change the competitive nature of the market. The
internal focus of the bank in their branding strategy formulation is good and has been beneficial, but management must begin to be more sensitive to the external environment to avert surprises and stay competitive.

Another managerial implication for the bank is the personification of the brand in the personality of the founder and the group CEO. Even though the bank is aware of this, there must be creative ways of implementing a strategy that will maintain the strength of the brand in his absence.

Also, the bank must devise concrete strategies to market to other stakeholders apart from their customers to change the perception of some stakeholders that it is not a bank as it came up in the research.

6.4 Limitation and Recommendations for Future Research

According to Yin (2003), the analytical benefits of having two or more cases may be substantially better than single case designs. Also, analytical conclusions independently coming from two cases, as with two experiments will be more powerful than those coming from a single case design. Future research into observing the phenomenon under study should therefore employ the multiple case studies due to its advantages over the single case design. It is hoped that further studies would be done by using multiple case studies.

This study also provides the opportunity for further research into corporate branding to contribute to both academia and industry. As identified in the literature, most of the study on
corporate branding has been conceptual and the use of UT bank as a case study in corporate branding is an attempt to test a framework on an indigenous company. Further research could be done in other industries using this research as the foundation.
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Appendix

Questionnaire

1. Why are all the companies under UT holdings named UT?

2. What is the brand of the UT bank?

3. How do you assess the brand of UT bank?

4. Who do you consider as your stakeholders?

5. What corporate image do you want to create for UT?

6. What is the public’s image of UT?

7. What strategies are you deploying to correct or reinforce this perceived image?

8. How does the public perceive the reputation of UT bank?

9. How does the bank intend to correct or reinforce the perceived reputation of the bank?

10. What are the external challenges that UT deals with within the Ghanaian financial sector?

11. How does the bank overcome these external challenges?

12. What are the internal challenges that UT confronts in the management of the company’s brand?

13. How does the bank overcome these internal challenges?

14. What are the offerings or products of UT bank?

15. Do you brand these products individually or collectively?

16. If individually, why? Or collectively, why?