

**ASSESSING THE APPLICABILITY OF STUDENT-BASED
BRAND EQUITY CONSTRUCTS IN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTION PREFERENCE IN GHANA**

EBENEZER ASARE EFFAH

PhD

2017

DECLARATION

I, Ebenezer Asare Effah, do hereby declare that, except for references to other people's works which have all been duly acknowledged, this work is the result of my own research and that it has neither in part nor in whole been presented elsewhere for any other degree.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my parents, OP. Samuel Kwadwo Asare
and
Madam Esther Akyeamaa.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am grateful to my Supervisor, Prof. Nana Owusu-Frimpong whose patient guidance, encouragement and constructive criticisms made this study possible. I wish to thank the management of all the university institutions involved in this study as well as the staff of National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE), National Accreditation Board (NAB) and Ministry of Education (MoE) whose understanding and cooperation made it possible for me to collect data for the study. I am also grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Asomaning for their invaluable support during my sojourns in London. I owe a debt of gratitude to my wife, Gertrude Effah and my children, Kwadwo Effah-Asare, Kwame Amparbeng Effah-Asare, Yaw Asomaning Effah-Asare, Kofi Effah-Asare and Akua Akyeamaa Effah-Asare for their prayers, support and understanding to endure my absence during the period of this study. Also, I am grateful to my sister, Florence Asare Anima; my nephew, Richard Asare Asamoah and my friend, Anthony Bosompem for their unwavering support. Above all, I thank God for blessing me with the strength to see this through.

ABSTRACT

With ad-hoc application of the traditional element of marketing failing to sustainably cushion institutions against growing competition, universities are frantically searching for ways to differentiate themselves in the long term. This study ascertains the applicability of five empirically established brand equity constructs to Ghana's university industry. It is underpinned by a pragmatist philosophy - an objective-driven blend between the ontological and epistemological philosophical positions, and adopts a mixed-methods paradigm that combines qualitative and quantitative survey methods of data collection and analysis.

For the qualitative part, 22 valid face-to-face in-depth interviews with undergraduate students selected from four universities were used while the quantitative study used 625 self-administered questionnaires from undergraduate students from twelve universities. Thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data while for the quantitative data, the structural equation modelling technique of partial least squares (PLS) was employed to ascertain relationships between the five independent student-based brand equity (SBBE) constructs on one hand, and students' university brand preference (SUBP) as a dependent variable, on the other.

Results of the analysis indicate a positive relationship between most of the SBBE constructs studied and university preference in Ghana. Four SBBE dimensions namely; university institutional reputation (UIR), university institutional image (UII), university graduate employability (UGE) and perceived institutional service quality (PISQ) recorded significant positive relationships with students' university preference (SUP). Positive relationships were also obtained between university image and university reputation, university identity and university reputation, as well as between perceived institutional service quality and graduate employability. On the contrary, an insignificant relationship was obtained between university institutional identity (UI) and students' university preference. The correlation analysis also indicates significant positive relationships among all the independent SBBE variables. Cumulatively, the results indicate that the SBBE concept is applicable to Ghana's university context as the SBBE constructs and university preference are positively related. The prevalence of reputation, image, graduate employability and perceived institutional service quality in the research findings has implications for policy in the university sector. Also worthy of note is the significant positive relationship obtained between perceived institutional service quality and graduate employability; as well as between university institution identity, university institution image and university institution reputation.

Much of the existing academic work on higher education branding has concentrated on brand equity's antecedents and consequences. This study links empirically proven antecedents of university brand equity to university preference. Also, most of existing empirical research on brand equity in the university sector has focused on developed countries whose circumstances are fundamentally different from those of developing economies. This study is a novelty in the sub-Saharan African context where student-focused university branding is uncommon; and so comes as a significant contribution from Ghana, to the growing worldwide debate on university branding. While contributing a survey instrument that enhances SBBE research methodology, theoretically, the unique blend of SBBE constructs employed is unprecedented. Notwithstanding some limitations identified, this study presents an empirical model that stands to guide university management in judiciously dispensing scarce resources.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Contents

DECLARATION.....	II
DEDICATION.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	IV
ABSTRACT.....	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	VI
LIST OF TABLES.....	XII
LIST OF FIGURES.....	XIII
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Study Background.....	2
1.2 Rational of the Study.....	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	4
1.4 Structure of the Thesis.....	6
1.5 Summary.....	7
 REFERENCES.....	9
 CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN GHANA.....	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Higher education in the African Content.....	15
2.3 Higher Education in Ghana.....	18
2.4 Growth in the Tertiary Education Industry.....	20
2.5 Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and Tertiary Education in Ghana.....	22
2.5.1 The Tertiary Education Reforms.....	23
2.6 Ghana's Private University Sector (Private Tertiary Education Institutions Offering Degree Programmes).....	25
2.6.1 Ownership of Institutions of Private Higher Education (PIHE).....	27
2.6.2 Agencies Providing Private Higher Education.....	28

2.6.3	Courses Offered by Institutions of Private Higher Education.....	29
2.6.4	Financing of Private Universities.....	30
2.7	Summary.....	30
REFERENCES.....		32

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW.....36

3.1	Introduction.....	36
3.2	The Brand Concept.....	36
3.3	The Concept of Brand Equity.....	39
3.4	Customer-Based Brand Equity Dimensions.....	46
3.4.1	Brand Awareness.....	46
3.4.2	Brand Associations.....	47
3.4.3	Perceived Quality.....	50
3.4.4	Brand Loyalty.....	52
3.5	Service Sector Branding.....	55
3.5.1	Service Brand Equity Dimensions.....	59
3.6	University Branding.....	60
3.6.1	The Student as a University Customer - The Basis of Student-Based Brand Equity.....	65
3.7	Summary.....	67
REFERENCES.....		70

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT-BASED BRAND EQUITY AND UNIVERSITY PREFERENCE.....95

4.1	Introduction.....	95
4.2	University Brand Equity and Preference.....	96
4.3	Student-Based Brand Equity Constructs and Research Hypotheses.....	98
4.3.1	University Institution Identity, University Institution Reputation, University Institution Image and Students' Brand Preference.....	98
4.3.2	Definitional Perspectives and Conceptual Relationships between Identity, Image and Reputation.....	104
4.3.3	Relationship between University Identity and University Preference.....	107
4.3.4	Relationship between University Image and University Preference.....	109
4.3.5	Relationship between University Reputation and University Preference.....	110
4.3.6	Relationship between Perceived Institutional Service Quality and	

	University Preference.....	113
4.3.7	Relationship between Graduate Employability and University Preference..	115
4.4	Conceptual Framework for the Study.....	118
4.5	Summary.....	124
REFERENCES.....		126
 CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....		150
5.1	Introduction.....	150
5.2	Philosophical Stance and Research Paradigms Underpinning the Study.....	150
5.2.1	Ontological Assumptions.....	151
5.2.2	Objectivist Ontology.....	152
5.2.3	Constructivist Ontology.....	152
5.2.4	Epistemology Assumptions.....	153
5.2.5	Positivist Epistemology.....	153
5.2.6	Interpretivist Epistemology.....	154
5.2.7	Realism/ Post Positivism.....	155
5.3	Identification of ResearchParadigms.....	156
5.4	Choice of Research Paradigm.....	158
5.5	The Mixed-Methods Approach.....	159
5.5.1	Qualitative Methods.....	160
5.5.2	Quantitative Methods.....	162
5.6	Approach to Mixed-methods and Sequence of Data Collection.....	162
5.7	Research Design.....	164
5.8	Data Types and Sources.....	164
5.8.1	Secondary Data.....	165
5.8.2	Primary Data.....	165
5.9	Population of the Study.....	165
5.10	Qualitative Approach.....	167
5.10.1	Qualitative Sampling – Sample Frame and Sample Size.....	167
5.10.2	Qualitative Sampling Technique.....	167
5.10.3	Qualitative Data Collection Instrument.....	168
5.10.4	Qualitative Data Administration.....	168

5.10.5	Qualitative Data Analysis Procedure.....	170
5.10.6	Validity Measures (Confirmability) for Qualitative Findings.....	171
5.11	Quantitative Approach.....	172
5.11.1	Quantitative Sampling – Sample Frame and Size.....	172
5.11.2	Quantitative Sampling Technique.....	173
5.11.3	Quantitative Data Collection Instrument -Questionnaire.....	174
5.11.4	Questionnaire Pre-testing.....	177
5.11.5	Questionnaire Administration.....	178
5.11.6	Data Preparation and Data Entry.....	179
5.11.7	Quantitative Data Analysis Procedure.....	180
5.12	Ethical Considerations.....	182
5.13	Summary.....	182
REFERENCES.....		184

CHAPTER SIX: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS.....196

6.1	Introduction.....	196
6.2	Analysis of Qualitative Findings.....	197
6.2.1	Background of Respondents.....	197
6.2.2	General Questions and Responses on University Preference.....	198
6.2.3	University Institution Image.....	201
6.2.4	University Institution Identity.....	206
6.2.5	University Institution Reputation.....	209
6.2.6	Perceived University Service Quality.....	212
6.2.7	Graduate Employability.....	219
6.3	Recommendations.....	219
6.4	Summary.....	220
REFERENCES.....		221

CHAPTER SEVEN: QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS.....222

7.1	Introduction.....	222
7.2	Demographic and Background Information.....	222
7.3	Most Preferred University.....	224
7.3.1	First Choice University.....	224
7.3.2	Reasons why Respondents could not Enter their First Choice	

	University.....	224
7.4	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).....	225
7.4.1	Testing for Suitability of Data for Analysis.....	225
7.4.2	Testing for the Suitability of Partial Least Squares (PLS) for Data Analysis.....	226
7.4.3	Testing for the Psychometric Properties of Scales Used.....	228
7.4.3.1	Convergence Validity.....	228
7.4.3.2	Discriminant Validity.....	231
7.5	Structural Equation Modelling.....	232
7.5.1	Model Efficiency.....	232
7.5.2	Structural Estimates and Hypotheses Testing.....	234
7.6	Summary of Hypotheses Tests.....	237
	REFERENCES.....	238
	 CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	 240
8.1	Introduction.....	240
8.2	Students' University Preference (SUP).....	240
8.3	Discussion of Student-Based Brand Equity Constructs and University Preference.....	243
8.3.1	Relationship between Perceived Institutional Service Quality (PISQ) and Students' University Preference (SUP).....	243
8.3.2	Relationship between Graduate Employability (UGE) and Students' University Preference (SUP).....	246
8.3.3	Relationship between University Institutional Identity (UI) and Students' University Preference (SUP).....	249
8.3.4	Relationship between University Institutional Reputation (UIR) and Students' University Preference (SUP).....	250
8.3.5	Relationship between University Institutional Image (UII) and Students' University Preference (SUP).....	253
8.3.6	Relationships between Identity, Image and Reputation of University Institutions.....	255
8.3.7	Relationship between Perceived Institutional Service Quality and Graduate Employability.....	256
8.4	Confirmation of Conceptual Model.....	257
8.5	Summary.....	258
	REFERENCES.....	260

CHAPTER NINE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	272
9.1 Introduction.....	272
9.2 Summary of Chapters.....	272
9.3 Main Thrusts of the Study.....	274
9.4 Summary of Findings.....	276
9.5 Research Contribution.....	280
9.5.1 Theoretical Contribution.....	280
9.5.2 Managerial Contribution.....	281
9.5.3 Methodological Contribution.....	283
9.6 Conclusions and Recommendations.....	283
9.7 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies.....	287
REFERENCES.....	289
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	299
APPENDIXES.....	355

LIST OF TABLES

Table	2.1	List of Accredited Tertiary Institutions in Ghana.....	21
Table	5.1	Aligning Research Objectives with Paradigms and Methods Employed.....	163
Table	5.2	Sample Size from Selected Universities for the Qualitative Research.	167
Table	5.3	Sample Size from Selected Universities for the Quantitative Research.....	173
Table	6. 1	Research Objectives under Qualitative Analysis.....	196
Table:	6.2	Demographic Profile of Respondents	197
Table	7.1	Demographic Profile of Respondents.....	223
Table	7.2	Normality Test for Questionnaire Items	227
Table	7.3	Reliability and Convergent Validity	229
Table	7.4	Discriminant Validity	231
Table	7.5	Item Cross Loadings	232
Table	7.6	Goodness-of-Fit Index	233
Table	7.7	Predictive Relevance (Q^2) and Effect Sizes (f^2).....	233
Table	7.8	Hypotheses Tests Summary.....	237

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1	Brand Equity Influence on Consumer Response.....	54
Figure 4.1	Antecedent (SBBE) Dimensions by Mourad et al. (2011) and Pinar et al. (2014).....	121
Figure 4.2	Researcher's Conceptual Framework of Relationship between SBBE Constructs and University Preference.....	123
Figure 5.1	Research Paradigms	157
Figure 7.1	Respondents' First Choice University	224
Figure 7.2	Reasons why some Respondents could not Enter their Most Preferred University.....	225
Figure 8.1	Perceived Institutional Service Quality and Student University Preference.....	246
Figure 8.2	Graduate Employability and Students' University Preference	249
Figure 8.3	University Institution Reputation and Student University Preference..	252
Figure 8.4	University Institution Image and Student University Preference	254
Figure 8.5	University Institution Image, University Institution Identity and University Institution Reputation	256
Figure 8.6	Perceived Institutional Service Quality and University Graduate Employability.....	257
Figure 8.7	Empirical Model - SBBE Constructs Applicability to the Ghanaian University Industry.....	258

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

Ghana's university industry has witnessed increasing competition since its liberalisation in 1993 (Atuahene, 2014). The number of universities in Ghana increased from under ten in the late nineties to 48 in 2010 and to 72 as at the end of 2014 (NCTE, 2015). There are also 49 unaccredited tertiary institutions, mainly universities, operating in the country (Ibid). In addition, the government of Ghana has recently announced its intention to upgrade all ten polytechnic institutions in the country to degree awarding institutions. According to the World Bank (2010), the wave of deregulation that rippled across Africa and beyond, increasing youth population, rising income levels and the concomitant increase in the desire for higher qualifications to gain and secure employment have been some of the main factors responsible for this trend (Adu, 2009). The number of university students has also seen massive growth over the period. University enrolments in Ghana have multiplied more than thirteen times over the past two decades in response to social, economic and political pressures for access to higher education (NCTE, 2015). From 118,000 in 2006, the number of university students in Ghana rose above 150,000 in 2010; by 2012, the number was close to 170,000. Currently, it is in excess of 207,000 (NAB, 2015).

The remarkable growth recorded by the industry is as a result of policy reforms, such as upgrading polytechnics to higher education status, and Colleges of Education to degree awarding institutions; the establishment of new universities to cater for 'fallow regions' of the country; the creation of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) to provide supplementary funding for infrastructure, research and development; and the introduction of distance learning programmes (Atuahene, 2014). Other activities in the industry include expansion of the student loan scheme and the creation of a liberalised environment that promotes private sector participation in higher education provision (Girdwood, 1999; Atuahene, 2014). Arguably, the single most dominant factor responsible for this growth has been the process of liberalisation which was initiated in 1993 when a structure for accrediting private universities was formed. This trend is not peculiar to Ghana as other West African countries like Nigeria, Benin and Senegal are experiencing same; so are some East African countries like Tanzania and Uganda (Adu, 2009). In view of the above, the World Bank has urged African governments to redefine their roles and reset their priorities whilst creating an

enabling environment for private sector participation through policy, strategy, tax incentives, labour laws, more access to student loans, as well as setting adequate standards, regulations, and accountability mechanisms (World Bank, 2010).

Universities in Ghana have not been able to meet growing demands as there continues to be more people seeking admission than there are places (Williams et al., 2012). While these healthy trends seem promising for the higher education industry in general, what is also true is that competition is intensifying. In the midst of the seemingly favourable demand situation, universities are making frantic efforts to attract two categories of students: those with the best pre-university grades to enrich their credentials and entrench themselves in the industry; and those with high affordabilities, as most institutions, especially those in the private sector run on tuition fees (Addae-Mensah, 2000). What continues to compound the already heightening competition is the entry of foreign universities from Europe, America and Asia to benefit from the favourable demand situation in the country (NAB, 2011). Ghana's university education sector is thus a vibrant one that requires administrators to fashion out effective strategies for sustainable differentiation.

Educational institutions are searching for ways to sustainably differentiate themselves in the wake of domestic and international competition (Supornpraditchai et al., 2007), and it is becoming increasingly difficult for universities, as the core of higher educational institutions, to develop and maintain a competitive edge in their respective target markets (Cubillo-Pinilla et al., 2009). This difficulty has happened at a time when the ad-hoc application of the traditional tools of marketing - like fee discounts, introduction of new courses, opening of new campuses and uncoordinated marketing communications - has proved ineffective in offering the desired levels of differentiation in the sector (Ivy, 2002, 2008; Maringe, 2006; Bosch et al., 2006; Hayes, 2007; Schubert, 2007; Kumar and Dash, 2011; Sharma et al., 2013).

Many universities have therefore resorted to branding as a sustainable differentiation strategy in the sector (Chapleo, 2010) due to strong brands' proven effectiveness in offering organisations competitive superiority (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Kotler and Fox, 1995; Keller, 2003, 2013; Mourad et al., 2011; Kapferer, 2008; Pinar et al., 2014). A typical instance of this is the UK government's efforts in supporting a world-wide re-branding campaign to complement individual institutional branding efforts (Whisman, 2009) for a coherent

competitive identity for UK universities. This move is meant to enable UK institutions compete more favourably with institutions in the USA and Australia (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007) as well as other emerging international-focused universities from countries like India and China (Silverstein and Singhi, 2012). In an emerging, competitive higher education industry, the researcher believes that administrators of Ghana's universities need to wake up to the branding call and adopt a holistic effort that aims at adding value to the overall university experience to ensure profitable customer (student) relationships (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012).

1.2 Rationale of the Study

As a source of differentiation, brands are critical for generating and sustaining competitive advantage, superior performance and long-term success in today's highly competitive business environment (Kotler and Keller, 2006; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Keller, 2013; Sharma et al., 2013). Although the concept of brand equity has been extensively researched in the context of physical products, it has received little attention in the higher education service sector (Mourad et al., 2011). While the importance of branding in university differentiation is also widely appreciated in the literature (Mourad et al., 2011; Sherma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014; Dean et al., 2016; Ramírez, 2016), much of both empirical research and theoretical papers is focused on international marketing of higher education (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). Generally, empirical research on university brand equity, particularly from students' perspective remains scanty. In addition, much of what has been done focuses on identifying antecedents of university brand equity (Mourad et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014). From an extensive search of the literature by the researcher, the connection between university brand equity and preference remains largely unexplored.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the gap is even more pronounced as there is a complete absence of research in the area of university brand equity, with the closest in terms of geographical proximity being a study undertaken in the Egyptian university market by Mourad et al. (2011), which also focused on student-based brand equity (SBBE) antecedents identification. Extant literature indicates that, to date, there has been no study conducted in the entire sub-Saharan African region that ascertains the relationship between brand equity and university preference in order to provide guidelines for implementation of the branding concept. Neither

has there been any study ascertaining whether university branding leads to success in the university industry. The researcher believes that this lack of empirical research hinders policy making and undermines the development of effective competitive strategies in that industry.

This study therefore attempts to fill this void by subjecting five proven antecedents of SBBE in the literature to empirical scrutiny. Unlike existing studies, this study does not focus on identifying SBBE antecedents; it rather seeks to ascertain the relationships between SBBE constructs and university preference among the general undergraduate students' population in Ghana. From a synthesis of the literature, it is believed that student-based university branding has the potential to provide reliable, sustainable differentiation (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001; Toma et al., 2005; Chapleo, 2007; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Curtis et al., 2009; Mourad et al., 2011; Durkin et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2012; Pinar et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2013; Goia et al., 2014; Tolbert, 2014) by which university operators in the emerging economies of sub-Saharan Africa can withstand the ever increasing competition.

In realising the purpose of the study, the researcher sought to address the following objectives:

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims at finding out whether student-based brand equity (SBBE) can influence university preference by ascertaining the relationships between a selection of SBBE constructs and university preference among the general undergraduate student body in Ghana. In realising the purpose of the study, the researcher sought to address the following objectives:

1. To ascertain whether student-based brand equity (SBBE) and university preference are related in Ghana;
2. To identify the nature of relationships between some specific SBBE constructs and university preference in Ghana;
3. To examine the associations among some selected SBBE determinants in Ghana; and
4. To ascertain the applicability of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) concept to the Ghanaian university context.

The decision to undertake this study in Ghana's university setting is based on the following reasons:

- Firstly, as illustrated in chapter two, Ghana's university industry is experiencing massive growth; and vibrant industries naturally attract the attention of stakeholders, including researchers, who are concerned with streamlining and managing affairs in an informed manner. Taking into account the competitive potential of superior brands in constantly changing business environments, particularly in the wake of globalisation (Kumar & Dash, 2011, Sharma et al., 2013; Aron, 2014) Ghana represents an appropriate setting for a study of this nature.
- Secondly, growing industries naturally attract competition. While the sector continues to witness the entry of more institutions, the need for sustainable competitive differentiation becomes an imperative. With Ghana gradually becoming a strong middle income country (Atuahene, 2014), the need to fulfil a sense of belonging and self-actualisation is likely to gravitate many image-seeking students towards university institutions that wield superior reputations (Steiner et al., 2013). Undertaking this study in Ghana is thus in response to that loud call.

Knowledge of the relevance of SBBE and the relative contributions of its key dimensions to students' preference for university institutions in Ghana would undoubtedly steer the allocation of scarce resources. Administrators of university institutions in Ghana would be informed by findings of this research to identify and invest in the relevant brand equity dimensions that are critical for creating strong, differentiated and appealing university brands that are preferred by students. Findings of this study would therefore guide management decision-making of Ghana's university institutions in their quest for sustainable superiority in the midst of heightening competitive pressures.

Much of branding theory and empirical work relates to tangible product marketing, and so its application to the service domain is limited (Hankinson, 2004). As a novelty in sub-Saharan Africa, findings of this study will contribute to the understanding of SBBE within the unique service environment of universities and other higher education institutions in that region. It will thus make a significant empirical contribution by adding to the scanty store of documented knowledge on the relationship between SBBE and university preference

particularly in Ghana, and sub-Saharan Africa in general. The next section presents highlights of the major sections contained in this thesis.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured in nine chapters as follows:

Chapter One presents an introduction to the study which contains background information on the Ghanaian university sector that seeks to highlight its growing and competitive nature, as well as indicates the need for sustainable differentiation. The chapter also presents the purpose and objectives of the study; reasons behind the choice of Ghana as the empirical setting for the study; relevance of the study; and lastly, the structure of the thesis. Chapter Two presents background information of higher education in Ghana. It begins with a review of major trends and happenings in Ghana's higher education industry with a view to situating the study within the context of the higher education industry in general and the university sector in particular. This chapter also presents enrolment trends in Ghana's higher education sector in general and the university sector in particular with emphasis on increasing enrolment numbers, as well as the growing number of universities. The chapter ends by looking at private sector participation in the industry where issues relating to proliferation and competition, ownership, programmes, fees and financing, among others, are highlighted.

Chapter Three reviews relevant literature with a view to placing the study within the right theoretical context. Specifically, the chapter presents a review of literature on the concept of branding and brand equity in addition to the key brand equity assets that underpin this study. It also reviews literature on customer-based brand equity (CBBE) from which the concept of student-based brand equity emanates. Literature on service sector branding has also been presented in that chapter as well as university branding where the concept of university brand equity is discussed.

Chapter Four presents the thesis' conceptualisation where the issue of students' preference has been discussed to identify attributes within the university environment that contribute to brand equity and students' preference for institutions in the industry. The chapter also presents a literature review of the five SBBE constructs adopted for the study; existing studies and circumstances from which they were adopted; as well as research hypotheses and the thesis' conceptual framework.

Chapter Five presents research design and methodology which discusses research philosophies underpinning the study as well as methods, strategies and procedures adopted. The chapter begins with an overview of the key philosophical assumptions that underpin social research and continues with the choice of research paradigms for this study. Also discussed is research design, under which data types and sources, population, sample frame, sample size and sampling methods adopted for the study are presented. Data collection instruments, methods and administration procedures, as well as methods of data analysis, are also presented in that chapter. The chapter ends with ethical guidelines that governed the conduct of this research.

In Chapter Six, results and analysis of qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews are presented. It presents analysis and discussion of the key SBBE constructs investigated in this study with a view to determining the relationships between those constructs and students' preference for universities in Ghana. Chapter Seven presents results and analysis of quantitative data to help address the research objectives. It presents relationships between the SBBE constructs investigated and students' university preference (SUP) through Structural Equation Modelling (PLS). Chapter Eight presents a discussion of findings that links the qualitative and quantitative results of the study to specific hypotheses, research objectives and the researcher's conceptual model. The discussion also links findings of this study to existing relevant literature. Finally, Chapter Nine presents a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. Also presented in the last chapter are key thrusts and contributions of the study, as well as limitations and suggestions for future research.

1.5 Summary

As Ghana's university industry becomes increasingly competitive, the need for sustainable differentiation has become more of a strategic alternative. With the usual reliance on the conventional elements of marketing proving less effective by the day (Maringe, 2006; Bosch et al., 2006; Hayes, 2007; Kumar and Dash, 2011; Sharma et al., 2013), SBBE is a concept that should merit administrators' attention and consideration. This study comes as a contribution to the scanty store of knowledge in the area of university branding, particularly from a students' perspective. This chapter has presented a brief tertiary, and specifically university education industry background, particularly in reference to the growing and competitive nature of the industry in Ghana that calls for a reliable means of sustainable

differentiation. It has also presented the purpose of the study where the relevance of the concept of SBBE is highlighted. It has spelt out the objectives of the study and a brief indication of the study's contribution, as well as its relevance to industry. The chapter concludes by presenting a structure of the thesis, which outlines the contents of the respective chapters. The next chapter presents background information of higher education in Ghana with a view to situate the study within the appropriate contextual frame.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Aaker, D.A. (1995). *Building Strong Brands*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Addae-Mensah, I. (2000). *Education in Ghana: A tool for social mobility or social stratification?* The J.B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, April, 2000.
- Adu, K. H. (2009). *Private higher education on the rise*. Available at www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story. Date accessed 02/03/12.
- Aron, D. (2014). Globalization, culture, and branding: how to leverage cultural equity for building iconic brands in the era of globalization. *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*, 51(11), 2032-2032.
- Atuahene, F. (2014). Charting Higher Education Development in Ghana: Growth, Transformations, and Challenges, in Alexander W. Wiseman, Charl C. Wolhuter (ed.) *The Development of Higher Education in Africa: Prospects and Challenges. International Perspectives on Education and Society*, 21, 215 – 263.
- Bosch, J., Venter, E., Han, Y., & Boshoff, C. (2006). The impact of brand identity on the perceived brand image of a merged higher education institution. *Management Dynamics*, 15(2), 10–30.
- Chapleo, C. (2007). Barriers to brand building in UK universities? *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 12(1), 23 –32.
- Chapleo, C. (2010). What defines “successful” university brands? *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 23(2), 169-183.
- Cubillo-Pinilla, J.M., Zuniga, T., Losantos, I.S. & Sanchez, J. (2009). Factors influencing international students’ evaluations of higher Education Programs. *The Journal of American Academy of Business*, 15(1), 270-8.

- Curtis, T., Abratt, R. & Minor, W. (2009). Corporate brand management in higher education: the case of ERAU. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 18(6), 404-413.
- Dean, D., Arroyo-Gamez, R.E., Punjaisri, K. & Pich, C. (2016). Internal brand co-creation: The experiential brand meaning cycle in higher education. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(8), 3041–3048.
- Durkin, M., McKenna, S. & Cummins, D. (2012). Emotional connections in higher education marketing. *International Journal of Education Management*, 26(2), 153-161.
- Girdwood A. (1999). *Tertiary Education policy in Ghana, 1988-1998*, report for the World Bank.
- Goia, T.M., Goib, L.C. & Wong, D. (2014). Constructing a brand identity scale for higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2014, 24(1), 59 –74.
- Hankinson, G. (2004). Relational network brands: towards a conceptual model of place brands. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(2), 109-21.
- Hayes, T. (2007). Delphi study of the future of marketing of higher education. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 927–931.
- Hemsley-Brown, J. & Goonawardana, S. (2007). Brand harmonization in the international higher education market. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 942-8.
- Hemsley-Brown, J., & Oplatka, I. (2006). Universities in a competitive global marketplace: A systematic review of the literature on higher education marketing. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 19(4), 316 – 338.
- Ivy, J. 2002. University image: *The role of marketing in MBA student recruitment in state subsidized universities in the Republic of South Africa*. MBA thesis, University of Leicester, Leicester.

- Ivy, J. (2008). A new higher education marketing mix: the 7Ps for MBA marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22(4), 288-299.
- Kapferer, J. N. (1998). *Strategic brand management – Creating and sustaining brand equity long term*. Kogan Page.
- Keller, K. L (2003). Brand synthesis: the multidimensionality of brand knowledge. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(4), 595-600.
- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2012). *Principles of Marketing* (13th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kotler, P. & Fox, K. F. A. (1995). *Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions*. (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kotler, P. & Keller, K. L. (2006). *Marketing Management*, (12th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Kumar, S., & Dash, M. K. (2011). Management education in India: Trends, issues and implications. *Research Journal of International Studies*, 18, 15 – 25.
- Maringe, F. (2006). University and course choice: Implications for positioning, recruitment and marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 20(6), 466–479.
- Mourad, M., Ennew, C. & Kortam, W. (2011). Brand equity in higher education. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(4), 403-420.
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2011). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Last date accessed 11/09/12).
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2015). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Last date accessed 15/04/15).

- National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE). (2015). *Summary statistics for accredited tertiary education institutions*. 2013/2014 academic year.
- Nguyen, N. and Leblanc, G. (2001). Corporate image and corporate reputation in customers' retention decisions in services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 8(4), 227-36.
- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt, T. E. (2014). University brand equity: an empirical investigation of its dimensions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(6), 616 – 634.
- Ramírez, G. B. (2016). Many choices, one destination: multimodal university brand construction in an urban public transportation system. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 29, 186-204.
- Schubert, B. (2007). *Development and implementation of branding concepts: the case for internal marketing*. HEIST information bank, available at: www.heist.co.uk/corporate_identity (accessed 15 January 2012).
- Sharma, A. A., Raob, V. R. & Poplic, S. (2013). Measuring consumer-based brand equity for Indian business schools. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 23(2), 175-203.
- Silverstein, M. J. & Singhi, A. (2012). *Can US universities stay on top?* Wall Street Journal, September, 29-30, C3.
- Steiner L., Agneta, C., Sundstrom, K. & Sammalisto, K. (2013). An analytical model for university identity and reputation strategy work. *Higher Education*, (65), 401-415.
- Supornpraditchai, T., Miller, K. E., Lings, I. N. & Jonmundsson, B. (2007). *Employee-based brand equity: antecedents and consequences*. AMZMAC, Conference Proceedings, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 3-5 December, 2007.

- Tolbert, D. (2014). An exploration of the use of branding to shape institutional image in the marketing activities of faith-based higher education institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, 13(4), 233-249.
- Toma, J., Dubrow, G., & Hartley, M. (2005). The uses of institutional culture: Strengthening and building brand equity in higher education. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 31(2), 1-105.
- Whisman, R. (2009). Internal branding: a university's most valuable intangible asset. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(5), 367-370.
- Williams Jr. R., Osei, C., & Omar, M. (2012). Higher education institution branding as a component of country branding in Ghana: Renaming Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 22(1), 71-81.
- World Bank (2010). *Financing higher education in Africa: A study by International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, Washington, DC, World Bank.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN GHANA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a contextual framework of higher education in Ghana. It reviews major trends and happenings in Ghana's higher education industry with a view to situating the study within the context of the higher education industry in general and the university sector in particular. Like any business concern, a higher education institution is expected to fulfil the expectations of its publics in order to survive and grow. The industry is an important part of every economy in terms of its contribution to knowledge, graduate employability, international research and interaction with industry (Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003). The industry has seen a lot of competition in contemporary times as the need for well-trained executives worldwide grows exponentially (Gary, 2006). As the levels of domestic and international competition and customer demands continue to increase, educational institutions are searching for ways to gain differential advantage (Rasli and Naim, 2005, in Shekarchizadeh et al., 2011). As competition intensifies, it is indeed becoming increasingly difficult for universities, as the core of higher educational institutions, to develop and maintain competitive advantage (Cubillo-Pinilla et al., 2009).

Owing to globalisation for example, international student mobility within the sector has seen rapid growth resulting in universities around the world competing for international students (Helferty and Clarke, 2009; Aron, 2014). As Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003) observe, the elements of globalisation in higher education are widespread and multi-faceted and the higher education market is now well established as a global phenomenon. The wave of deregulation that ripples across the world, increasing youth population and rising income levels are some of the factors responsible for the growth in the tertiary education delivery market (Adu, 2009). In addition, other factors like the contemporary quest for individuality and the accompanying increase in the desire for higher qualification to gain and secure employment have been responsible and hence further fuelled competition (World Bank, 2010).

The higher education industry has seen remarkable growth in student numbers due to the aforementioned factors. The number of tertiary students worldwide doubled in a little over twenty years from 40 million in 1975 to more than 80 million in 1995 (World Bank/UNESCO, 2000), and is expected to grow to over 150 million by 2025 (West, 1997).

This trend is not peculiar to Ghana, as other West African countries like Nigeria, Benin and Senegal are experiencing same; so are some East African countries like Tanzania and Uganda (Adu, 2009). While Ghanaian universities are making frantic efforts to take advantage of the booming tertiary education market, the liberalized nature of the economy, globalisation and increasing technological sophistication have enabled foreign operators from Europe, America and Asia to benefit from this favourable demand situation (GoG, 2012) resulting in fierce competition among players in the industry. Ghana's university education sector is thus a vibrant one that calls for effective means of highlighting competitive differences among provider institutions. Conscious efforts in image building through brands management have therefore become a strategic imperative in attracting stakeholders, including students (Mourad et al., 2011, Pinar et al., 2014). In situating the study within the broader African context, the following section looks at higher education in African.

2.2 Higher Education in the African Context

To sufficiently appreciate trends within the Ghanaian university industry, a brief highlight of Africa's higher education sector is necessary. Education is widely accepted as a leading instrument for promoting economic growth (GoG, 2010). For Africa, where growth is a prerequisite for the continent's long-held desire to climb out of poverty, education is particularly important. For several decades, African countries and their development partners have placed great emphasis on primary and, more recently, secondary education. Many countries have, however, neglected tertiary education as a means of improving economic growth and ultimately, mitigating poverty (Varghese, 2006). The Dakar Summit on "Education for All" in 2000, for example, advocated only for primary education as a driver of social welfare, ostensibly consigning tertiary education to the background (Kargbo, 2002).

Higher education institutions have thus been plagued with enormous challenges like drastic budget cuts, inadequate infrastructure, teaching and research facilities, among many others, all of which have negatively impacted the quality of teaching, learning and research (Kargbo, 2002). The irony is that, in the midst of this unfair discrimination against universities with regard to unbalanced resource allocation practices, African governments continue to perceive universities as major players in their development battle that stand at the apex of the educational system; serving as a place for the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge (Effah et al., 2009).

The competitive turmoil that is rippling across the entire world has not spared Africa. African universities have had to grapple with the enigma of rising competition in the midst of soaring knowledge-seeking populations. Institutions in countries with vibrant tertiary education industries like Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda are battling on all fronts to wield competitive superiority (Effah et al., 2009). Generally, the emergence of private universities in African countries has increased competitive uncertainty in the industry that compels institutions, private and public alike, to communicate their service offerings to their stakeholders (Varhnese, 2006). Competition is thus not only among the private universities but also between them and the public universities.

In terms of student enrolments, sub-Saharan Africa in particular has recorded phenomenal growth. From less than 200,000 students in 1970, enrolment across the region increased more than 20-fold to approximately 4 million by 2007 (UNESCO-UIS, 2009). However, despite the huge increases in student numbers over the years, a deeper look into the situation reveals ‘a drop in the ocean’ situation. Gross enrolment in tertiary education for sub-Saharan Africa was 6 % as of 2007 as against the global average of 26% based on UNESCO data. This figure however shows that participation in HE has doubled since 2002 (UNESCO-UIS, 2009). Countries whose participation rates exceed the regional average include South Africa (15.4%), Mauritius (14.0%), Nigeria (10.2%), Cape Verde (8.9%), Côte d’Ivoire (7.9%), Senegal (7.7%) and Cameroon (7.2%). Other countries, such as the Central African Republic (1.1%), Chad (1.2%), Mozambique (1.5%), United Republic of Tanzania (1.5%) and Burundi (1.9%) have rates considerably below the average for sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO-UIS, 2009). Ghana’s gross enrolment rate was 9.7 per cent during the 2008/09 academic year (GoG, 2010). The indication from this rather pessimistic outlook is that across Africa, only about 6% of the potential tertiary age group is enrolled in a tertiary institution, compared to the world average of about 26 per cent. In all, nine out of every ten countries with the lowest tertiary enrolment in the world are from Africa (World Bank, 2010).

The World Bank estimates that, if the current trends in Africa continue, the total number of students for the entire African continent could exceed 20 million by 2020. The level of expenditure could also be 75 per cent higher than the volume of public resources that may be mobilized. The number of teachers required would also need to double, from a total of approximately 456,000 in 2006 to 908,000 by 2020 (World Bank, 2010). In all, about seven to ten million African youngsters join the ranks of job seekers every year (Baah-Boateng et

al., 2013). This worrying state of affairs obviously calls for the need for university training to boost job creation and income-generating opportunities, especially for girls, women, and talented but poor students (World Bank/UNESCO, 2000).

On the basis of this pessimistic state of affairs, the World Bank and other bodies concerned with Africa's development have urged African governments to redefine their roles whilst creating an enabling environment for private sector participation in higher education (World Bank, 2010). Since the mid-1990s, there has been renewed interest in the prospects of growth and recovery in Africa by a variety of governmental and non-governmental actors. The characterisation of the continent as a 'basket case' has given way to the realisation that, despite its monumental problems, there are several rays of hope, thanks to quiet, unsung efforts at building a foundation for sustained growth, prosperity and pro-poor development enabled mainly by education (Atuahene, 2006).

Despite the constraints and challenges posed by rapidly changing social structures, declining incomes, war and conflict in several countries and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, individuals, community groups and institutions have demonstrated their capacity to grapple with the many odds for daily survival (World Bank, 2010). Against the backdrop of shrinking and sometimes misapplied resources, universities have been caught up in the need to develop and maintain creative coping mechanisms to reflect the industry's changing circumstances. In contrast to the above state of affairs, recent evidence suggests that higher education is both a result and a determinant of income, and can produce public and private benefits (Bloom et al., 2006). Higher education may create greater tax revenue, increase savings and investment, and lead to more entrepreneurial and civic societies in Africa. It can also improve nations' health, contribute to reduced population growth, improve technology, and strengthen governance (GPRS II, 2006).

In a speech, the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan argued:

“The university must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century. Universities can help develop African expertise; they can enhance the analysis of African problems; strengthen domestic institutions; serve as a model environment for the practice of good governance, conflict resolution and respect for human rights, and enable African academics to play

an active part in the global community of scholars". (United Nations Press Release No. UNIS/SG/2625, 11, *Cited by Atuahene, 2006*).

A number of challenges have plagued university education in Africa: physical infrastructure is deteriorating; lack of financial resources is inhibiting access to and affordability of education; faculty remuneration continues to be low; there are inadequate academic resources and facilities and inadequate modern technology leading to over-reliance on traditional approaches to delivery (World Bank, 2010). The result is that Africa's institutions of higher education have difficulty matching the quality of programmes on the global scale and hence have been sluggish in contributing to the realisation of desired levels of socio-economic transformation (ibid).

All in all, an analysis of the role of higher education in the context of sub-Saharan African countries shows that expanding higher education contributes to promoting faster technological catch-up, improving countries' ability to maximize output and decrease the knowledge gap and poverty in the region (Varghese, 2006). There is therefore increasing recognition and appreciation of the positive role higher education plays in the socio-economic development of African countries, which makes a strong case for improving the competitive competence of university institutions. The following sections present university education in the specific context of Ghana with a view to putting the study in the appropriate perspective.

2.3 Higher Education in Ghana

The development of higher education in Ghana cannot be separated from the past and present political developments of the country. Colonisation and the quest for power particularly by the British influenced higher education developments in Ghana (Manuh et al., 2007). Although the British government played a role in higher education development in Ghana, her colonial policy had no clearly defined higher education policies for the country. Direct government involvement in the provision of formal education was minimal in the early years of British colonialism as the British government did not have a formal policy of higher education for the colonies prior to the First World War (ibid).

Restrictive colonial policies instituted in sub-Saharan Africa in general, greatly impacted on the development of higher education programmes in Ghana. From historical antecedents, it is demonstrably evident that the fate of Ghana's tertiary education rests in the hands of

successive governments in promoting and disseminating knowledge, undertaking development oriented research, providing intellectual leadership, developing manpower and ultimately promoting social and economic modernisation and advancement (Yusefu, 1993). In a dispassionate evaluation of the place of the university in Ghana's development, the World Bank, for instance, has urged governments to expand access to and ensure that both the quality and relevance of tertiary education are improved to enable the country to climb out of poverty (Varghese, 2006). The quest for accelerated and sustainable economic growth and social transformation at independence led to the establishment of varied, yet specialized institutions with science and technology as a central feature and universities were established in part to promote this vision (Manuh et al., 2007). After a decade or so of independence, this optimism was truncated by political and economic crises characterized by sporadic mutinous changes of governments and the accompanying inconsistent policies, including those of higher education. The result of all this was two decades of crisis management in Ghana's economy, which directly affected institutions, including universities (Effah et al., 2009).

The current surge in demand for higher education, as well as the contemporary shift towards a global knowledge economy, increased the number of universities in Ghana from under ten in the late nineties to fifty one (public and private) in 2012 (NAB, 2013). Between 1999 and 2006, university student numbers in Ghana doubled to more than 118,000, while enrolments multiplied more than thirteen times over the period in response to social-economic and political pressures for access to higher education. In 2010, students' enrolment to Ghana's universities exceeded 150,000 (NAB, 2011). Ghana's universities however continue to grapple with the challenge of meeting growing demands as today there are more people seeking admission than places the universities are able to offer. A university built for 3,000 students is compelled to cope with about 24,000 students without corresponding expansion in academic and physical facilities thereby overstressing existing facilities to their elastic limits (NCTE, 2010).

Less than 35 per cent of students who apply to universities are admitted due to the growing numbers of qualified secondary school leavers in the face of inadequate university space, insufficient staffing and infrastructural limitations (NAB, 2013). There is therefore an enrolment deficit that the sector needs to address in responding sufficiently to prevailing socio-economic demands.

2.4 Growth in the Tertiary Education Industry

The past two decades have seen a lot of growth in the number of institutions within Ghana's tertiary education industry. The remarkable growth recorded by the industry is as a result of policy reforms such as upgrading polytechnics into higher education status and Colleges of Education into degree awarding institutions; the establishment of new universities to cater for 'fallow regions' of the country; the creation of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) to provide supplementary funding for infrastructure, research and development and the introduction of distance learning programmes. Other activities in the industry include expansion of the student loan scheme and the creation of a liberalised environment that promotes private sector participation in higher education provision (Atuahene, 2014).

The growth in the number of public institutions is largely attributable to the upgrading of 38 Teacher Training Colleges, which were under the Teacher Education Division of the Ministry of Education, into Colleges of Education in September, 2007 and placed under the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) (Chambers, 2008). Table 2.1 compares accredited tertiary institutions in Ghana between 2012 and 2014.

Table 2.1: List of Accredited Tertiary Institutions in Ghana

	2012	2014	% Increase
• Private Tertiary Education Institutions Offering Degree Programmes (Private Universities)	45	57	26.67
• Publicly Funded Universities	7	9	28.57
• Tutorial Colleges	8	11	37.5
• Distance Learning Institutions	5	3	- 40
• Public Specialized Institutions	9	-	-
• Public Colleges of Education	38	38	-
• Polytechnics	10	10	-
• Private Nurses' Training Colleges	5	5	-
• Public Nurses' Training Colleges	10	21	110
• Private Colleges of Education	3	8	166.67
• Public Colleges of Education	-	36	-
• Regionally Owned Tertiary Institutions	-	1	-
• Chartered Private Tertiary Institutions	-	3	-
• Public Professional Institutions	-	6	-
• Registered Foreign Institutions	-	11	-
• Unaccredited Institutions	-	49	-

(Source: NAB, 2013, 2015).

There is a total of nine public universities comprising University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Education, University of Development Studies, University of Mines and Technology, University of Professional Studies; and recently, University of Health and Allied Science and University of Energy and Natural Resources, which became operational in the 2012-2013 academic year. In all, there were seventy two universities in the country at the end of 2014

(NAB, 2015). There are also 54 unaccredited private tertiary institutions operating in the country, three of which are foreign institutions (NAB, 2015). To situate this review in the appropriate perspective, it is necessary to visit highlights of restructuring efforts by successive governments of Ghana in responding to the many challenges that the education sector in general has had to grapple with.

2.5 Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and Tertiary Education in Ghana

Nearly 20 years of structural adjustment programming (1982 to 2001) resulted in a mixed menu of reforms in Ghana's university education. While some of these may have been triggered and sustained by internal pressures within the universities themselves, others have been catalyzed by the realities of an external political economy dominated by adjustments and fiscal restraints that led to Ghana's assumption of a Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) status (GoG, 2012). It was in the light of the above happenings that change and transformation of Ghana's publicly funded universities were thought necessary and hence initiated. Universities in Ghana have been challenged both internally by their own publics and externally by governments and communities to address such critical issues as:

- Expanding access and providing equity;
- Improving quality and relevance of education;
- Ensuring knowledge production and its application to the problems facing industry and society; and
- Ensuring sustainable funding and resource management.

All these have called into question the roles and mission of universities not only in Ghana but in Africa at large. The public universities have faced competition from private universities as well as from other non-university centres of knowledge production and research. This new competition is taking place within the context of a liberalised tertiary education provision environment characterized by market-led reforms and private sector initiatives. The universities have singularly, or in concert, adopted different strategies and measures to expand enrolment, generate additional funding and review curricula and modes of operation in an attempt to respond to these calls (Effah et al., 2009).

Overall, higher education in Ghana has experienced significant changes, but has not been perceived as transformational. The result has been that Ghana's efforts to fashion out developmental agenda in accordance with the World Bank and other donors' strategies for poverty reduction have led to further reductions in expenditure on higher education. Some stakeholders have argued that World Bank interventions have done more harm than good to the higher educational sector (Addae-Mensah, 2000). Efficient funding is a prerequisite in a healthy education provision system, therefore any intervention that results in cuts in funding has the potential to stifle the growth of the sector and hence its contribution to the economy of the country as a whole (ibid).

The tertiary education sector, like all other sectors of the Ghanaian economy, was in a deplorable condition in the 1970s and 1980s. The financial provisioning, physical infrastructure and the relationship between the sector and government were at their lowest ebb (Atuahene, 2014). In addition, there existed on the campuses low staff recruitment, retention and morale coupled with regular interruptions in academic work caused by political and economic tussles between the government and the universities. By the early 1980s, conditions in the educational sector were ready for any form of reform. The introduction of reforms into the educational sector however, is not peculiar to Ghana. In fact, most sub-Saharan African governments have been compelled to introduce educational reforms as part of their overall efforts to restructure their economies. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund therefore mandated general economic reforms and most governments struggling to maintain some socio-economic order, including Ghana, reluctantly complied (Manuh et al., 2007).

The main drawback to education during that time was a decline in government revenue that led to a drastic cut back in financing education. Paradoxically, the decline in higher education financing by the government of Ghana happened at a time when enrolments in general were increasing (Effah et al., 2009). This state of affairs has, over the years, put pressure on tertiary institutions, particularly universities, in their bid to absorb the teeming numbers of the education-seeking youth.

2.5.1 The Tertiary Education Reforms

As part of efforts to restructure tertiary education, the PNDC government set up the University Rationalisation Committee (URC) and tasked it with the responsibility to set up

the policy framework for reforming tertiary education in Ghana. The URC submitted its final report in 1988, having submitted an earlier interim report in 1987. The URC put forward 166 recommendations on issues that the reform should pay attention to. Five main priority areas of reform were identified as follows:

- Cost-sharing – involving government's intention to shift some of the cost of funding tertiary education, especially in the area of food and lodging to students and parents. Universities were supposed to move away from residential universities to non-residential universities;
- Focus on new tertiary institutions - the rapid expansion of secondary school enrolment increased demand for tertiary institutions. The idea was for future efforts at expansion to aim at broadening the technological base of the economy by developing technical colleges, polytechnics and training colleges more rapidly than the development of universities;
- Integration of tertiary education institutions - to address the demand that all-tertiary institutions be integrated under the Ministry of Education (MOE). The integration was supposed to embrace the universities, polytechnics, the Regional Colleges of Applied Arts and Sciences (RECAST) and several post-secondary educational institutions, which had earlier been under the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. The ultimate goal was to establish a vertical linkage between pre-tertiary and tertiary institutions;
- Gender equity – to increase female enrolment at all levels of the educational system in order to reduce the gender gap in enrolment; and
- Education for the disabled – to provide special education for the disabled at the tertiary level to ensure universal access to education irrespective of one's physical condition.

It was also suggested that the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) should be strengthened to perform its supervisory role over tertiary institutions in the country (SARPI, 2001). Private participation in the provision of accommodation on the campuses of tertiary institutions was also to be encouraged.

One thing that became manifest after the tertiary reforms in 1991 is the tremendous increase in student enrolment. This increased enrolment however fell far short of absorbing the thousands of students who qualified for tertiary education for the following reasons:

- Lack of expansion of equipment and facilities in tertiary institutions;
- High unit cost of education at the tertiary level;
- Inability to provide sustained financial resources; and
- Inadequate student loans to support students' life on campus (SARPI, 2001).

Tertiary education on the whole was noted to have failed to impact positively on the nation's development. The negative attitude of Ghanaians to other types of education outside the university was blamed as one of the factors accounting for the inability of education to impact national development. The insistence of SAP reform policies on the removal of subsidies was problematic as people thought education was vital to development and market forces should not determine who in Ghana got access to good quality education. Cost sharing, for example, did not favour the rural poor as income levels became the most important determinant of enrolment into educational institutions (SARPI, 2001). Growth of the private sector through liberalisation was as a result of the failure of the reforms undertaken to address shortfalls identified in the sector. The following section presents happenings in the private universities sector.

2.6 Ghana's Private University Sector (Private Tertiary Education Institutions

Offering Degree Programmes)

Prior to the 1990s, the delivery of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa in general was undertaken by the public sector. Acute socio-economic crises that emanated from a wide array of sources, not excluding negative consequences of the SAP, woefully limited the capacity of the public universities to brace themselves to absorb the teeming pre-tertiary graduates (Varghese, 2006). Owing to the limited capacity of the then few public universities relative to the growing numbers of students seeking higher qualifications, it became necessary for the sector to be liberalised to enable private sector participation (Khaled et al., 2001). In consonance with developments in the West African sub-region, Ghana liberalised her university education sector as part of its education reforms, resulting in a mixed public and private provision in an increasingly competitive university environment. From just two private universities in 1999, the burgeoning private sector had 45 universities in 2012; by the end of 2014, the number of accredited private universities in the country had increased to 57 (NAB, 2015). The process of liberalisation was initiated in 1993 when a structure for

accrediting private universities was formed. Polytechnics in Ghana were also upgraded to tertiary status.

Private participation in tertiary education is regulated by a number of Acts. The Education Act, 1961 (Act 87; as amended in 1965) empowers the Minister of Education to approve the establishment of private tertiary institutions, close institutions, and make regulations for the establishment, management and conduct of the affairs of the institutions. Following the educational reforms introduced in 1987, these functions have been in practice and performed through the National Accreditation Board (NAB) established in 1993 by PNDCL 317. Detailed regulations were provided in the Legislative Instrument (L.I. 1700) of 2000. The Board is specifically charged with the responsibility for the accreditation of both public and private tertiary institutions with regard to the contents and standards of their programmes and the determination of the equivalences of diplomas, certificates and other qualifications offered by institutions in Ghana or elsewhere (NAB, 2013). Among the critical elements that NAB focuses attention on in its accreditation exercise are minimum entry requirements for admission, academic programmes, staffing, physical facilities and equipment. Others are library facilities, employment prospects for graduates and funding.

LaRocque (2001) quotes a study on Private Tertiary Education in Ghana as estimating the number of private tertiary institutions, either in operation or planned, at 80, 11 of which had received accreditation from the NAB. As of 31st January 2004, 28 private tertiary institutions had received accreditation from NAB, comprising nine university colleges, six theological colleges, nine tutorial colleges, two distance learning institutions and two journalism/screen arts institutions. Today, one can count over 57 accredited private university institutions (NAB, 2015).

In terms of students' enrolment, the private tertiary institutions, understandably, tend to have far smaller numbers than the public institutions. From an estimated total enrolment of 5,000 in 1995, total student enrolment in eight of the 28 accredited private tertiary institutions as of the 2003/2004 academic year was 5,383. These eight are the largest institutions in terms of enrolment. It is no wonder that in 2006, the total student enrolment in all 28 accredited institutions did not exceed 8,000 compared to the over 80,000 students in the public tertiary institutions (NAB, 2011).

Notwithstanding the appreciable contribution of the private sector in absorbing the increasing

student numbers, the sector still has a long way to go in making a really significant impact on the chronic admission pressures in the country.

2.6.1 Ownership of Institutions of Private Higher Education (PIHE)

The ownership pattern of private institutions of higher education varies among countries. A global analysis of ownership patterns of PIHEs (Varghese, 2006) reveals the following patterns of ownership:

- i) Institutions operating like multinationals;
- ii) Institutions operating in collaboration with foreign institutions;
- iii) Institutions operating through international collaborations between governments and public universities;
- iv) Institutions operating as religious organizations;
- v) Institutions operating as private institutions established by nationals and operating within national confines; and
- vi) Institutions operating as collaboration between institutions of the same country.

Generally, private tertiary institutions in Ghana can be categorised into the profit-oriented and the not-for-profits. The not-for-profits are mostly owned by religious bodies and include Valley View University, Central University, All Nations University College, Pentecost University College, Catholic University College, Presbyterian University College, Methodist University College and Islamic University College. These institutions teach mainly degree and diploma programmes, and derive their revenues from tuition fees, as well as charitable donations that are sourced both internally and externally. Although these institutions are not for profit, they charge higher fees than the public universities. The profit oriented institutions are mainly tutorial colleges that offer mostly foreign programmes leading to the award of international diplomas and professional certificates. Examples are the Graduate School of Management, which offers programmes leading to the award of diplomas certified from the UK, and the Ghana School of Marketing, where programmes offered lead to the award of a certificate from the Chartered Institute of Marketing in the United Kingdom. There are also a few foreign-domestic collaborations in operation. These institutions derive their revenues mainly from tuition fees, which tend to be high.

2.6.2 Agencies Providing Private Higher Education

In Ghana, agencies that provide private higher education are mostly religious bodies, and international institutions.

i. Religious Bodies

There has been an upsurge in the desire, particularly among religious bodies, to establish private universities. By March 2004, the National Accreditation Board had granted accreditation to six theological colleges and nine private tertiary institutions, mostly owned by religious bodies, to offer degree programmes in religious or theological studies, administration and accountancy, among others. The Catholic, Protestant, Charismatic and Muslim communities in Ghana have established their own universities. Most of these institutions started primarily as a mechanism for delivering religious or theological education, but have since moved into the provision of a wider range of job-oriented courses such as accounting, business administration, computer studies and marketing; and a few are making bold inroads into the sciences. Central University is an example, where programmes like nursing, physician assistantship, pharmacy, architecture, and since the 2014/15 academic year, law, are on offer (National Accreditation Board, 2015).

ii. Linkages with Foreign Universities

One of the requirements for the accreditation of a new institution is its affiliation to an established university, either locally or abroad. As of 2008, 16 of the 28 accredited institutions were affiliated to external institutions and professional bodies. These private institutions cash in on the image of established elite universities through affiliation. University affiliation affords young institutions the opportunity to avoid the drudgery of initiating brand building efforts all from the scratch. As with the public universities, most of the private tertiary institutions invite lecturers from recognized universities abroad on sabbatical, visiting, or adjunct lectureship positions to teach while others also serve as external examiners to ensure that high standards are achieved and maintained. The NIIT franchise in Accra for example, has been set up as part of an information technology training and education network of NIIT around the world to offer fee-paying short courses and two-year professional diplomas. New York University has also opened a campus in Accra where students are given an opportunity to attend special courses at the University of Ghana and the National Film and Television Institute, while GfK of Germany is into collaboration with Central University College to run MSc in Marketing, Social and Organisational Research.

Other foreign institutions operating in Ghana include Mahatma Ghandi University from India, SMC University from Switzerland, Business University of Costa Rica, Liverpool John Moores University from the UK, University of Finland, IPE Management School from France, Open University of Malaysia and Goodwin College from the USA (NCTE, 2015).

2.6.3 Courses Offered by Institutions of Private Higher Education

The courses offered in private universities reflect either a commercial consideration or a religious orientation. In general, the private universities offer courses that require less investment in terms of infrastructure, research, teaching and learning facilities thereby avoiding the relatively expensive capital outlay that is required to mount and run courses in the natural sciences. The for-profit institutions cater for private business enterprises and offer courses that are market-friendly. Business courses are very common in for-profit private universities. These institutions offer selected courses and are better understood as ‘boutique’ institutions as compared with the ‘supermarket model’ of public universities.

The religion-affiliated universities started with courses focusing on religious epistemologies – either on Islamic or on Christian beliefs and traditions. For example, Central University started as a theological institution and continues to run a well established department for theology. Others such as Valley View University, Pentecost University College, Catholic University College, Presbyterian University College and Methodist University College which are anchored on the Christian faith are also operational.

A conspicuous difference between the public and private sectors of Ghana’s university education provision is the enormous concentration on business related courses by the latter sector. The reason for the concentration on business administration, information technology and professional courses is not difficult to discern - these are career-oriented and job-related programmes that prepare students directly for the job market. This is particularly important in an era in which graduate unemployment is increasingly becoming an issue of concern (Holmes, 2013). It is noted, for example, that in a recent study undertaken under the auspices of the Association of African Universities in six African countries including Ghana, published in the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, graduate unemployment was estimated at 8 per cent for graduates in the humanities and natural sciences and only 3 per cent for business graduates (Mugabushaka et al., 2003).

2.6.4 Financing of Private Universities

Among the distinguishing features of private tertiary institution in Ghana is funding where a dominant source is students' fees. Tuition fees thus form the financial backbone of most private institutions in the country. Profit-oriented private universities operate like enterprises generating profit. The total income of private institutions is determined, therefore, by the number of students and the rate of tuition fees levied. Employment-oriented and market-friendly courses attract a larger number of students to these institutions. The religion-based universities, in general, levy a lower rate of fees as they receive subsidies from their parent organizations, and at times staff are drawn from the church hierarchy. However, some universities receive support from other sources. Certain private universities get part of their resources from voluntary contributions as well as supplies in terms of equipment, etc.

All in all, student fees continue to be the dominant source of income for the private universities (Varghese, 2006). Tuition fees vary between PIHEs. The profit-oriented institutions levy fees on the basis of full cost recovery and, if possible, to generate profits. In some instances, the PIHEs affiliated to universities or institutions abroad levy higher fees, as there is a growing number of Ghanaians who are willing to pay higher fees to attain degrees from foreign universities. Ashesi and Wisconsin universities are such examples in Ghana. Fees levied by not-for-profit PIHEs are relatively low. Other sources of funding include support from abroad which constitutes as high as 50 per cent of funding at Islamic University College, for example, and grants from sponsors with the highest recipient being All Nations University which generates 70 per cent of its funding from this source (Myjoyonline, 2012). Private tertiary institutions in Ghana are free to set their own fee levels. As the sector continues to shape up, there is ample justification to expect that the phenomenon of private university education has indeed come to stay, if not to lead.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has sought to situate the study within the context of the Ghanaian university education industry. It begins by reviewing happenings in the African tertiary education industry in general that have the potential to impact the development and maintenance of student based brand equity (SBBE) with particular emphasis on the intensity of competition among players in the industry. Data presented provide ample indication of increasing tertiary education-seeking populations, hence the need for sustainable competitive differentiation to enable universities benefit from the prevailing favourable industry trends.

This chapter has looked at the Ghanaian tertiary, and specifically, university industry contexts where settings of both private and public universities were visited and reviewed. In consonance with global trends, there is an increasing number of private universities in Ghana in response to growing demands as public universities have not been able to cope with the overwhelming number of students seeking admissions. The chapter reveals increasing student numbers, as well as the number of people seeking university education in Ghana, as the need and desire to possess and use tertiary qualifications increase. Also presented are some of the restructuring processes that the tertiary education industry of Ghana in general has gone through under the guidance of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, in response to contemporary socio-economic orders.

Generally, the reputation of Ghana among African countries is good and has attracted foreign fee paying students who contribute to the revenue base of the sector. Graduates from Ghana's universities are able to find employment abroad suggesting good reputation in that sense (World Bank/UNESCO, 2000). Ghana's tertiary industry, however, ranks near the bottom of international ranking of universities (NCTE, 2013). While university institutions in Ghana continue to brace themselves against intensifying competitive pressures that emanate from a wide array of sources including liberalisation and globalisation (Kumar and Dash, 2011; Sharma et al., 2013; Aron, 2014), what remains important is the adopting of strategies that will ensure sustainable differentiation. The next chapter reviews branding and university brand equity literature with a view to placing the study within the appropriate theoretical and empirical contexts.

REFERENCES

- Addae-Mensah, I. (2000). *Education in Ghana: A tool for social mobility or social stratification?* The J.B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, April, 2000.
- Adu, K. H. (2009). *Private higher education on the rise*. Available at www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story. Date accessed 02/03/12.
- Aron, D. (2014). Globalization, culture, and branding: how to leverage cultural equity for building iconic brands in the era of globalization. *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*, 51(11), 2032-2032.
- Atuahene, F. (2006). *A policy Analysis of the Financing of Tertiary Education Institutions in Ghana: An Assessment of the Objectives and the Impact of the Ghana Education Trust Fund*. Doctorial Thesis. The College of Education of Ohio University.
- Atuahene, F. (2014). Charting Higher Education Development in Ghana: Growth, Transformations, and Challenges, in Alexander W. Wiseman, Charl C. Wolhuter (ed.) *The Development of Higher Education in Africa: Prospects and Challenges. International Perspectives on Education and Society*, 21, 215-263.
- Baah-Boateng, W., Adjei, P. and Oduro, A. D. (2013). Determinants of Moonlighting in Ghana: An Empirical Investigation', *African Review of Economics and Finance*, 4(2), 176–202.
- Binsardi, A. & Ekwulugo, F. (2003). International marketing of British education: research on the students' perception and the UK market penetration. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 21(5), 318-27.
- Bloom, D., Canning, D., & Chan, K. (February, 2006). *Higher education and economic development in Africa*. Available at http://www.worldbank.org/afr/teia/pdfs/Higher_Education_Econ_Dev.pdf, Accessed 14/03/12.

- Chambers, M. I. (2008). *The African Youth and Employment*: ECOWAS Commission Accra. Ghana 5 September, 2008.
- Cubillo-Pinilla, J. M., Zuniga, T., Losantos, I. S. & Sanchez, J. (2009). Factors influencing international students' evaluations of higher Education Programs. *The Journal of American Academy of Business*, 15(1), 270-8.
- Effah, P., Newman, E. & Pillay, P. (2009). *Tertiary Education Financing in Ghana*. Partnership for Higher Education in Africa. New York.
- Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (2006). *Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II)*. National Development Planning Commission, Republic of Ghana, 2006.
- Government of Ghana (GoG) (2010). Education Sector Performance Report, 2010.
- Government of Ghana (GoG) (2012). White paper on the report of the Education Reforms Committee, Ministry of Education Youth and Sports.
- Helferty, A. & Clarke, A. (2009). Student-led campus climate change initiatives in Canada. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 10(3), 287-300.
- Holmes, L. (2013). Competing perspectives on graduate employability: Possession, position or process? *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(4), 538–554.
- Kargbo, J. A. (2002). African universities and the challenge of knowledge creation and application in the information age. *Library Review*, 51(8), 411 – 416.
- Khaled, H., Said, M. & Kortam, W. (2001). Modernization of education and scientific research in Egypt, *Cairo University Vision*, Part II, December, pp. 179-204.
- Kumar, S., & Dash, M. K. (2011). Management education in India: Trends, issues and implications. *Research Journal of International Studies*, 18, 15-25. Retrieved from http://www.eurojournals.com/RJIS_18_02.pdf. Date accessed: November 2015.
- LaRoche, N. (2001). *Private Education in Ghana: A Market and Regulatory Survey* Prepared for the World Bank, 2001.

- Manuh, T., Gariba, S. & Budu, J. (2007). *Change and transformation in Ghana's publicly funded universities - A study of experience, lessons and opportunities*. Published in Association with Partnership for Higher Education in Africa. Oxford: James Curry Ltd.
- Mourad, M., Ennew, C. & Kortam, W. (2011). *Brand equity in higher education*. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(4), 403-420.
- Mugabushaka, A. M., Techler, U. & Schomburg, H. (2003). Failed or Self-hindering Prophecies? Employment Experiences of African Graduates in the 1990s. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*. myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201111/76543.php. Date accessed: 20/05/2012.
- Myjoyonline, (2012). myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201111/76543.php. Date accessed: 20/05/2012.
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2011). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Date accessed: 11/09/12).
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2013). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Date accessed: 21/03/14).
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2015). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Date accessed: March, 2016.
- National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE) (2010). *Summary of basic statistics on public tertiary education institutions*. 2008/2009 academic year.
- National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE) (2013). *Summary statistics for accredited tertiary education institutions*. 2011/2012 academic year.
- National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE) (2015). *Summary statistics for Accredited Tertiary Education Institutions*. 2013/2014 academic year. Date accessed: March, 2016.

- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt, T. E. (2014). University brand equity: an empirical investigation of its dimensions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(6), 616-634.
- Sharmaa, A. A., Raob, V. R. & Poplic, S. (2013). Measuring consumer-based brand equity for Indian business schools. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2013, 23(2), 175 –203.
- Shekarchizadeh, A., Rasli, A. & Hon-Ta, H. (2011). SERVQUAL in Malaysian universities: perspectives of international students. *Business Process Management Journal*, 17(1), 67- 81.
- Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative (SAPRI) (2001). *Structural Adjustment and Tertiary Education in Ghana* (1983-1999), Presented at the Second National SAPRI Forum, Accra. February, 2001.
- UNESCO (2009). *The new dynamics of higher education and research for societal change and development*. Proceedings of the COMMUNIQUE. 8th July 2009. UNESCO, Paris.
- Varghese, N. V. (2006). Growth and Expansion of Private Higher Education in Africa. *International Institute for Education Planning*, UNESCO.
- West, R. (1997). *Review of higher education financing and policy*. Report of the West Review, Department of Education, Training and youth Affairs, Canberra.
- World Bank (2010). *Financing higher education in Africa: A study by International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, Washington, DC, World Bank.
- World Bank/UNESCO (2000). *Higher education in developing countries: Peril and promise*. Washington, D.C: The World Bank.
- <http://www.tfhe.net/report/downloads/report/whole.pdf>. Date accessed: April 2012.
- Yusefu, T. M. (1993). *Creating the African university: Emerging issues for adjustment. Revitalisation and expansion*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Press.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

In situating this study within the appropriate theoretical context, a broad literature search was conducted as presented in this chapter. This chapter begins by reviewing relevant literature in the general area of the concept of branding, followed by literature on brand equity. It then reviews literature on customer-based brand equity (CBBE). The chapter continues with a literature review on service sector branding and university branding where the substantive issue of university brand equity is presented.

The sections on the concepts of branding and brand equity present, among others, a review of major conceptualisations and dimensions of the concepts espoused in various studies, as well as identify major areas of congruence and variance in those expositions that relate to this study. This is to establish the operational contours of the study, as well as identify major conceptual dimensions and sub-dimensions of the concept. Literature on service sector branding has also been reviewed to place the study in the appropriate service context. The section on university education explores branding in that sector and discusses previous studies relevant to this study, particularly in relation to attributes within the university service environment that contribute to brand equity and preference for institutions in the industry. This review of relevant literature forms the basis of the researcher's conceptual framework and hypotheses presented in the next chapter.

3.2 The Brand Concept

Brand management has become a top corporate priority due to the growing need for sustainable differentiation (Mourad et al., 2011; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Kotler and Keller, 2006; Keller, 2013; Sharma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014). The brand as a concept has been variously defined. The American Marketing Association (1960) in Aaker, (1995) defined the brand as 'a name, term, sign, symbol, or design or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or groups of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competition' (Aaker, 1991). According to Aaker (1991; 1995) the brand comprises a logo, a name or a package that differentiates between products and services of different organisations. Other researchers have articulated similar definitions

and stressed that image and value are pivotal in branding considerations (Ambler and Styles, 1996; Keller, 2003; Keller and Lehmann; 2006; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Du preez, 2015).

Many of the early studies on branding stressed two salient dimensions. Firstly, they highlight identification (Aaker, 1991, 1995, 1996; Keller, 1993, 2003, 2013; Kapferer, 1998; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012), which characterised the genesis of the concept in the sixteenth century when brewers of alcoholic beverages and livestock owners imprinted their symbols on their products (Aaker, 1991). The second brand import as espoused by the definitions is differentiation (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Joseph et al., 2012; Keller, 2013; Pinar et al., 2014), which has become important after the era of the monopolies when industries began experiencing increasing competition and thus felt the need to highlight competitive differences between similar offerings (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Kapferer, 1998; Keller, 2003; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Luis et al., 2015). Thus, apart from identification, the brand possesses unique and appealing features, values and attributes, which positively differentiate it from the competition. As Stephen King (WPP Group, London) opined ‘... a product is made in a factory; a brand is bought by a customer; a product can be copied by a competitor, a brand is unique; a product can be quickly outdated, a successful brand is timeless’ (Aaker, 1991, p1). The brand affords the organisation some inimitable exclusivity that is enduring and preferred by consumers (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Keller, 2003, 2013). In his pioneering work, Aaker (1991) describes the brand as encompassing a preponderance of elements including the slogan, identity, image, logo, product, service, person, information, identification, the company, packaging, the name, promotion, advertising and its overall presentation (Schiffman et al., 2005; Mourad, 2010; Mourad et al., 2011). According to Murphy (1990), the brand is a complex phenomenon; not only is it the actual product, but it is also the unique property of a specific owner that has been developed over time to embrace a set of values and attributes (both tangible and intangible) that meaningfully differentiate products that are otherwise similar (Keller, 2013). In the light of the encompassing nature of the brand, Marconi (1993) cautions against the simplistic assertion that concentrates on the name, by stressing that the brand is not just a name because the name is just created to identify the product. Rather, the brand is created to add value to the product and give it a personality thereby differentiating it from competing alternatives.

The process of branding involves the development and maintenance of a set of product and/or

organisational attributes, which could be tangible/actual, emotional/psychological or aesthetic/cultural and are coherent, appropriate, distinctive, protectable and appealing to target audiences (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2003). It involves the management of an intricate, multifaceted synthesis of attributes such as products, name, place, time, space, colours, people, communication, distribution, price, processes, symbols, media and many tangible and intangible others, into a coherent, unique whole that target markets relate to (de Chernatony et al., 2004; Keller, 2003; Keller and Lehmann, 2006; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Therefore, the brand comprises a complex blend of attributes compressed into a coherent whole that is unique and so differentiates organisations and their offerings from competitors.

In attempting to make meaning of the concept, there has been a wide diversity of scholarly expositions on branding, which compounds rather than simplifies the intricacy in which the concept is shrouded. Biel (1992) talks about brandscape; Aaker (1991) advocated brand personality; Keller (1993, 1998), brand awareness and brand imagery; while Berry (2000) espouses brand meaning. According to de Chernatony and Harris (2000), there is a shift in the branding literature from a focus on the concept of brand image, which relates to consumers' perceptions of brand differentiation (Mourad et al., 2011; Keller, 2013; Pinar et al., 2014) to brand identity that focuses on the distinctiveness of the brand. In their attempted to conceptualize the brand, de Chernatony and McWilliam (1989) introduced performance needs (functionality) and personal expression needs (representation).

Thus, while there is unanimity regarding the multifaceted nature and the differentiating ability of the brand, what continues to be challenging is the rather high level of inconsistency in terminologies adopted in attempting to explain the concept. This goes to affect dimensions and indicators proposed, and hence, the divergent contributive outcomes of those dimensions and indicators (Broyles et al., 2010; Ho and Wang, 2011). Whatever the extent of convergence or divergence in scholarly claims about the concept, it is worth noting that a good understanding and appreciation of the complex, unique and differentiating nature of the brand is a prerequisite for understanding the concept of brand equity, which is the focus of this study.

Extant literature is replete with benefits of successful brands. According to Pinar et al. (2014), brands need to be given sufficient attention because they are a powerful asset that represents the essence of organisations. When well managed, the brand becomes the most

valuable intangible asset an organisation can have (Aaker, 1995; Keller, 1993; Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Pinar et al., 2014) that functions both as a sustainable differentiator for the organisation and reason-to-buy for the consumer (Aaker, 1996, 1991; Keller, 2013). According to Kotler and Keller (2006) and Buil et al. (2013), strong brands result in customer preference and loyalty as they tend to affect consumers' impressions, perceptions and feelings about products and their performance. From the point of view of the organisation, the brand functions as a mediator between consumers and its offerings, bestowing such benefits as better competitive differentiation, lower marketing and distribution costs, customer loyalty, profitable customer relationships, easy extensions and protection from imitation through trade marking (Aaker, 1991; De Mooij, 1993; Keller, 2001). For the consumer, the brand becomes a signal of quality and authenticity that simplifies purchase decision making (Krishnan and Hartline, 2001). It symbolises meaning (especially in services patronage) that alleviates functional, emotional, safety and financial risks associated with patronage and consumption decisions (ibid). Strong brands represent promises kept and so engender trust and a sense of belonging among consumers (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Thus, there is justification in the increasing levels of attention that is given to brands and brand equity by practitioners and researchers in contemporary times.

3.3 The Concept of Brand Equity

Literature on brand equity abounds in both product and service industries due to the demonstrable relevance of the concept in differentiating in today's increasingly competitive world. According to Barwise (1993), the concept of brand equity gained wide approval and usage in the 1980s among advertising practitioners. Important academic contributors through the 1990s were Aaker (1991), Srivastava and Shocker (1991), Kapferer (1998), and Keller (1993) although there have been more recent studies and expositions on the meaning and content of the concept (Mackay, 2001; Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Va'zquez et al., 2002; Keller, 2003, 2013; Kim et al., 2003; Keller and Lehmann, 2006; Pappu et al., 2006; Leone et al., 2006; Whitelock and Fastoso, 2007; Lee and Back, 2010; Pike et al., 2010; Broyles et al., 2010; Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010; Mourad et al., 2011; Kim and Hyun, 2011; Andres et al., 2012; Buil et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014).

A review of contemporary literature on brand equity reveals a plethora of definitions and dimensions of same. Among the many conceptualisations of brand equity, the two most

fundamental are Aaker's (1991, 1995) and Keller's (1993, 2003). These primary conceptualisations have underpinned many studies on the concept in both product and service industries (Faircloth et al., 2001; Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010; Pike et al., 2010; Mourad et al., 2011; Kim and Hyun, 2011; Buil et al., 2013; Ravi et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014; Tolbert, 2014; Williams and Omar, 2014; Nebojsa et al., 2015; Ramírez, 2016). Aaker (1991, pp.15) defines brand equity as 'a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers'. It is the value that consumers associate with a brand; a combination of assets and liabilities that are linked to a brand that either add to or subtract from its value in the eyes of stakeholders (Aaker, 1991). From a consumer perspective, Keller (1993, pp.2) defines brand equity (CBBE) as 'the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumers' response to the marketing of the brand'. In his opinion, brand equity represents the value that consumers associate with a brand, which is principally predicated on consumers' direct or indirect interaction with or experience of the brand over time, due to which they may have seen, heard, felt, learned and responded to it (Keller, 2013; Sasmita and Suki, 2015). In his first and generic conceptualisation of brand equity, which is considered as a principal contribution to the understanding of the concept, Aaker (1991) identified brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other proprietary assets as the dimensions of brand equity. Keller's improved version in 1993 highlighted awareness and familiarity that hinge on brand associations in which he stressed image, benefits, attributes, feelings and brand experience (Keller, 2013).

Muller (1998) undertook an empirical study in the restaurant industry in which service quality, service delivery, service image and signs and symbols were identified as major components of brand equity in that industry. In a similar study in the hotel industry, Kim et al. (2003) applied Aaker's model and projected brand loyalty, quality and image; downplaying the effect of brand awareness. Yoo and Donthu's (2001) multi-dimensional model of brand equity was also based on Aaker and Keller's dimensions and focused on differences in consumers' responses to a focal brand relative to a bland product when they are both backed by the same level of marketing efforts and product attributes. Leuthesser et al. (1995) attempted a conceptualisation that spans across the continuum of the value delivery chain when they described brand equity as consisting of a set of associations and behaviours on the part of the brand's consumers, channel members, and organisations that enable the product or organisation to earn greater value or greater margins than it would without the

brand name; that which gives the brand a strong, sustainable, and differentiated advantage over the competition (Cuneo et al., 2012; Sasmita and Suki, 2015; Su and Tong, 2015). Yasin et al. (2007) also adopted a similar perspective of the concept by referring to it as the “tremendous value” that the brand name brings to producers, retailers and consumers of the brand (Emmanuel, 2014).

In the opinion of Swait et al. (1993), brand equity consists of consumers’ implicit valuation of the brand in a market with differentiated brands relative to a market with no brand differentiation, while Lassar et al. (1995) explain the concept as consumers’ familiarity with the brand that enables them to hold some favourable, strong, and unique associations in memory. Lassar et al. (1995) further identified five perceptual dimensions of brand equity as performance, social image, value, trustworthiness and attachment (Cleopatra, 2015). In his opinion, Farquhar (1989) considers brand equity as comprising the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing efforts of the brand (Keller, 1993), where brand knowledge is explained as the full set of brand associations linked to the brand in long-term consumer memory (Theo, 2014; Davcik et al., 2015).

In developing a theoretical framework for sport brand equity, Ross et al. (2006) proposed a model which included both antecedents and consequences of brand equity. The model proposed two components of brand equity: brand awareness and brand associations. In that study, three main factors were indicated as comprising the antecedents of brand equity: organisation induced, market induced, and experience induced. Organisation induced factors include strategies developed by organisations relating to the elements of the extended marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, people and process). The market induced factors include the informal, non-paid communication strategies developed in the form of word-of-mouth communication and publicity, whereas the experience induced component is related to consumers’ overall experience upon using the product or service (Keller, 2013). Therefore, notwithstanding the divergence in definitions and dimensions in brand equity theory and conceptualisations, almost all the above-reviewed agree that the concept involves additional value conferred on a product by the brand that emanates from consumers’ associations and perceptions of that brand (Winters, 1991; Chaudhuri, 1995; Keller, 2003).

Brand equity thus denotes the extent to which a brand is valued by its consumers (Brewer and

Zhao, 2010) and deals with the value of a brand over and above products and services, and processes involved in their manufacture and provision. It is the overall superiority of a product carrying a strong brand name when compared to other brands (Jillapalli and Jillapalli, 2014). As Lassar et al. (1995) opine, brand equity has more to do with consumers' subjective perception than any objective indicators. Thus, the physical/tangible self of the organisation and its products/services *per se* do not take centre stage in trying to make meaning of the concept. From the foregoing, it is clear that in conceptualising brand equity, a range of constructs have been developed that vary in content, while certain common dimensions run through most of them. What is also clear from the above is that brand equity is a conceptual prism; a multi-dimensional construct (de Chernatony and McDonald, 1998; Lee and Back, 2010; Pike et al., 2010; Kim and Hyun, 2011), whose bundle can be unpacked from a number of different viewpoints. These viewpoints include financial, consumer, organisational and employee perspectives (De Mooij, 1993; Va'zquez et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2003; Supornpraditchai et al., 2007).

While current literature has focused on brand equity building and conceptualisation, there has been no unanimity on how it should be measured and as well, what dimensions should be employed in its measurement (Mackay, 2001). Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010) maintain that there is substantial but fragmented and inconclusive literature on branding, and that the absence of an agreed definition for the concept has spawned various methodologies for measuring it (Kartono and Rao, 2008).

Two approaches to measuring brand equity – economic/financial and consumer/psychological - have dominated extant literature. Early research focused on measuring brand equity by using a variety of financial techniques (Simon and Sullivan, 1993; Farquhar 1998; Swait et al., 1993; Kapferer, 1998). Financial based brand equity (also referred to as firm-based brand equity (FBBE)) assumes an economic perspective involving the value of the corporate entity, which is over and above the market value of its tangible assets due to the brand's ability to create future earnings/cash flow (Shocker and Weitz, 1988; de Chernatony and McDonald, 1998; Kim et al., 2003; Steven and Dennis, 2013; Wang, 2013). This approach to measuring brand equity treats the brand as a financial asset of the firm. Simon and Sullivan (1993) adopted the economic perspective by defining the brand as an organisation's intangible asset whose value can be extracted from the organisation's market value. The FBBE measurement therefore considers the brand as a driving force for

increased market share and profitability (Sharma et al., 2013) that emanates from consumers' favourable response to the brand (Isberg and Pitta, 2013). Thus, FBBE confers additional value on the organisation such as, lower financial risk, incremental cash flow, higher rent, higher entry barriers, lower marketing and distribution costs and protection from imitation through copyrighting (De Mooij, 1993). In addition, FBBE can create stronger customer loyalty, reduce price elasticity of demand, increase marketing effectiveness and provide opportunities for licensing agreements. It also provides the opportunity for brand extensions and stronger competitive positioning for the organisation (Keller, 2003).

The concept has also been defined in psychological customer-based contexts (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Keller, 1993, 2003, 2013), which employs the cognitive psychology approach to study how the brand affects consumers' perception and processing of information about an organisation and its offerings (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010; Keller, 2013; Mourad et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014). Customer-based brand equity (CBBE) is the differential value, both functional and non-functional that customers attach to a brand thereby considering it as one of superior value with such benefits as better performance, confidence in decision making, greater risk reduction, lower information costs and positive product and consumer imagery (Farquhar, 1989; Va'zquez et al., 2002). This perspective has been utilized in various empirical studies on brand equity (Vorhies, 1997; Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Washburn and Plank, 2002; Baldauf et al., 2003; Kim and Kim, 2004; Tolba and Hassan, 2009; Pike et al., 2010; Mourad et al., 2011; Lee and Chieng, 2011; Keller, 2013; Sharma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014; Ramírez, 2016). This perspective rests on the premise that the power of the brand lies in the mind of the consumer.

According to Kartono and Rao (2008), the financial approach involves a blend of consumer utility theory and economic theories of demand and supply to measure the value of the brand to the organisation (Sharma et al., 2013). Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010) also argue that an organisations' financial value is the outcome of consumers' response to the brand. Thus, the two approaches to measuring brand equity are interrelated as it takes positive consumer response to realise organisational value. This study appreciates the interconnectedness between the consumer and economic perspectives of brand equity and adopts the student-based brand equity concept (Mourad et al., 2011; Pinar et al., 2014) from the concept of customer-based brand equity (CBBE).

Keller (1993) argued that evaluating the brand in the minds of consumers is a prerequisite for a brand's market performance (Asamoah, 2014, Jin and Xiao, 2015). He developed a customer-based brand equity model, which comprised familiarity, awareness and associations; and argued that brand equity is determined mainly by brand knowledge, which comprises awareness, attributes, benefits, images, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and experience. According to Keller (2013, p.45), CBBE is achieved 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". He identifies two dominant dimensions of brand equity as "brand knowledge and brand response", where brand knowledge has been defined in terms of brand awareness and image, with brand response to marketing, conceptualised in terms of consumer perceptions, preferences, and behaviours arising from the organisation's marketing mix activities.

In his maiden conceptualisation of the concept in 1993, Keller also classified methods used in measuring customer-based brand equity into direct and indirect approaches where he explained direct/behavioural measures to imply a brand's impression on consumers due to which they are inclined to respond more favourably to its marketing. This, according to him, results in such behavioural outcomes as brand preferences, purchase intent, positive brand evaluations and willingness to pay premium prices (Su and Tong, 2015). The indirect/drivers approach involves contributive dimensions of the concept that drive behavioural outcomes including awareness, associations and perceived quality. Either outcomes or contributive dimensions, both measures point to the strength of the brand and the equity that emanate thereof. Although much of academic research on CBBE uses the latter approach (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010; Sharma et al., 2013), as indicated earlier, there is no agreement on what dimensions make up CBBE. This study adopts the direct approach and considers student-based brand equity (SBBE) as the university's positive impression on students, which results in preferential evaluation among the latter.

Yoo and Donthu (2001) also provided a generalized measure of brand equity that highlights the differential impact of different dimensions of brand equity by developing what they termed as "multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale", which was based on Aaker and Keller's models, focusing particularly on brand awareness, perceived quality, associations and brand loyalty. Aaker (1996) also introduced "Brand Equity Ten" - a model for measuring brand equity, which is a direct build up on his models of 1991 and 1995

comprising awareness, associations, perceived quality, perceived value, loyalty, and satisfaction on one hand, and market behaviour measures, such as market share, market price and distribution coverage on the other. Therefore, regardless of the fact that the concept of brand equity has been variously conceptualised in the literature, the psychological and financial approaches have been dominant. Also worth noting is that the two approaches are interconnected as it takes brand knowledge and response to realise financial gains.

Alamro and Rowley (2011) propose three strands of customer-based brand equity that condense the concept into fewer, manageable dimensions: knowledge equity (KE); attitudinal equity (AE); and relationship equity (RE). Knowledge equity is defined as the component of CBBE that evaluates consumers' awareness of the brand (recognition and recall), and their familiarity with brand characteristics, meaning, and functions. Thus, knowledge equity incorporates the cognitive dimension in the minds of consumers as per the Hierarchy of Effects Model (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961), and measures how effectively brand messages reach target consumers (Washburn and Plank, 2002; Keller and Lehmann, 2006; Baldauf et al., 2003; Kim and Kim, 2004; Keller, 2013).

Attitudinal equity refers to consumers' attitudes towards a particular brand that represents its "affective" dimension. It measures the effectiveness of the different marketing mix elements in influencing consumer perceptions. In a similar conceptualisation, Lassar et al. (1995) identified perceived quality (indicating the performance of the brand), perceived value (capturing the utility and affordability of the brand) and social image (representing the brand's social dimension). Further, Rossiter and Percy (1997) posited that brand attitude has both cognitive and emotional dimensions.

Relationship equity includes both customers' satisfaction as well as their attitudinal loyalty towards the brand. Relationship equity represents the attachment dimension between a brand and its consumers as per the Hierarchy of Effects Model, and measures the effectiveness of marketing activities in building a relationship between the brand and its target markets (Baldauf et al., 2003; Kim and Kim, 2004; Atilgan et al., 2005; Tolba and Hassan, 2009; Buil et al., 2013). Attitudinal loyalty represents the level of commitment of the average consumer toward the brand, while behavioural loyalty is the willingness of the average consumer to repurchase the brand (Morgan, 2000; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Tolba and Hassan, 2009). According to Tolba and Hassan (2009), attitudinal loyalty consists of affect

(Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001); prestige (Lassar et al., 1995); perceived quality (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Baldauf et al., 2003; Kim and Kim, 2004); and perceived value (Lassar et al., 1995; Aaker, 1996; Mackay, 2001).

This classification is corroborated by several studies in the literature. First, Keller and Lehmann (2006) defined “brand knowledge”, a component of CBBE, as consisting of awareness, associations, attitudes, and attachments. While awareness corresponds to knowledge equity in Alamro and Rowley’s study, attitudes and attachments represent attitudinal equity and relationship equity respectively. Similarly, Vakratsas and Ambler (1996) defined consumer-based effects in terms of cognition (knowledge equity), affect (attitudinal equity), and experience (relationship equity). It is clear that the dominant constructs have remained implicit in the various conceptualisation (Jumiati and Norazah, 2015). Thus even in studies where attempts have been made to compress the divergent dimensions of the concept into a manageable chunk, authors have been near unanimous in their reference to the dominant constructs, such as awareness, associations and loyalty, that underpin the concept of brand equity.

3.4 Customer-Based Brand Equity Dimensions

As amply indicated in the foregoing review of the literature, brand equity has been variously conceptualised by different authors postulating different dimensions - an indication of some inconsistency as regards the components of the concept. However, the common denominator threading through most studies is the adoption of one or more of the dimension of Aaker (1991) and Keller’s (1993) works. The following sections review relevant literature of some of the dominant dimensions in the above studies, which form the basis of the current study.

3.4.1 Brand Awareness

Awareness is a ubiquitous dimension in brand equity conceptualisations (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Kapferer, 1998; Keller, 2013; Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010; Pike et al., 2010; Mourad et al., 2011; Kim and Hyun, 2011; Buil et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2013). It is “the strength of a brand’s presence in the minds of consumers” (Ross, 2006, p. 30; Keller, 2013). Aaker (1991) defines brand awareness as a measure not only of consumer’s knowledge of the existence of a brand, but also their ability to identify a brand as belonging to a particular product category. Alamro and Rowley (2011) contend that knowledge about a brand may directly influence brand equity associated with a particular brand, while knowledge about a

product category will influence brand equity associated with all brands featured in that product category. In the opinion of Keller (2003, 2013), brand awareness is customers' ability to recall and recognize the brand as indicated by their ability to identify the brand under different conditions and to link the brand name, logo, symbol, etc. with certain associations in memory (Steiner et al., 2013; Idris and Whitfield, 2014).

Aaker (1991) identifies other higher levels of awareness besides recognition and recall (Casidy, 2013). He includes top-of-mind, brand dominance, brand knowledge and brand opinion, where brand knowledge denotes the full set of brand associations that are linked to the brand and therefore underlie consumers' impressions of and attitudes and behaviours towards the brand (Keller, 2013). Aaker (1996) envisages a healthy metamorphosis from recognition through recall to top-of-mind awareness as brands progress from 'the new' to 'the well-known'. Brand knowledge and brand opinion can be used in part to enhance the measurement of brand recall in that consumers need first to be aware of the brand in order to develop a set of associations for it (Washburn and Plank, 2002; Sasmita and Suki, 2015). Brand awareness thus contributes to the equity of the brand by moving consumers from a state of non-awareness of the brand to awareness – a shift that is basic in the formation of attitudes and behaviours that culminate in loyalty. In the opinion of Aaker (1995) brand awareness forms the anchor to which other associations are hooked over time; it engenders familiarity and subsequent liking; serves as a signal of essence as well as the basis for brand preference among consumers (Hakala et al., 2012). Thus brand awareness is an indispensable precursor to brand equity, as effectively, consumers' knowledge about a brand precedes any preference or liking for it. Despite its proven relevance in brand equity considerations however, brand awareness has been noted to have no demonstrable effect on students' preference in the university industry (Kim et al., 2003; Mourad et al., 2011; Casidy, 2013).

3.4.2 Brand Associations

Brand associations measure anything that is connected to a brand in the memory of consumers (Aaker, 1991; Sasmita and Suki, 2015). According to Keller (1993, p. 3), associations involve "informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for the consumers". It is that component of the brand on which its image hinges and represents the basis for purchase decision and for brand loyalty (Aaker 1991). The concept encapsulates all brand-related thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, beliefs and attitudes (Kotler and Keller, 2006, p. 188). Collectively, brand

association elements define the image of the brand (Keller, 1993; de Chernatony and Harris, 2000) and may include a variety of attributes such as perceived quality, brand name and product attributes (Mourad et al., 2011). Keller (1993) categorises brand associations into attributes, benefits and attitudes, where attributes denote the features of each product/service, and can be further classified into product-related and non-product related attributes.

Product-related attributes are those that “relate to a product’s physical composition or a service requirement” including safety, variety of programmes and customer service (Gladden and Funk, 2002). Non-product related associations, on the other hand, are extrinsic factors influencing the consumer decision-making process, such as information about the price, packaging, and usage imagery (Keller, 1993). Gladden and Funk (2002) propose logo design as one of the non-product related associations as it is related to consumers’ recall and recognition processes (Keller, 2003). Benefits on the other hand, are related to consumers’ perceptions that are related to the value of the brand, and its expected outcomes. Keller categorised benefits into:

- Functional, which is related to the brand’s demonstrable functional utility and consumers’ expectation to satisfy consumption related needs, such as becoming a member of a club to achieve social and psychological wellbeing;
- Experiential, which is related to consumers’ experiential needs such as pleasure, excitement and variety seeking; and
- Symbolic, which is related to intrinsic consumer needs such as escape, self-advancement and actualisation, and learning.

In their study on brand equity in fitness clubs, Gladden and Funk (2002) proposed that the constructs of escape, nostalgia, and pride are expected benefits that create brand associations in that industry.

Brand attitudes are defined as “consumers’ overall evaluation of the brand” (pp. 4) that determines their response to it. Keller (1993) further contends that the “attitudes” construct is an important one because its study can lead to a better understanding of consumer choice. Zehthaml and Bitner (2006) propose that attitudes consist of the cognitive, affective and conative components. In reference to the sports industry, Gladden and Funk (2002) assert that brand associations can help managers to build their brand names; and marketers, to determine

the components of brand equity in order to target and manipulate those components. Ross et al. (2006) also note that brand associations can enhance awareness and image, as well as build consumer loyalty.

In his conceptualisation of the concept, Chen (1996) identified two categorized of brand associations - product associations and organizational associations. According to Chen, product associations comprise functional and non-functional associations, where functional attributes comprise the tangible features of a product (de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo, 1998; Keller, 1993). According to Lassar et al. (1995), functional attributes of the brand play an important role in consumers' evaluation of its performance, where performance is defined as consumers' judgment about a brand's fault-free and long-lasting physical operation and flawlessness in the product's physical construction (Lassar et al., 1995). The implication here is that brand equity will dwindle in a situation where a reputable brand is noted to perform its physical functions ironically inadequately; the reverse is also true.

Non-functional associations/attributes include symbolic attributes (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993), which are the intangible features that meet consumers' needs for social approval and personal expression or self-esteem (de Chernatony and McDonald, 1998; Hankinson, 2004; Keller, 1993). Non-functional attributes consumers associate with the brand include trustworthiness, perceived value, differentiation, country of origin and social image (Lee and Chieng, 2011). Chen and Chen (2000), for example, contend that brands that are trustworthy are highly valued by consumers. According to Lassar et al. (1995), trustworthiness relates to the confidence consumers place in the firm and its communication programmes and hinges on the extent to which the firm's actions seek to fulfil the interests of consumers. In conceptualising brand equity, Lassar et al. (1995) regarded trustworthiness as an important element in determining the strengths of brands.

In the opinion of Lassar et al. (1995), perceived value is the perceived brand utility relative to its costs in consumers' assessment, which is based on simultaneous comparison between what is sacrificed and what is received in return for the sacrifice made. Thus, consumers' choice of brands largely depends on a perceived balance between the costs of a product and all its utilities (Lassar et al., 1995) where costs comprise overall sacrifice made in accessing, obtaining and using the product (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012).

Value is central to the concept of brand equity (Lassar et al.,1995). Generally, consumers are willing to pay premium prices where value, and therefore equity, is high. According to Kapferer (1998), distinctiveness denotes the degree to which consumers perceive a brand as being distinct from those provided by the competition. Leuthesser et al. (1995) states that the underlying determinants of consumer-based brand equity are that brands provide benefits to consumers by differentiating products, thereby facilitating the processing and retrieval of information. Undoubtedly, brands that are perceived to be positively different can confer premium prices on their owners (Mackay, 2001; Washburn and Plank, 2002; Keller and Lehmann, 2006; Kim and Kim, 2004; Mourad, 2010). Distinctiveness is therefore critical in brand positioning as it contributes to the success of brands (Lee and Chen, 2012).

In his precursory work on brand conceptualisation, Aaker (1991) identifies information processing and retrieval, differentiation and positioning, creation of positive attitudes and feelings and brand extension possibilities as some of the key benefits of the associations dimension of brand equity.

3.4.3 Perceived Quality

Zeithaml and Bitner (2006) defines perceived quality as consumers' judgment about the "superiority or excellence" of the product that is based on consumers' subjective evaluation of its quality and not on managers' or experts' (Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Wang, 2013). According to Aaker (1991; 1995), perceived quality means customers' perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purposes, relative to alternatives. Perceived quality concerns itself with a measure of the impressions that consumers hold with regard to the levels of quality a brand presents. It is therefore impressionistic rather than objective reality and is measured in relation to other competing brands (Chiu et al., 2010; Sasmita and Suki, 2015). Thus, the perceived quality approach analyses product quality from consumers' viewpoint; making quality a subjective assessment that is dependent upon consumer perceptions and need fulfilment (Dedeoğlu and Demirer, 2015; Vera, 2015). It can be viewed as a perceptual outcome generated from processing product attributes that lead consumers to make decisions about the quality of products (Lindquist and Sirgy, 2003; Rami and Hicham, 2013).

Objective quality refers to the technical, measurable and verifiable components of products/services, processes and quality controls (Lee and Chen, 2012), which do not necessarily contribute to brand equity. Since it is impossible for consumers to make complete

and correct judgments of objective quality, they use quality attributes with which they associate a particular brand in their evaluation (Richardson et al., 1994). Boulding et al. (1993) argued that, since quality is directly influenced by perceptions, consumers use quality attributes to ‘infer’ quality of unfamiliar products. The relationship between perceived quality and brand equity was first established by Aaker (1991). A product/service perceived by consumers to be of high quality tends to contribute to consumer satisfaction (Low and Lamb, 2000). Consistent with suppositions expressed in the literature, Dabholkar et al. (1996) indicated that consumer satisfaction is an important factor in how consumers perceive quality, and that since levels of customer relationships change over time, it is important to clearly understand the dynamics of quality perceptions, as well as how such perceptions influence customer retention over time (Rust et al., 2004).

Perceived quality affects consumers’ evaluation of brands (Low and Lamb, 2000; Alasadi and Sabbagh, 2013; Allameh et al., 2015). Bartikowski et al. (2010) maintain that, in the short run, higher quality perceptions lead to increased profits due to premium pricing; and in the long run, to healthy business growth, involving both market expansion and market share gains. Generally, consumers are prepared to pay premium prices for the reassurance, kudos and feeling of wellbeing associated with superior brands (Aaker, 1991; Kondasani and Panda, 2015). In another recently published research, it has been posited that there are positive relationships between perceived quality and brand loyalty, as between brand awareness and perceived quality (Nguyen et al., 2011). Aaker (1995) posited that perceived quality confers on the organisation such benefits as differentiation, premium pricing, channel member interest, brand extension and overall reason to buy (Allameh et al., 2015; Vera, 2015).

Zeithaml and Bitner (2006) and Olsen et al. (2011) classify the concept of perceived quality into two categories of attributes - intrinsic attributes and extrinsic attributes. Intrinsic perceived quality attributes are mainly responsible for developing consumers’ perception about variation in tangible quality and are related to such physical aspects of a product as colour, flavour, size, form and appearance. On the other hand, extrinsic attributes are predominantly augmented that are not related to the product in the physical sense (Cristina et al., 2013). Examples include brand name, stamp of quality, store features, packaging and production information. Despite their lack of significant influence on actual quality delivery, a number of extrinsic cues such as price, store characteristics and country of origin have been found to remarkably moderate consumer perceptions in respect of product performance and

quality (Veale and Quester, 2009; Bekir, and Halil, 2015, Jorge, 2015).

3.4.4 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a central dimension of brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1995) which measures the emotional attachment that customers have to a brand (Oliver, 1997; Lam et al., 2004; Sasmita and Suki, 2015). It concerns itself with the psychological/emotional allegiance that exists between a brand and its customers. Oliver (1997, p. 34) defines brand loyalty as ‘a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same-brand set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviours’. Lam et al. (2004) see it as “a buyer’s overall attachment or deep commitment to a product, service, brand, or organization” (p. 294).

The impression created is that brand loyalty hinges on perceived product superiority, personal fortitude, emotional bonding, and their synergistic effects (Oliver 1997). It is considered to be the central brand asset as all other equity dimensions - awareness, associations, and perceived quality - feed into it (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Veloutsou, 2015; Pedro et al., 2015; Pappu and Quester, 2016). Contemporary extant literature generally categorises brand loyalty into two - attitudinal loyalty and behavioural loyalty (Washburn and Plank, 2002; Baldauf et al., 2003; Kim and Kim, 2004; Atilgan et al., 2005; Tolba and Hassan, 2009; Esmaeilpour, 2015). Attitudinal loyalty is the level of commitment of the average consumer toward a brand, while behavioural loyalty represents a willingness on the part of the average consumer to repurchase a brand (Morgan, 2000; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Tolba and Hassan, 2009). Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) proposed a model of brand loyalty that suggests that behavioural loyalty tends to lead to greater market share, while attitudinal loyalty leads to higher relative brand pricing. They posited that behavioural loyalty is linked to consumer’s behavioural disposition towards a brand and is indicated by the number of repeat purchases made (Keller, 2013), or a commitment to re-buy the brand as a primary choice (Oliver, 1997). Cognitive loyalty, on the other hand, determines the potential for a brand to occur first in a consumer’s memory when contemplating a purchase within a particular product category. In other words, brands with cognitive loyalty are the first to pop up when the need and consideration to make a purchase decision of a particular product arise. Because cognitive loyalty is closely linked with top-of-mind awareness (Tolba and Hassan, 2009), brands wield competitive superiority when they become consumers’ first choices (cognitive loyalty) and

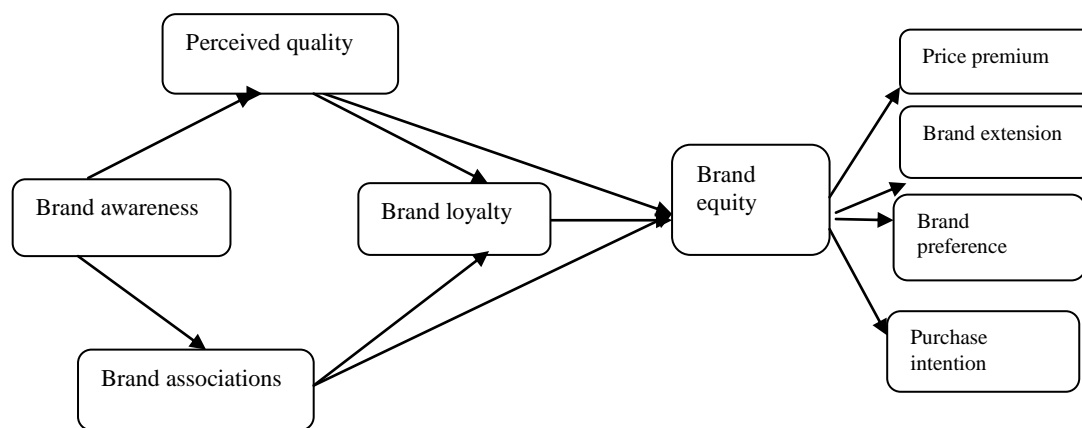
are repeatedly purchased (behavioural loyalty) (Keller, 2003). Morgan (2000) similarly suggests that the term “loyal” can be interpreted in different ways, ranging from affective loyalty (“what I feel”) to behavioural loyalty (“what I do”). Narayandas (1998) and White and Schneider (2000) also propose laddering models of the loyalty continuum that appear consistent with this orientation. Thus, the many strands of loyalty - attitudinal, cognitive or affective/behavioural – are very much interconnected and basically point to the existence of emotional connection between the brand and its loyal consumers which ultimately impacts on the equity of the brand (Buil et al., 2013).

Brand loyalty benefits organisations in many different ways (Kim and Kim, 2004; Lam et al., 2004; Atilgan et al., 2005; Buil et al., 2013). In a study into the relative importance of antecedents of brand loyalty in the B2B industrial setting, Taylor et al. (2004) emphasised satisfaction, value, resistance to change, brand affect, trust and brand equity as important in brand loyalty considerations (Chinomona, 2016). Thus, they propose that satisfaction is a key precursor to brand loyalty as unfulfilled consumers are unlikely to re-buy. Similarly, value is a dimension of brand loyalty that ensues where overall satisfaction emanating from both functional and emotional utility of a delivery outweigh the costs associated with that delivery (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Thus, consumers’ choice of a particular brand over others in a product category is motivated by their conviction about the higher value that the chosen brand possesses relative to its price. In their study, Mattila and Enz (2002) presented results indicating that consumers’ evaluation of service encounters highly correlate with their displayed emotions during the interaction, as well as post encounter stages; suggesting that affect can influence consumer emotions, moods, attitudes, satisfaction and ultimately loyalty, even in the absence of product beliefs (Kim et al., 2003; Richard, 2016). Like Tylor et al. (2004), Mattila and Enz (2002), Cleopatra (2015) and Chinomona (2016) suggest the prevalence of trust in loyalty considerations. Fukuyama (1995, p. 26) defines trust as “. . . the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of members of that community”. Undoubtedly, trust forms an integral part of the intricate emotional/psychological state that culminates in attitudinal and behavioural loyalty (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Torres et al., 2015; Chinomona, 2016).

Also worthy of note is the centrality of brand loyalty among the equity dimensions. In their empirical study on the impact of brand equity on consumer response, Buil et al. (2013)

proposed an inter-brand dimensional relationship model based on Aaker's (1991) conceptualisation that also attempts to summarise the key benefits associated with brand equity as presented in figure 3.1. The figure indicates the interconnection among the four dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty and their eventual determination of the overall equity of the brand. Individually, the first three dimensions feed into the central dimension of brand loyalty, while together, all four go to determine the equity of the brand.

Figure 3.1: Brand Equity Influence on Consumer Response



Source: Buil et al. (2013)

In terms of equity's influence on consumer response as indicated in the model, high brand equity levels are known to lead to higher brand preference and purchase intentions among consumers (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995), as well as higher stock returns (Aaker and Jacobson, 1994). Besides, high brand equity affords the opportunity for premium pricing, successful extensions and resilience against competitors' promotional pressures, thereby creating barriers against competitors' entry (Keller, 2013).

According to the literature, brand loyalty bestows numerous benefits on organisations. Zeithaml and Bitner (2006) classify loyalty related benefits into financial, marketing and communicational. In terms of the financial benefits, it is reported that customer loyalty to a particular brand can increase that brand's profits between 25 per cent to 85 per cent (Reidheld and Sasser, 1990). Marketing benefits are related to loyal customers' willingness to develop positive word-of-mouth for the organisation, which has been proved to be one of the most

effective communication strategies in the service industry. Finally, the communication benefits are related to loyal customers' willingness to participate in marketing research and make suggestions about the improvement of the organisations' services (Zeithml and Bitner, 2006).

Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) and Fariba, (2015) maintain that brand loyalty is directly related to premium brand pricing, where price premium is the amount a customer will pay for a brand in comparison with other brands offering similar benefits, and may be high or low and positive or negative depending on the brands involved in the comparison (Taylor et al., 2004; Sasmita and Suki, 2015). Other benefits of brand loyalty include marketing cost reduction, trade leverage, basis for customer attraction, and opportunity to respond to competitive threats (Aaker, 1991, 1995). Owing to the centrality of brand loyalty, many studies in the service industry have adopted dimensions that relate directly or indirectly to it; even where the term loyalty is not directly mentioned (Vorhies, 1997; Mourad et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 20013; Pinar et al., 2014) as it is in this study. The following section reviews literature of service sector brand equity in order to place the study in a service perspective.

3.5 Service Sector Branding

Service branding has received a lot of scholarly attention in recent times (Helm and Oezergin, 2013; Williams et al., 2013; Peters and Kemp, 2014; Ugolini et al., 2014; Sujchaphong et al., 2015; Penny, 2016). A service can be defined as “a holistic process, which provides focus to the internal relationship between the service company and employees, and comes alive in the external relationships between consumers and service providers” (Riley and Chernatony, 2000, p. 148). As compared with products, the inherent properties of services include intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability (Mortimer, 2002; Jacobsen, 2012). In particular, intangibility, which refers to the degree to which a product or a service cannot provide a clear and concrete image (McDougall and Snetsinger, 1990) is positively associated with uncertainty. A number of branding and brand equity frameworks have been developed to enable marketers to effectively formulate and implement customer oriented marketing programmes that would enable them gain sustainable competitive differentiation (Kapferer, 1998; Buil et al., 2013; Keller, 1993, 2013). Most of these models are, however, conceptualised in the realm of physical goods. This is in spite of the growing importance of

service economies the entire world over (Turley and Moore, 1995; Peters and Kemp, 2014; Sujchaphong et al., 2015).

Research in the area of branding in the services realm has seen sluggish growth, as well as being predominantly conceptual in nature; most of what is known about service brand equity is anecdotal or theoretical at best (Krishnan and Hartline, 2001). It is argued that, due to our limited understanding of service brand equity, it is time researchers devoted attention to study its effects as well as how it might differ from equity in the tangible goods industry. In the light of the prevailing insufficiency, naturally, the debate as to what branding strategy should be adopted to fit the services industry continues unabated. Parasuraman et al. (1988), for instance, suggest that branding strategists focus on distinctiveness, relevance, memorability and flexibility. They also argue that service organisations avoid individualising service brands and rather assume a corporate orientation so as to sufficiently capture the preponderance of attributes that service and its provision present.

This position ties in with Berry's (2000) assertion that a service brand is a specific company or organization that provides a service for consumers to buy. In other words, the company itself is the primary brand in services marketing, whereas the product is the primary brand in packaged product. In a sharp departure, Onkvisit and Shaw (1989) recommend an individualized approach to branding services that is independent of the corporate entity offering the service in question. Owing to such characteristics as inseparability, intangibility and heterogeneity as mentioned above, some authors are of the view that branding is even more critical for services than it is for goods as it enables service quality evaluation (Krishnan and Hartline, 2001). It is thus suggested that branding may be more important for services because a brand can provide consumers with a symbolic meaning that assists in both recognition of services and image creation. O'Cass and Grace (2003), for instance, argue that the intense competition within the service marketplace and the inherent difficulty in differentiating services that lack tangibility should encourage service companies to establish strong brands. According to Berry (2000), a service brand plays a critical role in reducing consumers' perceived monetary, social, emotional and safety risks associated with the buying process.

Signalling theory aptly captures service intangibility and differentiation through branding. It hinges on consumer uncertainty about service delivery mainly due to the characteristic of

intangibility and is based on the supposition that there is a likelihood of consumer uncertainty about the quality of services provided by firms as a result of the different levels of information that flows between organisations and their publics, particularly consumers (Kirmani and Rao, 2000; Martin and Camarero, 2005). In such occurrences of information asymmetry, the need for a tool to convey information credibly about unobservable quality to the buyer (Rao et al., 1999, p. 259) known as *signals* arises.

Nelson (1974), Kirmani (1990) and Rao et al. (1999) observed that high levels of advertising expenditures that are incurred in promoting organisations and their products, for example, is a signal of the firm's own trust in and commitment to their product or service quality. They posit that these expenditures and the associated perceived internal impressions of superior quality do serve as 'a signal' that infer those high levels of quality among consumers (Lui et al, 2015). This is especially the case where services are latent, experience and credence laden (Krishnan and Hartline, 2001) and so do not present an adequate functional basis upon which quality can be tangibly evaluated. Several scholars have argued that brands are the most widely used signal when tangibilising unobservable credence qualities associated with service delivery (Park and Lessing, 1981; Rao and Monroe, 1989; Rao et al., 1999; Erdem et al., 2006). In the context of the university environment, communication is complex involving the flow of information from different sources within the institution to diverse stakeholders relating to core and supporting attributes (Pinar et al., 2014) like internal structures, programmes, facilities, institutional leadership, and formal communication mechanisms. Therefore, in that complex environment, the brand cures information asymmetry by representing substance, originality and authenticity; it symbolises meaning for students, thereby reducing, if not removing, the high level of uncertainty that characterises service patronage of that nature, as well as the safety, emotional and financial risks that are associated with it (Berry, 2000; Krishnan and Hartline, 2001).

From an integrative perspective, the service brand functions both as an entity and a process that facilitate and mediate the marketing processes that result in the experiences that drive the creation of value (Brodie et al., 2009; Downer, 2016). Brands provide sign systems that symbolise meaning in the marketing process, and hence are a fundamental asset or resource that a marketing organization uses in developing service-based competency and hence competitive advantage (Laing et al., 2002; Keller, 2013). This position is in conformity with the assertion that branding is critical in services due to its potential to elevate services above

the commodity level as many services are seen as commodities by consumers (Onkvisit and Shaw, 1989; Berry, 2000; Keller, 2013). In that regard, the brand becomes a risk reliever; a source of information that serves as a tool for differentiation thereby simplifying the consumer choice process (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998). Therefore, the preponderance of favourable attributes encapsulated in the brand helps to reduce the risks associated with the purchase and consumption of services.

In a study into the importance of brand equity in a wide range of service sectors, including hotels, legal services, dry cleaners, movie theatres and education institutions, Krishnan and Hartline (2001) confirm the relative importance of branding to different service sectors. This observation conforms to the long held position that tangible products and services possess *search*, *experience* and *credence* attributes (Darby and Karni, 1973; Krishnan and Hartline, 2001).

Search attributes comprise product characteristics that consumers can evaluate prior to purchase such as brand name and price, while experience attributes involve product characteristics that can be discerned and evaluated only after purchase or during consumption such as excitement, fun, entertainment and emotional value. Any other product characteristics that consumers cannot determine or evaluate even after purchase or consumption represent credence attributes (Darby and Karni, 1973). They indicate that tangible goods are generally search and experience attributes laden, while services are high on experience and credence attributes. Thus, whereas experience attributes are common to both tangible goods and services, search and credence attributes dominate tangible goods and services respectively. Consumers are able to determine and evaluate quality levels of most services during or after consumption, if they are at all discernible. Krishnan and Hartline (2001) affirm that, while very few services including dry cleaning are dominated by search attributes, experience-dominant services are common in the literature and include restaurants, taxi services, lawn mowing and movie theatres. In that study, services that are credence-laden are thought to include auto repair, medical procedures, and legal representation.

Extant literature suggests that, generally, the relevance of brand equity to a service is determined by the nature of attributes that dominates it. Where attributes are predominantly search in nature, consumer choice is optimised; indicating that the closer we get to credence oriented services the farther we depart from easy choice. That is to say that consumers

perceive the highest risks in purchasing services dominated by credence attributes, and the lowest risks in purchasing services with search attributes (Mitra et al., 1999). The branding literature therefore proposes that, in order to tangibilise services thereby making their purchase less risky for the consumer, brand equity is more important for services that are dominated by experience and credence attributes. This observation supports the position of early expositions on consumer choice (Levitt, 1981; Berry, 2000; Onkvisit and Shaw, 1989) that consumers rely heavily on extrinsic cues, such as brand names, in their evaluation of products prior to purchase. From the foregoing, "tangibilizing the intangible" through the elements compressed in the brand becomes critical in services marketing as it helps to enhance consumers' cognitive potential that informs choice. Therefore branding has become relevant to service providers in order to rise above intangibility and make service evaluation easy on the consumer.

3.5.1 Service Brand Equity Dimensions

In tangibilising services through branding with a view to simplifying the decision making process and reducing the risk associated with service evaluation and selection, a wide array of dimensions have been proposed by researchers and authors (Keller, 1993; Kent et al., 1993; Byron, 1995; Booth, 1999; Scott, 2000; Smith and Ennew, 2000; Temple, 2006; Lockwood and Hadd, 2007; Chen, 2008; Kurz et al., 2008). In their study of brand equity in the telecommunications industry, Alamro and Rowley (2011) proposed awareness, image and customer attributes as the antecedent dimensions of service brand equity. In that study, awareness attributes comprise three sub-dimensions namely; advertising, word of mouth and publicity, while the image dimension is divided into service value attributes and provider attributes. Customer attributes, on the other hand, involve reference groups, perceived risk and satisfaction.

Of particular interest to this study is the image dimension due to its proven impact on service brand equity (Vorhies, 1997; Alamro and Rowley, 2011; Mourad et al., 2011; Williams, 2012; Finch et al., 2013; Steiner et al., 2013; Goia et al., 2014). Under that dimension, service value attributes such as quality and price, as well as provider attributes such as corporate status, corporate image, country of origin, company employees, location and brand personality, result in service brand equity. Earlier, in the restaurant industry, Muller (1998) examined the determinants of brand equity concluding that quality of products or services,

service delivery and symbolic image were the main determinants of brand equity. Prasad and Dev (2000) however identified brand performance and brand awareness as dimensions of brand equity in the hotel industry. In the same industry, Kim et al. (2003) used Aaker's (1991) model and identified loyalty, perceived quality and image as more significant dimensions. That empirical study isolated brand awareness as a less significant precursor of service brand equity (Mourad et al., 2011).

In the financial services sector, Mackay (2001) employed a "hierarchy of effects model" and focused on market share as an indicator of brand equity while in their study of the Egyptian higher education industry, Mourad et al. (2011) proposed consumer, awareness and image attributes as instrumental in service equity development, although their findings indicate that the consumer and awareness dimensions have no significant effect on brand equity in the higher education sector (Kim et al., 2003). Thus, existing literature is replete with dimensions in researchers' attempts to identify service brand equity antecedents. Although there have been no unanimity in the identified dimensions, one could argue, firstly, that many if not most of the determinants converge; and secondly, that the dimensions mostly emanate from the primary conceptualisations by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), which also form the basis of this study. The following section reviews literature on branding in the university context.

3.6 University Branding

Marketing has gained significance as higher education institutions become more marketised and promotionalised in an increasingly competitive landscape (Tolbert, 2014; Moshe, 2013; Williams and Omar, 2014) characterised by shrinking boundaries, proliferation of institutions and student fragmentation (Sharma et al., 2013) as well as declining enrolments and retention rates (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001; Williams et al., 2013). According to Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006), the global university environment continues to experience increasing uncertainty largely attributable to globalisation and internationalisation of higher education, decreasing state funding, increasing demand for higher education, technological advancement, growing knowledge economy, student sophistication, and the growing urgency in responding to converging and contrasting stakeholder interests (Blackmore, 2009; Kumar and Dash, 2011; Sharma et al., 2013; Schofield et al., 2013; Aron, 2014). These and many other forces have acted as drivers to the adoption of marketing theory and principles to gain competitive advantage and market share (Schofield et al. 2013; Tolbert, 2014). In their theory of academic capitalism, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) in Torbert (2014) indicate that

academic institutions in the new economy have adopted the marketing culture to reshape how they perceive and interact with students, alumni, and other constituent groups. Thus marketing theory and practice have become necessary as the global education environment becomes more competitive.

Brand equity is of strategic importance to organizations in establishing corporate identities that are consistent, acceptable and appealing to a wide range of stakeholders (Durkin et al., 2012). The concept has gained recognition among higher education administrators as a strategic endeavour in dealing with today's complex global challenges (Chapleo, 2007; Edmiston, 2008; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Lowrie, 2007; Sharma et al., 2013). According to Tolbert (2014), in order to evoke positive reputations in the minds of their many constituents, educational institutions are actively pursuing branding campaigns. This is due to the realisation that strong brands are attractive to current students; and tend to increase retention rates (Cobb, 2001; Morphey, 2001; Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001; Sevier, 2002; Williams, 2012). Sharma et al. (2013) corroborate this stance and suggest that in the business school environment, brands have a significant role to play in school preference among students. Universities the entire world over are therefore striving on all fronts to carve and nurture inimitable reputations that appeal to students and other stakeholders (Curtis et al., 2009; Williams, 2012).

In their work on the relationship between emotional connections and competitive differentiation in the UK higher education industry, Durkin et al. (2012) made reference to increasing sectoral competition that calls for distinct brand identities; a situation that has compelled universities to adopt conventional marketing practices in their bid to attract and retain both domestic and international students (Brookes, 2003; Bennett and Ali-Choudhury, 2009). Thus, there is ample evidence in the literature that institutions are actively promoting their brands by providing unambiguous positioning in their stakeholders' minds, thereby establishing favourable dispositions among the stakeholders. In the opinion of Goia et al. (2014), however, research and literature relating to branding in educational institutions is still limited despite its proven effectiveness in providing competitive advantages to higher education institutions.

Early higher education marketing research considered the sector as a product rather than a service. Kotler and Fox (1995, p.6) for instance defined education marketing as 'the analysis, planning, implementation and control of carefully formulated programmes designed to bring

about voluntary exchanges of values with a target market to achieve organisational objectives.’ From the 1990s, scholarly writings began recognising marketing in the sector as a service, based on the need for managers to examine consumer decision-making processes. According to Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006, p.316), existing higher education marketing literature is “incoherent, even inchoate, and lacks theoretical models that reflect upon the particular context of higher education and the nature of their services”. Academic studies undertaken in the field of higher education marketing have concentrated on different aspects of the service including brand architecture of universities (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007); the concept of the ‘student customer’ (Lauder et al., 2006; Chen, 2008; Sharma et al., 2013); and determinants and influences of students’ institution choice (Mazzarol, 1998; Maringe, 2005; Lowrie, 2007). Others include institutional image, reputation, identity and loyalty (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001; Dawn, 2014); websites and university branding (Opoku et al., 2006); relative effectiveness of marketing communication tools (Gatfield et. al., 1999); and the applicability of commercial branding in the higher education environment (Jevons, 2006).

While the above-mentioned areas have featured in many studies in the area of higher education, the concept of brand equity has not had its fair share (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). This is in spite of the fact that scholarly research on higher education branding goes back a long way (Temple, 2006). Among UK universities for example, the need to build and communicate brand attributes has been long felt as competition for both domestic and international students intensify in response to diminishing government funding and resultant internationalisation to make ends meet (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). Evidently, therefore, there is a need for research on brand equity in the higher education sector (Chapleo, 2007; Mei et al., 2014).

Bennett and Ali-Choudhury (2007, p. 4) define a university brand as “a manifestation of the institution’s features that distinguish it from others, reflect its capacity to satisfy students’ needs, engender trust in its ability to deliver a certain type and level of higher education, and help potential recruits to make wise enrolment decisions”. In the opinion of Bulotaite (2003) when the name of a successfully branded university is mentioned, it evokes a set of associations, emotions, images and faces that carry positive impressions with which stakeholders, including students, are delighted to associate themselves.

Some researchers have argued that conventional brand management techniques are inadequate in the higher education market due to the complexity in which that service market is shrouded. Chapleo (2010) argues that providing information to assist students in choosing educational institutions requires the development and communication of unique selling points (Veloutsou et al., 2004), but asserts that this is not a straightforward affair as “much of what is described as branding in higher education would be better labelled as reputation management or even public relations” (Temple, 2006, p. 18). Jevons (2006) points to this inadequacy in arguing that universities do not really practise what they preach about differentiating through their brands. Tolbert (2014) also cautions against the simplistic use of visual representation through fonts and colours and argues that higher education brand management should capture the entire essence of the institution that meets the needs of a wide array of stakeholder constituents. In addressing this shortfall, some scholars have also indicated the need for universities to depart from the generalist approach to a more specific competence-based marketing approach to branding, which focuses on key strengths of the institution (Schubert, 2007). This admonition is based on the belief that university brands that succeed in creating unique communicative identities have the potential to instigate more positive feelings among their targets than most service brands (Bulotaite, 2003). Therefore, while the relevance of branding is widely acknowledged in the sector, there has not been any agreement on the form its management should take, largely due to its complexity.

Making a case for branding in the higher education market, Whelan and Wohlfeil (2006, p. 317), have argued that “higher education institutions need to be managed more and more as corporate brands”. This position is in tandem with that of Opoku et al. (2006) who opine that the classic functions of brands apply equally appropriately to a wide range of service sectors and that branding as a concept applies as well to higher education as it does to other sectors (Maringe, 2005; Jevons, 2006; Brewer and Zhao, 2010). As argued by Du preez (2015), higher education institutions can and should implement brand and image theories that have been applied successfully in non-education environments like commerce and industry to influence choice behaviours of student consumers.

Bulotaite (2003) also presents an optimistic argument for university branding by asserting that the complexity inherent in universities institutions due to the presence of experience and credence attributes, rather makes a strong case for the adoption of branding in that industry, as branding can simplify this complexity and promote customer attraction and loyalty to

institutions. In the opinion of Mourad (2013), the selection of educational services is risky for students because, apart from the financial commitments involved, such decisions play a major role in directing their future career. Thus, while it is impossible to judge the quality of research, teaching, student selection, curriculum design, infrastructure, staff, and consultancy skills and so on that prevail on the university landscape, brand names provide a shorthand measure for universities to communicate these attributes to stakeholders in a coherent manner. In their opinion, Belanger et al. (2002) opine that the brand has become a strategic weapon for higher educational institutions in general in their quest to establish appreciable levels of congruence between themselves and their students' values, goals and attitudes. Jevons (2006) relates the link between brand equity and students' choice of universities to a virtuous cycle in which the university brand becomes an aid to efficient student recruitment where applicants self-select, with only those who consider their values congruent with those of the organization applying in the first instance. From the foregoing, the university brand plays the role of clarifying positioning that enables students to associate themselves meaningfully with institutions, as the brand is able to compress and tangibilise individual attributes of the university, thereby influencing students' preference.

Branding is considered to be one of the most important assets of any organisation (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Kapferer, 1998; Keller, 2003) as it plays a critical role in influencing attitudes and behaviours of stakeholders. What varies, however, is the degree of importance of branding in relation to different industries (Balmer and Liao, 2007). Branding in higher education has become an increasingly essential issue attracting substantial financial resources (Chapleo, 2007). Thus, the widespread acceptance and appreciation of branding is amply evident in the manner in which it permeates the entire university institution. According to Chapleo (2007), branding has become an effort not only for the marketing department, but for the university as a whole. In appreciation of the need for deliberate and well coordinated efforts of all functions and employees in the university brand building process, Whisman (2009, p. 368) states that "colleges and universities must recognize that their most valuable tangible asset is their passionate employees".

Similarly, Chapleo (2010) and Hatch and Schultz (2013) emphasise indispensability of employees' support in the endeavour. Jeanes (2013) has added to the call for employee dedication and commitment to university branding and emphasized the need for flexibility to ensure that employees are able to think outside the box and bring innovative ideas on board.

The inclusion of university employees needs to be complemented by a compelling brand vision (Chapleo, 2010; Brown and Carasso, 2013; Jeanes, 2013) that will ensure focus as well as unity of purpose, and of action in serving the student as a customer of the university experience. Therefore, for university branding to be effective, its management needs to be all encompassing, cutting across all departments and involving all and sundry. It effectively needs to have a compelling vision that makes room for flexibility and innovation, and command everyone's dedication and commitment in serving the institution's various stakeholders, including students. According to Whisman (2009), while various corporate marketing strategies are being employed in the academic world in universities' search for ways to improve their reputations and rankings, a major controversial issue in university marketing and branding relates to the appropriateness or otherwise of perceiving and treating the student as a "customer" (Sharma et al., 2013).

3.6.1 The Student as a University Customer - The Basis of Student-Based Brand Equity

According to Chen (2008) and Mazzarol and Soutar (2008, 2012), higher education institutions across the world have become increasingly marketing oriented as students increasingly become consumers. From a constructivist perspective, Ng and Forbes (2009) in Pinar et al. (2014) recognise the student as a key party in the creation of the university experience. According to Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006), in the midst of increasing competition, universities have recognised the need to market themselves to attract students. However, an issue that attracts growing academic debate is the transferability of the "student as customer" concept to the university education sector as it is in the product and other service sectors.

Sharma et al. (2013) observe that educational institutions are considering their students as customers of the education experience as the service becomes less differentiated across the globe. Chapleo (2007) maintain that higher educational institutions are under pressure to build and maintain a good reputation for student services that create an impression of customer friendliness; while Tolbert (2014) similarly maintains that current students are important target audiences for brand-building messages. The advent of deferred fees in UK higher education, has also led to some arguing that students be regarded as customers (Bok, 2003). In Ghana, upward review of fees has become an annual ritual, particularly among private universities (NAB, 2011), which underscores the need for students to occupy the centre of administrators' considerations; just like the customer does in the tangible products

industry. In the opinion of Sharma et al. (2013), students increasingly regard themselves as customers due to changes in funding systems that rely heavily on tuition fees across the world. Increasingly therefore, students perceive universities as service providers from whom they are making a purchase (Bok, 2003) and so expect value for their monies.

Commenting on the need to balance multiple stakeholder interests in university brand building, Newman et al. (2004) suggest that students are progressively seeing themselves as consumers, with higher education rapidly transitioning into a market; while Tolbert (2014) maintains that university institutions are compelled to respond to increasing student demands in ways that build both prestige and revenue by adopting a new market orientation, which involves perceiving students as customers who shop for educational opportunities, including bargaining for financial aid.

In an apparent acceptance of this commercial perspective, many institutions have and continue to institute measures to ensure student fulfilment. The UK's National Student Survey of student satisfaction, for example, helps facilitate more informed decision-making by potential applicants, while at the level of individual universities, the perception of a customer orientation is strengthened through the issue of in-semester teaching quality/satisfaction surveys to enable students to evaluate the value of their learning experiences (Durkin et al., 2012). To that end, Segev et al. (1999) indicate that student feedback in measuring business school image has become an essential means of gathering essential information in the higher education marketing process.

Conversely, while Eagle and Brennan (2007) appreciate the centrality of students' expectations management in tertiary education delivery, they stress the need for a clear understanding that tuition fees paid by students basically facilitate education but does not cause it. According to Emery et al. (2003), students' contribution to the cost of their education in the form of fees does not render what they receive a purchase. In adding to this converging opinion, Yunker and Yunker (2003) point to the possibility (in completing teaching satisfaction questionnaire) of students to mark down academic staff who strive to maintain high academic standards by not unduly awarding good grades without merit. A possible risk associated with the purchase position, therefore, is that students would then expect good grades whether or not they perform well, as a manifestation of quality of outcome.

Conway et al. (2008) attempted to water down the controversy by suggesting a mid-point position. In their opinion, students should be considered as customers of the higher education experience instead of customers of the institutions, because other service delivery instances where quality outcome depends on efforts of customers are hard to come by. Sharing in that perspective, Ivy (2001, 2008) asserts that students should not be seen to be buying degrees; instead they should be seen as buying the benefits that a degree confers in terms of employment, status and enhanced lifestyles.

Balmer and Liao (2007), however, go beyond the student-customer perspective and suggest that higher education branding affords graduates a sense of identification that enables them define themselves, not just as customers, but as life-long organizational members of the university community, which becomes their psychological property (Lerman and Garbarino, 2002). Therefore, this study appreciates the relevance and centrality of the student in higher education institution marketing and subscribes to the position that the student is indeed a customer of the university, and hence central to the differentiation endeavours of the university institution; hence its focus on student-based brand equity (SBBE).

3.7 Summary

Branding considerations occupy a new level of importance in today's global marketplace due to the brand's demonstrable role as a powerful intangible asset that functions as a reliable differentiator for organisations, as well as a trusted guide in consumers' decision-making (Keller, 2013). Strong brands draw their life blood from positive customer perceptions, trust and preferences (Kotler and Keller, 2006), which ultimately culminate in loyalty and profitable customer relationships (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Like their counterparts in the tangible products industry, organizations in various service industries, including universities, are making frantic efforts to build and cash in on their brands as a sustainable strategy. Gradually but surely, branding is becoming more of a strategic imperative for higher educational institutions in their quest to develop meaningfully differentiated identities that communicate their strengths (Jevons, 2006) in that credence laden industry. This newly found assurance is in realisation of the inadequacy in relying on the traditional differentiation strategies (Ivy, 2002, 2008; Maringe, 2005; Bosch et al., 2006; Hayes, 2007; Schubert, 2007; Kumar and Dash, 2011; Sharma et al., 2013).

It has been argued that effective branding of an institution should go far beyond traditional promotional efforts (Bosch et al., 2006; Hayes, 2007). Ivy (2008) for instance argues that the original marketing tools may not suffice in the MBA marketing environment (Maringe, 2005; Schubert, 2007), while Kumar and Dash (2011) maintain that liberalization, privatization, and globalization have necessitated a replacement of the traditional approach with a more professional approach, perhaps suggesting the adoption of a more holistic and strategic approach to differentiation.

As a service industry, quality evaluation in university education is associated with such risk-laden features as intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability due to the simultaneous occurrence of production and consumption of university services. Institution selection decision making therefore involves higher perceived risk due to the difficulty associated with evaluation before purchase (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Mitchell, 1999; Laing et al., 2002). As indicated by Mazzarol (1998), it is not always easy to separate production from consumption in higher education as is the case with most services, as principally, the student will remain involved in the service production for the duration of the learning process. Unsurprisingly, evidence in the literature suggests that service organizations like universities struggle to formulate and implement their corporate branding strategies, possibly due to their paradoxical complexity, the newness of the field, as well as their cross disciplinary nature (Schultz, 2005). Bunzel (2007), for instance, maintains that intangibility and inseparability of higher education services make branding even more of an important institutional consideration.

University branding becomes a risk reliever - a source of information, that serves as a tool for differentiation that cushions students against choice related uncertainty (Byron, 1995; Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003; Temple, 2006; Bunzel, 2007; Lockwood and Hadd, 2007; Chen, 2008; El Mahdy and Mourad, 2008; Mourad et al., 2011); it is an effective instrumentality that gives cues and acts as a search signal to students and their sponsors during the school selection decision-making process (Temple, 2006; Lockwood and Hadd, 2007; Chen, 2008). Developing and maintaining a distinctive brand therefore helps to create competitive advantage in the higher education sector in general (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). As observed by Blanton (2007) and Heaney and Heaney (2008), educational institutions can differentiate themselves and build their value through branding.

This chapter has sought to place the study in the appropriate theoretical perspective by examining the concepts of branding and brand equity. The concept of customer-based brand equity from which the substantive issue of student-based brand equity emanates has also been extensively examined. Emphasis has been placed on major conceptualisations that underpin scholarly works in that area, which feature definitions, characteristics, antecedents and relevant critique of various constructs proposed and adopted. The chapter has also reviewed literature on service branding and service brand equity in order to place the study in a service perspective. It concludes by examining university brand equity under which the concept of ‘student customer’ (which is a prerequisite for student-based brand equity) has also been examined. The next chapter presents conceptual development which reviews literature leading to formulation of research hypotheses, as well as the thesis’ conceptual framework containing the SBBE constructs under consideration.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A. (1995). *Building Strong Brands*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A. (1996). Measuring brand equity: across products and markets. *California Management Review*, 38(3), 102-20.
- Aaker, D.A. & Jacobson, R. (1994). The financial information content of perceived quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 58, 191-201.
- Alasadi, R. & Al Sabbagh, H. (2013). Quality care perceptions in private Syrian hospitals. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 6(2), 76 – 86.
- Alamro, A. & Rowley, J. (2011). Brand strategies of Jordanian telecommunications service providers. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18(4), 329-48.
- Allameh, S. M., Pool, J. K., Jaberi, A., Salehzadeh, R. & Asadi, H. (2015). Factors influencing sport tourists' revisit intentions: The role and effect of destination image, perceived quality, perceived value and satisfaction. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 27(2), 191-207.
- Ambler, T. & Styles, C. (1996). Brand development versus new product development: towards a process model of extension. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 14(7), 10-19.
- Andres, C., Pilar, L. & Maria, J. Y. (2012). Private label brands: measuring equity across consumer segments. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(6), 428-438.
- Asamoah, E. S. (2014). Customer based brand equity (CBBE) and the competitive performance of SMEs in Ghana. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 21(1), 117-131.

- Atilgan, E., Aksoy, S. & Akinci, S. (2005). Determinants of the brand equity: a verification approach in the beverage industry in Turkey. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 23(3), 237-248.
- Baldauf, A., Cravens, K.S. & Binder, G. (2003). Performance consequences of brand equity management: evidence from organizations in the value chain. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 12(4), 220-36.
- Balmer, J. M. T. & Liao, M. (2007). Student corporate brand identification: an exploratory case study. *International Journal of Corporate Communications*, 12(4), 356-375.
- Bartikowski, B., Kamei, K. & Chandon, J. L. (2010). A verbal rating scale to measure Japanese consumers' perceptions of product quality. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 22(2), 179-95.
- Barwise, P. (1993). Brand equity: Snark or boojum? *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 10(1), 93-104.
- Bekir, B. D. & Halil, D. (2015). Differences in service quality perceptions of stakeholders in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(1), 130-146.
- Belanger, C., Mount, J. & Wilson, M. (2002). Institutional image and retention. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 8(3), 217.
- Bennett, R. & Ali-Choudhury, R. (2007). Components of the university brand: an empirical study, in Melewar, T. C. (Ed.), *Intangible Economies: Brand, Corporate Image, Identity and Reputation in the 21st Century*. Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Colloquium of the Academy of Marketing's Brand, Corporate Identity and Reputation. SIG, Brunel University, 12-13 September 2007.
- Bennett, R. & Ali-Choudhury, R. (2009). Prospective students' perceptions of university brands: an empirical study. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19, 85-107.

- Berry, L. (2000). Cultivating service brand equity. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(1), 128-37.
- Biel, A. L. (1992). How brand image drives brand equity. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 12, 6-12.
- Binsardi, A. & Ekwulugo, F. (2003). International marketing of British education: research on the students' perception and the UK market penetration. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 21(5), 318-27.
- Blackmore, J. (2009). Academic pedagogies, quality logics and performative universities: Evaluating Teaching and What Students Want. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(8), 857-872.
- Blanton, J. (2007). Engagement as a brand position in the higher education marketplace. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 7(2), 143-54.
- Bok, D. (2003). Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education: Exploring how intangibility affects perceived risk. *Journal of Service Research*, 6(4), 373-89.
- Booth, J. (1999). *Choosing a place of higher education: some preliminary analysis of student response to marketing efforts*. Academy of Marketing Annual Conference Proceedings, University of Stirling, Scotland, UK, 7-9 July.
- Bosch, J., Venter, E., Han, Y., & Boshoff, C. (2006). The impact of brand identity on the perceived brand image of a merged higher education institution. *Management Dynamics*, 15(2), 10-30.
- Boulding, W., Kalra, A., Staelin, R. & Zeithaml, V. (1993). A dynamic process model of service quality: from expectations to behavioural intentions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 30, 7-27.

- Brewer, A. & Zhao, J. (2010). The impact of a pathway college on reputation and brand awareness for its affiliated university in Sydney. *International Journal of Education Management*, 24(1), 34-47.
- Brodie, R. J., Whittome, J. R. M. & Brush, G. J. (2009). Investigating the service brand: a customer value perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 345-55.
- Brookes, M. (2003). Higher education: marketing in a quasi-commercial service industry. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 8(2), 134-42.
- Brown, R. & Carasso, H. (2013). *Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK Higher Education*. London: Routledge.
- Broyles, S. A., Leingpibul, T., Ross, R. H. & Foster, B.M. (2010). Brand equity's antecedent/consequence relationships in cross-cultural settings. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 19(3), 159-69.
- Buil, I., Martínez, E. & de Chernatony, L. (2013). The influence of brand equity on consumer responses. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(1), 62-74.
- Bulotaite, N. (2003). University heritage: an institutional tool for branding and marketing. *Higher Education in Europe*, 48(4), 449-54.
- Bunzel, D. (2007). Universities sell their brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 16(2), 152-3.
- Byron, S. (1995). Brand equity and market-based assets of professional service firms. *Journal of Professional Services Marketing*, 13(1), 3-7.
- Casidy, R. (2013). The role of brand orientation in the higher education sector: a student-perceived paradigm. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 25(5), 803-820.
- Chapleo, C. (2007). Barriers to brand building in UK universities? *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 12(1), 23 –32.

- Chapleo, C. (2010). What defines “successful” university brands? *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 23(2), 169-183.
- Chaudhuri, A. (1995). Brand equity or double jeopardy? *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 4(1), 26-32.
- Chaudhuri, A. & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty. *Journal of Marketing*, 65 (April), 81-93.
- Chen, C. H. (1996). *The measurement and construction of customer-based brand equity*. PhD dissertation. National Chengchi University, Taiwan, Republic of China.
- Chen, L. H. (2008). Internationalization or international marketing? Two frameworks for understanding international students’ choice of Canadian universities. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 18(1), 1-33.
- Chen, C. H. & Chen, S. K. (2000). Brand dilution effects of extension failure – a Taiwan study. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 9(4), 243-53.
- Chinomona, R. (2016). Brand communication, brand image and brand trust as antecedents of brand loyalty in Gauteng Province of South Africa. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 7(1), 124-139.
- Chiu, K. K.-S., Lin, R.-J., Maxwell, K. H. & Huang, L.-H. (2010). Power of branding on internet service providers. *The Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 50(3), 112-120.
- Christodoulides, G. & de Chernatony, L. (2010). Consumer-based brand equity conceptualisation and measurement. *International Journal of Market Research*, 52(1), 43-66.
- Cleopatra, V. (2015). Brand evaluation, satisfaction and trust as predictors of brand loyalty: the mediator-moderator effect of brand relationships. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 32(6), 405 -421.

- Cobb, C. (2001). *The concept of brand identity in relation to students' intent-to-persist*. Doctoral thesis. University of Oklahoma, UMI No. 3006667.
- Cobb-Walgren, C. J., Ruble, C. A. & Donthu, N. (1995). Brand equity, brand preference and purchase intent. *Journal of Advertising*, 24(3), 25-41.
- Conway, T. M., Dalton, C., Loo, J. & Benakoun, L. (2008). Developing ecological footprint scenarios on university campuses: a case study of the University of Toronto at Mississauga. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 9(1), 4-20.
- Cristina, C.-P., Jean-Pierre, L.-M. & Isabel N.-C. (2013). Perceived quality in higher education: an empirical study. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 31(6), 601-619.
- Cuneo, A., Lopez, P. & Yague, M. J. (2012). Private label brands: measuring equity across consumer segments. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(6), 428-438.
- Curtis, T., Abratt, R. & Minor, W. (2009). Corporate brand management in higher education: the case of ERAU. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 18(6), 404-413.
- Dabholkar, P. A., Thorpe, D. I., & Rentz, J. O. (1996). A Measure of Service Quality for Retail Stores: Scale Development and Validation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 24(1), 316.
- Darby, M.R. & Karni, E. (1973). Free competition and the optimal amount of fraud. *Journal of Law and Economics*, 16, 67-88.
- Davcik, N. S., da Silva, R. V. & Hair, J. F. (2015). Towards a unified theory of brand equity: conceptualizations, taxonomy and avenues for future research. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*. 24(1), 3-17.
- Dawn, T. (2014). An Exploration of the use of branding to shape institutional image in the marketing activities of faith-based higher education institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, 13(4), 233–249, 2014.
- de Chernatony, L. & Dall'Olmo R. F. (1998). Modelling the components of the brand. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32(11/12), 1074-90.

- de Chernatony, L., Drury, S., & Segal-Horn, S. (2004). Identifying and sustaining services brands' values. *Journal of Marketing Communication*, 10(2), 73-93.
- de Chernatony, L. & Harris, F. J. (2000). Developing corporate brands through considering internal and external stakeholders. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 3(3), 268-74.
- de Chernatony, L. & McDonald, M. (1998). *Creating Powerful Brands in Consumer, Service and Industrial Markets*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- de Chernatony, L. & McWilliam, G. (1989). The strategic implications of clarifying how marketers interpret brands. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 5(2), 153-71.
- De Mooij, M. (1993). *Brand Equity*. Education Directorate of the International Advertising Association, Amsterdam, September, 1993.
- Dedeoğlu, B. B. & Demirer, H. (2015). Differences in service quality perceptions of stakeholders in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(1), 130-146.
- Downer, L. (2016). It's the equity stupid! protecting the value of the partisan brand. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*. Jan-Mar2016, 28(1), 22-39.
- Du preez, R. (2015). Towards a 21st century university: teachings from consumer behaviour applicable to higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 29(5), 140–155.
- Durkin, M., McKenna, S. & Cummins, D. (2012). Emotional connections in higher education marketing. *International journal of Education Management*, 26(2), 153-161.
- Eagle, L. & Brennan, R. (2007). Are students customers? TQM and marketing perspectives. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 15(1), 44-60.
- Edmiston, D. (2008). An examination of integrated marketing communication in US public institutions of higher education. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 8(3), 152–175.

- El Mahdy, M. & Mourad, M. (2008). *Higher Education in Egypt. Higher Education in Africa: Internationalization Dimensions*. Co-published by the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Centre for International Higher Education (CIHE), Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College.
- Emmanuel, S. A. (2014). Customer based brand equity (CBBE) and the competitive performance of SMEs in Ghana. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*. 21(1), 117 – 131.
- Emery, C. R., Kramer, T. R. & Tian, R. G. (2003). Return to academic standards: a critique of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 11(1), 37-46.
- Erdem, T., Swait, J. & Valenzuela, A. (2006). Brands as signals: a cross-country validation study. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(1), 34-49.
- Esmailpour, F. (2015). The role of functional and symbolic brand associations on brand loyalty: A study on luxury brands. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 19(4), 467-484.
- Faircloth, J. B., Capella, L. M., & Alford, B. L. (2001). The effect of brand attitude and brand image on brand equity. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 9(3), 61-74.
- Fariba, E. (2015). The role of functional and symbolic brand associations on brand loyalty: A study on luxury brands. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 19(4), 467-484.
- Farquhar, P. H. (1989). Managing brand equity. *Marketing Research*, 1, 24-33.
- Finch, D., McDonald, S. & Staple, J. (2013). Reputational interdependence: An examination of category reputation in higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* 23(1), 34–61.
- Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust*. New York, NY: Free Press.

- Gabbott, M. & Hogg, G. (1998). *Consumers and Services*. Chicester: Wiley.
- Gatfield, T., Braker, B. & Graham, P. (1999). Measuring communication impact of university advertising materials. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 4 (2), 73-79.
- Gladden, J. & Funk, D. (2002). Developing an understanding of brand associations in team sport: empirical evidence from consumers of professional sport. *Journal of Sport Management*, 16(1), 54-81.
- Goia, M.T., Goib, C.L. & Wong, D. (2014). Constructing a brand identity scale for higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2014, 24(1), 59 –74.
- Hakala, U., Svensson, J. & Vincze, Z. (2012). Consumer-based brand equity and top-of-mind awareness: a cross- country analysis. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(6), 439-451.
- Hankinson, G. (2004). Relational network brands: towards a conceptual model of place brands. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(2), 109-21.
- Hatch, M. J. & Schultz, M. (2013). The dynamics of corporate brand charisma: routinization and activation at Carlsberg IT. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 29(2), 147-162.
- Hayes, T. (2007). Delphi study of the future of marketing of higher education. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 927–931.
- Heaney, J. G. & Heaney, M.F. (2008). *Services branding strategies: using corporate branding to market educational institutions*. Paper presented at the Academy of World Business, Marketing and Management Development, Rio de Janeiro.
- Helm, S., & Oezergin, B. (2013). *Service inside: the impact of ingredient service branding on quality perceptions and behavioural intentions*. AMA Winter Educators' Conference Proceedings, 24, 216-217.

- Hemsley-Brown, J. & Goonawardana, S. (2007). Brand harmonization in the international higher education market. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 942-8.
- Hemsley-Brown, J. & I. Oplatka. (2006). Universities in a competitive global marketplace: A systematic review of the literature on higher education marketing. *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 19(4), 316–338.
- Ho, H. & Wang, F. (2011). Prestige, Parallel or Predatory –Pricing strategies among Taiwanese universities. *International Journal of Marketing studies*, 3(3), August 2011.
- Idris, M., & Whitfield, A. (2014). Swayed by the logo and name: Does university branding work? *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 41–58.
- Isberg, S. & Pitta, D. (2013). Using financial analysis to assess brand equity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(1), 65–78.
- Ivy, J. (2001). Higher education institution image: a correspondence analysis approach. *International Journal of Education Management*, 15(6/7), 276-82.
- Ivy, J. (2008). A new higher education marketing mix: the 7Ps for MBA marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22(4), 288-299.
- Jacobsen, B. P. (2012). Place brand equity: a model for establishing the effectiveness of place brands. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 5(3), 253–271.
- Jeanes, E. L. (2013). The construction and controlling effect of a moral brand. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 29(2), 163-172.
- Jevons, C., (2006). Beyond product's brand management. Universities: a prime example of branding going wrong. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 15, 466–467.
- Jillapalli, R., & Jillapalli, R. (2014). Do professors have customer-based brand equity? *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 22–40.
- Jin, S. & Xiao, T. (2015). Brand personality and brand equity: evidence from the sportswear industry. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 124–133.

- Jorge, V. (2015). Perceived brand quality as a way to superior customer perceived value crossing by moderating effects. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 147–156.
- Joseph, M., Mullen, E.W. & Spake, D. (2012). University branding: understanding students' choice of an educational institution. *Journal of Brand Management*, 20(1), 1-12.
- Jumiati, S. & Norazah, S. (2015). Young consumers' insights on brand equity: Effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 43(3), 276–292.
- Kapferer, J. N. (1998). *Strategic Brand Management – Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*. Kogan Page.
- Kartono, B., & Rao, V. R. (2008). *Brand equity measurement: A comparative review and a normative guide* (Johnson School Research Paper Series, 24-09). Retrieved from Social Science Research Network Electronic paper collection <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1401149>
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 1-2.
- Keller, K. L. (2001). Building customer-based brand equity: Creating brand resonance requires carefully sequenced brand-building efforts. *Marketing Management*, 10(2), 14–19.
- Keller, K. L. (2003). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*, (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Keller, K. L. & Lehmann, D. R. (2006). Brands and branding: research findings and future priorities. *Marketing Science*, 25(6), 740-59.

- Kent, W. E., Lian, K., Khan, M. & Anene, J. (1993). Colleges' hospitality programs: perceived quality. *Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 34(6), 90-7.
- Kim, J.-H. & Hyun, Y.J. (2011). A model to investigate the influence of marketing-mix efforts and corporate image on brand equity in the IT software sector. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40, 424-38.
- Kim, H., Kim, W., & An, A. (2003). The effect of consumer based brand equity on firms' financial performance. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 20(4), 335–351. Retrieved from http://www.iseg.utl.pt/aula/cad1849/effect_cbbe_firms_fin_perform.pdf. Date accessed: March, 2014.
- Kim, W. G. & Kim, H.-B. (2004). Measuring customer-based restaurant brand equity: investigating the relationship between brand equity and firms' performance. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 45(2), 115-31.
- Kirmani, A. (1990) The effect of perceived advertising costs on brand perceptions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17 (2), 160-71.
- Kirmani, A. & Rao, A. R. (2000). No pain, no gain: a critical review of the literature on signalling unobservable product quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 64(2), 66-79.
- Kondasani, R. K. R. & Panda, R. K. (2015). Customer perceived service quality, satisfaction and loyalty in Indian private healthcare. *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 28(5), 452– 467.
- Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2012). *Principles of Marketing* (13th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kotler, P. & Fox, K. F. A. (1995). *Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions*. (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kotler, P. & Keller, K. L. (2006). *Marketing Management*, (12th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

- Krishnan, B. C. & Hartline, M. D. (2001). Brand equity: is it more important in services? *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(5), 328-42.
- Kumar, S., & Dash, M. K. (2011). Management education in India: Trends, issues and implications. *Research Journal of International Studies*, 18, 15 – 25. Retrieved from http://www.eurojournals.com/RJIS_18_02.pdf. Date accessed: September, 2012.
- Kurz, K., Scannell, J., & Veeder, S. (2008). Willingness to pay: Making the best case for institutional value and return on investment. *University Business*, 11(5), 31–32.
- Laing, A., Lewis, B., Foxall, G. & Hogg, G. (2002). Predicting a diverse future: directions and issues in the marketing of services. *European Journal of Marketing*, 36(4), 478-97.
- Lam, S. Y., Shankar, V., Erramilli, M. K., & Murthy, B. (2004). Customer value, satisfaction, loyalty, and switching costs: An illustration from a business-to-business service context. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 32(3), 293–311.
- Lassar, W., Mittal B. & Sharma A. (1995). Measuring Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 12(4), 11-19.
- Lauder, H., Brown, P., Dillabough, J., & Halsey, A. (2006). Introduction: The prospects for education: Individualization, globalization, and social change. In H. Lauder, P. Brown, J.-A. Dillabough, & A.H. Halsey (Eds.), *Education, globalization and social change* (pp. 1–70). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lavidge, R. J. & Steiner, G. A. (1961). A model for predictive measurements of advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Marketing*, 25(6), 59-62.
- Lee, G. C. & Chieng, F. Y. L. (2011). Dimensions of customer-based grand equity: A study of Malaysian brands. *Journal of Marketing Research and Case Studies*, 2011(2011) ID.821981. Date accessed: April 2015.
- Lee, J. S. & Back, K. J. (2010). Re-examination of attendee-based brand equity. *Tourism Management*, 31, 395-401.

- Lee, M. R. & Chen, T. T. (2012). Revealing research themes and trends in knowledge management: from 1995 to 2010. *Knowledge-Based Systems*, 28(1), 47-58.
- Leone, R. P., Rao, V. R., Keller, K. L., Luo, A. M., McAlister, L. & Srivastava, R. (2006). Linking brand equity to customer equity. *Journal of Service Research*, 9(2), 125-38.
- Lerman, D., & Garbarino, E. (2002). Recall and recognition of brand names: A comparison of word and nonword name types. *Psychology & Marketing*, 19(7/8), 621-639.
- Leuthesser, L., Kohli, C. & Harich, K. (1995). Brand equity: the halo effect measure. *European Journal of Marketing*, 29(4), 57-66.
- Levitt, T. (1981). Making intangible products and product intangibles. *Harvard Business Review*, 59, 94-102.
- Lin, Y., Lee, Y., Lin, S. C. H. & Zheng, Y. (2013). The effect of impulsiveness and promotional types on purchase intentions in Taiwan: a study. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 12(1), 7-24.
- Lindquist, J. D. & Sirgy, J. M. (2003). *Shopper, buyer and consumer behaviour: Theory and Marketing Applications*, (2nd ed.). Biztantra, New Delhi: Dreamtech Press.
- Lockwood, R. C. & Hadd, J. (2007). Building a brand in higher education: why business practice - particularly brand strategies - are becoming essential in today's universities. *Gallup Management Journal Online*, 12 July, 1-6.
- Low, G. S. & Lamb, C. W. Jr (2000). The measurement and dimensionality of brand associations. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 9(6), 350-68.
- Lowrie, A. (2007). Branding higher education: equivalence and difference in developing identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 990-999.
- Luis, J., Sánchez, F., Sotorrío, L.L. & Diez, E.B. (2015). The relationship between corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation in a turbulent environment: Spanish

- evidence of the Ibex35 firms. *Corporate Governance: The international journal of business in society*, 15(4), 563-575.
- Mackay, M. M. (2001). Evaluation of brand equity measures: Further empirical results. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 10(1), 38–51.
- Marconi, J. (1993). *Beyond Branding: How Savvy Marketers Build Brand Equity to Create Products and Open New Markets*. Chicago, IL: Probus Publishing Company.
- Maringe, F. (2005). Interrogating the crisis in higher education marketing: The CORD model. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 19(7), 564-78.
- Martin, S. S. & Camarero, C. (2005) Consumer reactions to firm signals in asymmetric relationships, *Journal of Service Research*, 8(1), 79-97.
- Mattila, A. S. & Enz, C. A. (2002). The role of emotions in service encounters. *Journal of Service Research*, 4(4), 268-77.
- Mazzarol, T. (1998). Critical success factors for international education marketing. *International Journal of Education Management*, 12(4), 163-175.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G. (2008). *The Global Market for Higher Education: Sustainable Competitive Strategies for the New Millennium*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G. N. (2012). Revisiting the global market for higher education. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 24(5), 717-737.
- McDougall, G. H. G. & Snetsinger, D. W. (1990). The intangibility of services: measurement and competitive perspectives. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 4(4), 27-40.
- Mitchell, V. (1999). Consumer perceived risk: conceptualizations and models. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33(1/2), 163-195.
- Mitra, K., Reiss, M. C. & Capella, L. M. (1999). An examination of perceived risk, information search and behavioral intentions in search, experience and credence services. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 13(3), 208-28.

- Mittal, B. & Kamakura, W. A. (2001). Satisfaction, repurchase intent, and repurchase behaviour: investigating the moderating effect of customer characteristics. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48(1), 131-42.
- Morgan, R. P. (2000). A consumer-oriented framework of brand equity and loyalty. *International Journal of Market Research*, 42(1), 65-78.
- Morphew, C. (2001). A rose by any other name? Which colleges become universities. *The Review of Higher Education*, 25(2), 1-26.
- Mortimer, K. (2002). Integrating advertising theories with conceptual models of services advertising. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 16(5), 460-8.
- Moshe, S. (2013). Managing and improving service quality in higher education. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 5(3), 309-320.
- Mourad, M. (2010). Internationalisation: a new positioning strategy in the higher education market. *International Journal of Management in Education*, 4(2), 185-200.
- Mourad, M. (2013). Conceptualizing brand equity in the higher education market: an exploratory study. *American Marketing Association / Winter 2013*.
- Mourad, M., Ennew, C. & Kortam, W. (2011). Brand equity in higher education. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(4), 403-420.
- Muller, C. C. (1998). Endorsed branding. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 90-6.
- Murphy, J. (1990). Assessing the value of brands. *Long Range Planning*, 23(3), 23-9.
- Narayandas, D. (1998). Measuring and managing the benefits of customer retention. *Journal of Service Research*, 1(2), 108-28.
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2011). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Date accessed: November, 2012.

- Nebojsa, S. D., Rui, V. da S. & Joe, F. H. (2015). Towards a unified theory of brand equity: conceptualizations, taxonomy and avenues for future research. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(1), 3–17.
- Nelson, P. (1974). Advertising as information. *Journal of Political Economy*, July/ August, 81, 729-54.
- Newman, F., Couturier, L., & Scurry, J. (2004). *The future of higher education: Rhetoric, reality, and the risks of the market*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Nguyen, N. & Leblanc, G. (2001). Corporate image and corporate reputation in customers' retention decisions in services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 8(4), 227-36.
- Nguyen, T. D., Barrett, N. J. & Miller, K. E. (2011). Brand loyalty in emerging markets. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(3), 222-32.
- O'Cass, A. & Grace, D. (2003). An exploratory perspective of service brand associations. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 17(55), 452-75.
- Oliver, R. L. (1997). *Satisfaction: A behavioural perspective on the consumer*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Olsen, N. V., Menichelli, E., Meyer, C. & Naes, T. (2011). Consumers liking of private labels: an evaluation of intrinsic and extrinsic orange juice cues. *Appetite*, 56(3), 770-7.
- Onkvisit, S. & Shaw, J.J. (1989). Service marketing: image, branding, and competition. *Business Horizons*, 32, 13-18.
- Opoku, R., Abratt, R. & Pitt, L. (2006). Communicating brand personality: are the websites doing the talking for the top South African business schools? *Brand Management*, 14(1/2), 20-39.

- Pappu, R. & Quester, P. G. (2016). How does brand innovativeness affect brand loyalty? *European Journal of Marketing*, 50 (1/2), 2–28.
- Pappu, R., Quester, P. G. & Cooksey, R. W. (2006). Consumer-base brand equity and country-of-origin relationship. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(5/6), 696-717.
- Parasuraman, A., Berry, L., Leonard L., Zeithaml, V. & Valarie A. (1988). SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12-40.
- Park, C. W. & Lessig, V. P. (1981) Familiarity and its impact on consumer biases and heuristic. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8(2), 223-30.
- Penny, E. (2016). What I talk about when I talk about branding. *Design Week*, page 1-1, 2/4/2016.
- Peters, A. & Kemp, J. (2014) Ask Us Anything: Communicating the Value of Reference Services through Branding. *Public Services Quarterly*. Jan-Mar, 10(1), 48-53.
- Pike, S., Bianchi, C., Kerr, G. & Patti, C. (2010). Consumer-based brand equity for Australia as a long- haul tourism destination in an emerging market. *International Marketing Review*, 27(4), 434-49.
- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt T. E. (2014). University brand equity: an empirical investigation of its dimensions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(6), 616 – 634.
- Prasad, K. & Dev, C. S. (2000). Managing hotel brand equity: a customer-centric framework for assessing performance. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41(3), 22-31.
- Rami, A. & Hicham, A. S. (2013). Quality care perceptions in private Syrian hospitals. Education, Business and Society: *Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 6(2), 76 – 86.

- Ramírez, G. B. 2016. Many choices, one destination: multimodal university brand construction in an urban public transportation system. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 29, 186-204.
- Rao, A. R. & Monroe, K. B. (1989). The effect of price, brand name, and store name on buyers' perceptions of product quality: an integrative review. *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 26(3), 351-7.
- Rao, A. R., Qu, L. & Ruekert, R. W. (1999) Signalling unobservable product quality through a brand ally. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36 (2), 258-68.
- Ravi, S. K., Satyabhusan, D. & Prem, C. P. (2013). The nature and antecedents of brand equity and its dimensions. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 31(2), 141-159.
- Reidheld, F. & Sasser, W. (1990). Zero defections – quality comes to services. *Harvard Business Review*, 68, 105-11.
- Richard, C. (2016). Brand communication, brand image and brand trust as antecedents of brand loyalty in Gauteng Province of South Africa. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 7(1), 124–139.
- Richardson, P. S., Dick, A. & Jain, A. K. (1994). Extrinsic and intrinsic cue effects on perceptions of store brand quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(4), 28-37.
- Riley, F. D. & Chernatony, L. D. (2000). The service brand as relationships builder. *British Journal of Management*, 11(2), 137-50.
- Ross, S., James, J. & Vargas, P. (2006). Development of a scale to measure team brand associations in professional sport. *Journal of Sport Management*, 20(2), 260-79.
- Rossiter, J. R. & Percy, L. (1997). *Advertising and Promotion Management*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Rust, R. T., Katherine N., Valarie A. & Zeithaml, V. (2004). Return on Marketing: Using Customer Equity to Focus Marketing Strategy. *Journal of Marketing*, 68, 109-127.

- Sasmita, J. & Suki, N. M. (2015). Young consumers' insights on brand equity: Effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 43(3), 276 - 292
- Schiffman, L., Bednall, D., O'Cass, A., Paladino, A. & Kanuk, L. (2005). *Consumer Behaviour*, (3rd ed.). Sydney: Pearson Education, Australia.
- Schofield, C., Cotton, D., Gresty, K., Kneale, P. & Winter, J. (2013). Higher education provision in a crowded marketplace. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35(2), 193–205.
- Schubert, B. (2007). *Development and implementation of branding concepts: the case for internal marketing*. HEIST information bank, available at: www.heist.co.uk/corporate_identity. Date accessed: 15 January 2012.
- Schultz, H. (2005). The customer isn't always. *Marketing Management*, 14(1), 9-10.
- Scott, D. (2000). One day and a lifetime of brand lessons. *Brandweek*, 41(34), 30-2.
- Segev, E., Raveh, A., & Farjoun, M. (1999). Conceptual maps of leading MBA programs in the United States: Core courses, concentration areas and the ranking of the school. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20, 549 – 565.
- Sevier, R. (2002). *Building a brand that matters*. Hiawatha, IA: Strategy Publishing.
- Sharma, A. A., Raob, V. R. & Poplic, S. (2013). Measuring consumer-based brand equity for Indian business schools. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2013, 23(2), 175–203.
- Shocker, A. D. & Weitz, B. (1988). *A perspective on brand equity principles and issues – Defining, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*. Marketing Science Institute, MA: Cambridge.
- Simon, C. J., & Sullivan, M. W. (1993). The measurement and determinants of brand equity: A financial approach. *Marketing Science*, 12, 28–52.

- Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Smith, R. & Ennew, C. (2000). *Service quality and its impact on word of mouth communication in higher education*. Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing Annual Conference, University of Derby, Derby, 5-7 July.
- Srivastava, R. K. & Shocker, A. D. (1991). *Brand Equity a Perspective on its Meaning and Measuremen*. Report No. 91-124, Cambridge, MA: Marketing Science Institute.
- Steiner, L., Sundstrom, A.C. & Sammalisto, K. (2013). An analytical model for university identity and reputation strategy work. *High Education* (2013), 65, 401–415.
- Steven, I. & Dennis, P. (2013). Using financial analysis to assess brand equity. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 22(1), 65–78.
- Su, J. & Tong, X. (2015). Brand personality and brand equity: evidence from the sportswear industry. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 124–133.
- Sujchaphong, N. Nguyen, B. & Melewar, T. C. (2015) Internal branding in universities and the lessons learnt from the past: the significance of employee brand support and transformational leadership. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 25(2), 204-237.
- Supornpraditchai, T., Miller, K. E., Lings, I. N. & Jonmundsson, B. (2007). *Employee-based brand equity: antecedents and consequences*. AMZMAC, Conference Proceedings, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 3-5 December.
- Swait, J., Erdem, T., Louviere, J. & Dubelaar, C. (1993). The equalization price: a measure of consumer-perceived brand equity. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 10(1), 23-45.

- Taylor, S. A., Goodwin, S. & Celuch, K. (2004). The relative importance of brand equity to customer loyalty in an industrial setting. *Journal Product & Brand Management*, 13(4), 217-227.
- Temple, P. (2006). Branding higher education: Illusion or reality? Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education, 10(1), 15-19.
- Theo, L. (2014). *Global Branding Based on Brand Gender and Brand Equity*. AMA Winter Educators' Conference Proceedings, 2014.
- Tolba, A. H. & Hassan, S. S. (2009). Linking customer- based brand equity with brand market performance: a managerial approach. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 18(5), 356-66.
- Tolbert, D. (2014). An Exploration of the Use of Branding to Shape Institutional Image in the Marketing Activities of Faith-Based Higher Education Institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, 13(4), 233–249.
- Torres, P. M., Augusto, M. G., & Lisboa. J. V. (2015). Determining the causal relationships that affect consumer-based brand equity: The mediating effect of brand loyalty. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 33(6), 944 – 956.
- Turley, L. W. & Moore, P. A. (1995). Brand name strategies in the service sector. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 12(4), 42-50.
- Ugolini, M. M., Cassia, F. & Vigolo, V. (2014). Services branding: is it a matter of gender? *TQM Journal*. 2014, 26(1), 75-87.
- Vakratsas, D. & Ambler, T. (1996). *Advertising effects: a taxonomy and review of concepts, methods and results from the academic literature*. Working Paper, Cambridge, MA: Marketing Science Institute.

- Va'zquez, R., R'io, A. B. & Iglesias, V. (2002). Consumer-based brand equity: development and validation of a measurement instrument. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 18, 27-48.
- Veale, R. & Quester, P. (2009). Tasting quality: the roles of intrinsic and extrinsic cues. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 21(1), 195-207.
- Veloutsou, C. (2015). Brand evaluation, satisfaction and trust as predictors of brand loyalty: the mediator-moderator effect of brand relationships. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 32(6), 405 – 421.
- Veloutsou, C., Lewis, J. W. & Paton, R. A. (2004). University selection: information requirements and importance. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 18(3), 160-71.
- Vera, J. (2015). Perceived brand quality as a way to superior customer perceived value crossing by moderating effects. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 147–156.
- Vorhies, D. W. (1997). Building strong brands. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(3), 260-261.
- Wang, E. S. T. (2013). *The influence of visual packaging design on perceived food product quality, value, and brand preference*. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 41(10), 805–816.
- Washburn, J. H. & Plank, R. E. (2002). Measuring brand equity: an evaluation of a consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 10(1), 46-62.
- Whelan, S. & Wohlfeil, M. (2006). Communicating brands through engagement with 'lived' experiences. *Brand Management*, 13(4/5), 313-29.

- Whisman, R. (2009). Internal branding: a university's most valuable intangible asset. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(5) 367-370.
- White, S. S. & Schneider, B. (2000). Climbing the commitment ladder: the role of expectations disconfirmation in customers' behavioural intentions. *Journal of Service Research*, 2(3), 240-53.
- Whitelock, J. & Fastoso, F. (2007). Understanding international branding: defining the domain and reviewing the literature. *International Marketing Review*, 24(3), 252-70.
- Williams, R. L. Jr. (2012). *Branding through renaming for strategic alignment in service organizations* (Doctoral dissertation (PhD) thesis). Edinburgh Napier University.
- Williams Jr., Robert L.; Omar, M. (2013). *Applying brand management to higher education through the use of the brand flux model: the case of arcadia university*. AMA Winter Educators' Conference Proceedings. 2013, 24, 248-258.
- Williams, R., & Omar, M. (2014). How branding process activities impact brand equity within higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 1 –10.
- Winters, L. C. (1991). Brand-equity measures: some recent advances. *Marketing Research*, 3, 70-3.
- Yasin, N. M., Noor, M. N. & Mohamad, O. (2007). Does image of country-of-origin matter to brand equity? *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 16(1), 38-48.
- Yoo, B. & Donthu, N. (2001). Developing and validating multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 52, 1-14.
- Yunker, P. J., Yunker, J. A. (2003). Are students' evaluations of teaching valid? Evidence from an analytical business core course. *Journal of Education for Business*, 78(6), 313-7.

Zeithaml, V. A. & Bitner, M. J. (2006). *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus across the Firm*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT-BASED BRAND EQUITY AND UNIVERSITY PREFERENCE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature leading to the formulation of research hypotheses for the study with a view to addressing the objectives of the study. It also presents the thesis' conceptual framework which features the dependent and independent SBBE constructs under investigation and the relationships thereof.

Despite the growing realisation among educational institutions of the relevance of branding in differentiation (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Chapleo, 2007; Lowrie, 2007; Edmiston, 2008; Mourad et al., 2011; Mathew et al., 2012; Mourad, 2013; Pinar et al., 2014), there is lack of theoretical models that address higher education marketing and branding (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Coleman et al., 2011; Williams, 2012; da Silveira et al., 2013; Mei et al., 2014). The sector remains largely unexplored in that regard with conceptualisations by Byron (1995), Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003) and Chen (2008) being key in exploring the potential of university branding in relieving the risks associated with university choice, due largely to service intangibility (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Other relevant studies in the industry include Gatfield et al. (1999); Gray et al. (2003); Bunzel (2007); El Mahdy and Mourad (2008); Kurz et al. (2008); Mazzarol and Soutar (2008); Mourad (2010); Pinar et al. (2014); Shahijan et al. (2015) and lately, Dean et al. (2016). In relation to the scarcity of higher education literature, Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007) indicate that international marketing of higher education has dominated both empirical research and theoretical papers that relate to the industry, with a lot of attention focused on brand identity elements and their communication to stakeholders (Bunzel, 2007; Jevons, 2006).

In their recent study into the antecedent dimensions of student-based university brand equity, Pinar et al. (2014) indicate that there appears to be a prevalence of external branding efforts that lack internal focus, as well as sufficient appreciation of the holistic instrumentality that creates the university brand. In the same light, Jevons (2006) has previously questioned the effectiveness of this communicative approach to branding, as has Bunzel (2007) who argues

that there is little to show for such an identity focused approach in relation to stakeholder perception and institutional ranking. This study is a timely addition to the university branding literature, which does not only combine internal and external focus to branding but also adopts a students' perspective in linking brand equity to university preference.

4.2 University Brand Equity and Preference

Brand preference refers to consumers' tendency to select a specific brand over similar others (Wang, 2013); it denotes the relative liking of a particular brand over others in a certain product category (Chomvilailuk and Butcher, 2010). According to Howard and Kerin (2013), brand preference implies consumers' liking for a brand that is above any other in a particular product category that promotes their willingness to recommend the brand to others. In the opinion of Tingchi et al. (2014), brand preference is a symbolic predictor of consumer patronage (Corte et al., 2010). As a concept, brand preference has received considerable attention in the brand equity literature. The concept has been variously addressed by a number of authors (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003; de Chernatony, 2006; Kapferer, 2008; Alamro and Rowley, 2011; Jose et al., 2011; Hu et al., 2012; Daniel and Kerin, 2013; Matthew et al., 2014; Schultz and Block, 2014; Wang, 2015) in their studies on branding and brand equity, most of which suggest that brand preference and brand equity are positively related (Lieven et al., 2015).

The relationship between brand equity and brand preference has been conceptualised in different ways. Rundle-Thiele and Mackay (2001) use brand loyalty and brand preference interchangeably while Keller (2003) treats brand preference as an antecedent of brand equity. Alamro and Rowley (2011) hold the latter view by treating brand preference as an essential pre-requisite for brand equity in dynamic and highly competitive emerging markets. Chang and Liu (2009) in Wang (2015) hold a different view that brand equity affords organisations a number of benefits including brand preference, which should be the focus of brand management (Nilson, 2000); thus treating brand preference as a consequence of brand equity. According to Griskevicius and Kenrick (2013), strong brands positively impacts consumers' behaviours and preferences. This study considers brand preference as students' liking for a university that is anchored on its brand equity (Howard and Kerin, 2013). It thus subscribes to the stance that treats brand preference as a consequence of brand equity (Chang and Liu, 2009; Luis et al., 2011; Hu et al., 2012; Wang, 2015).

The focus of this study is not on SBBE antecedent identification (Sharma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014); rather, it aims at ascertaining the relationships between proven SBBE determinants and university preference.

A wide array of factors has been identified in extant literature as either influencing SBBE or higher education institution preference among students. Gray et al. (2003) identified university learning environment, reputation, graduate career prospects, university destination, and its cultural integration as the main elements by which university brands are positioned. Gatfield et al. (1999) identified quality of teachers and resources, campus life and university access services as the most important promotional features in marketing university brands. In her work on determinants of business school preference among students, Ivy (2008) identified, in order of importance, programmes on offer, institutional reputation, fees and informativeness of prospectus. Others determinants include interactions with faculty, staff, and other students; communication through publicity and e-media and premiums offered. Other elements of the university experience (Pinar et al., 2014) that are identified as key determinants of SBBE include facilities (Price et al., 2003), people and processes in the marketing of services (Nicholls et al., 1995). Thus, beside the fact that the preponderance of determinants of university brand equity suggested by different authors indicates that there has not yet been any unanimity regarding specific antecedents thereof, not much has been done in establishing a linkage between university branding and preference among students.

This study adopts student-based brand equity dimensions from studies by Mourad et al. (2011) and Pinar et al. (2014), which largely emanated from the primary conceptualisations of brand equity by Aaker (1991, 1995) and Keller (1993, 2003). Literature search conducted using such available search engines as Emerald insight, Ebscohost, Joster, Proquest and Google Scholar identified the study by Mourad et al. as the latest relevant work in the emerging higher education markets in Africa, which is also from a student perspective. The study by Pinar et al. (2014), on the other hand, sought to identify antecedents of student-based brand equity and to determine the relative importance of those dimensions in university branding. This researcher deems it both relevant and interesting applying some of the key dimensions in both studies to Ghana's largely unexplored university landscape. The following section reviews literature in respect of the respective SBBE constructs adopted from the two studies, which leads to the formulation of research hypotheses and subsequently, the researcher's conceptual framework.

4.3 Student-Based Brand Equity Constructs and Research Hypotheses

This section delves into the university brand equity constructs contained in the conceptual framework in Figure 4.2 with a view to formulating the relevant hypotheses to address the research objectives.

4.3.1 University Institution Identity, University Institution Reputation, University Institution Image and Students' Brand Preference

Three concepts at the heart of the brand, which have enjoyed appreciable levels of ubiquity in the branding literature, are corporate identity, corporate image and corporate reputation. These have been variously conceptualised by different researchers leading to overlaps and variation in the ways they have been defined and treated (van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2010; Steiner et al., 2013; Garnett, 2014). Corporate identity is thought of as an organisation's visual identification and logos; its measurement is based on visual cues, including physical and behavioural elements, which help various categories of stakeholders to recognize the company and distinguish it from others (Abratt, 1989; Steiner et al., 2013). The concept refers to an organization's unique characteristics, which are rooted in the behaviour of its members and have strategic importance (VanRiel and Balmer, 1997; Xie et al., 2015). It involves how an institution goes about its businesses; its behaviours, thoughts, feelings, interactions and relationships with the external world as indicated by a combination of both tangible and intangible elements that are noted to be associated with it (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012). According to Gray (1986) and Christensen and Askegaard (2001), the concept signals values and attitudes of an organization's actors that are envisaged in its symbolic representations (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Berg and Kreiner (1990) and Steiner et al. (2013) maintain that the concept involves the aggregation of affective perceptions of organizational attributes, while Harris and de Chernatony (2001) suggest that identity is 'an organization's ethos, aims and values that create a sense of individuality which differentiates a brand' (p. 442). Therefore, although definitional perspectives are many and varied, there is commonness of thought that the concept of organisational identity is the outcome of a multifaceted synthesis of organisational elements that signal what the organisation stands for including its cultural values and the behaviours of those who represent or act on its behalf.

Many of the pioneering conceptualisations adopted an inside out perspective focusing on how institutions wish to project themselves to be seen and understood. To these researchers, the

concept represents the picture presented to external stakeholders of an organisation (VanRiel, 2005; Cornelissen, 2011; Schmeltz, 2014). Some researchers have conversely envisaged organisational identity as representing not necessarily how the firm purports to be perceived, but rather how stakeholders envisage the organisation as a result of those deliberate organisational efforts. Keller (2001), for example, describes the concept as involving brand associations or elements held in consumers' memory; an indication of what consumers perceive the brand to be (Hankinson, 2004). Such an approach considers brand identity as comprising internal organisational arrangements that inform consumers' perceptions of the brand, and so places emphasis on consumer perception that emanates from those internal efforts. Upshaw (1995), for example, found that brand identity is not what a marketer creates, but what consumers perceive to have been created, whose perception emanates from symbols, words, images, behaviours and associations (Steiner et al., 2013). This researcher is of the opinion that identity works that consider the two approaches are more effective as the two are interwoven, because effectively, organisations' stakeholder perceptions are created principally by deliberate internal mechanisms. This study therefore considers organisational identity as a construct that originates from within the organisation (Kapferer, 2004; de Chernatony and Cottam, 2006; Goia et al., 2014) and manifests on the outside in the form of stakeholder perceptions.

Different dimensions of the concept of organisational identity have been identified by researchers in various service industries (O'Cass and Grace, 2003; Coleman et al., 2011; da Silveira et al., 2013). These include employee and client focus, visual identity, brand personality, communications, and human resource initiatives in the business to business service sector (Coleman et al., 2011). Goia et al. (2014) identified brand vision, brand culture, positioning, personality, relationships, and presentations as the components that build brand identity. In the education industry, Cobb (2001) identified an institution's vision, its brand-customer relationship, employee commitment, quality of programmes, commitment of financial resources, and pricing (Goia et al., 2014); while Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001) identified institutional appeal, attractiveness, distinctiveness, fairness and good quality advertising. Bosch et al. (2006) and Melewar and Akel (2005) also identified physical specificities and qualities, personality, culture, relationship, customer reflection, and the institution's self-image, which are based on the visual and verbal elements that the institution has created (Goia et al., 2014).

Therefore organisational identity, either visual or verbal is socially constructed and created from within the organisation, as well as through interactions between the organisation and its stakeholders in which the former is the originator and the more active participant (Henkel, 2005). The recipient stakeholder however becomes the party whose perception matters in determining the appropriateness and hence effectiveness of the identity created (de Chernatony et al., 2004; Steiner et al., 2013). What appears to be the case also is that different dimensions of the construct are conceptualised in different industries for which reason da Silveira et al. (2013) suggest the need to conceptualize brand identity to suit particular market contexts.

Extant branding literature establishes that brand image is a critical component of brand equity (Faircloth et al., 2001; Williams, 2012; Finch et al., 2013; Steiner et al., 2013; Goia et al., 2014; Pinar et al., 2014; Sasmita and Suki, 2015; Richard, 2016). According to Kotler and Fox (1995), image involves the sum of people's beliefs, ideas and impressions of an object. Aaker (1991) defined brand image as 'a set of associations, usually organized in some meaningful way'. In Keller's (1993) opinion, brand image involves a set of perceptions held in consumers' memory about a brand that emanate from its brand associations; Biel (1992) considers the concept as a cluster of attributes and associations that are connected to the brand name in consumers' minds. Therefore image, in the context of branding, is a consistent set of associations, which form an impression (Williams, 2012).

Corporate image therefore involves the overall impression made on the minds of the public about an organization (Barich and Kotler, 1991) that is formed from a synthesis of elements and processes by which the public perceives an institution, as well as compares and contrasts the various attributes of that institution with competing others in a given industry (Gray, 1986). According to Hatch and Schultz (2003, p.1048), corporate image involves 'views of the organization developed by its stakeholders'; the outside world's overall impression of the company including the views of customers, shareholders, the media and the general public.

In appreciation of the preponderance of attributes of the university setting that affect its imagery, Theus (1993) identified a number of factors - organizational, situational, personal, and business - that affect its numerous stakeholders. Conversely, Kennedy (1977) identified functional and emotional components of institutional image. According to him, the functional component is related to tangible characteristics that can be easily measured, while the

emotional component is associated with psychological dimensions that are manifested by consumers' feelings and attitudes towards an organization and its products and services. These feelings are derived from individual experiences with an organization and affect the processing and evaluation of information relating to attributes that constitute functional indicators of image (Keller, 1993, 2003).

In a similar vein, Grönroos (1984) and Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1992) identified functional and technical quality of the institution as resulting in its image, which in turn has an impact on stakeholders' overall perception of quality. They maintain that technical quality comprises what customers derive in consequence of their interaction with the service organization including technical dimensions of the service delivery system, such as equipment, computer-based systems, and the characteristics of the physical environment where the service is produced and consumed. Functional quality, on the contrary, resides in the manner in which the service is provided, including service access and contact personnel's attitudes and behaviours. The foregoing suggests psychological and physical dimensions of the concept, which indicates that core product/service contents and supporting extras (Pinar et al., 2014) are equally important in determining the image of a service. It also implies that the relevance of institutional image resides in its potential to positively impact stakeholder perception of services provided, as well as other tangible deliverables of the institution. Therefore in the context of this study, corporate/university image is defined as a combination of functional, emotional and psychological attributes of the university institution that emanate from students' experiences with it, which impact on the latter's perceptions and evaluations of the institution and its services that ultimately culminate in its reputation.

The concept of corporate reputation has received enormous attention in the branding literature (Du preez, 2015; Stensaker, 2015; Boivie et al., 2016; Zavyalova et al., 2016) and a considerable amount of scholarly work has been done in establishing a definition for it (Rassler and Abratt, 2009; Gotsi and Wilson, 2001; Abratt and Kleyn, 2012; Gokhan et al., 2016).

A review of the literature unveils a dominant global orientation to defining the concept that views it as a phenomenon that universally affects all stakeholders of the organisation. Scholarly works that adopt this orientation view reputation as the overall perception of an

organization among its multiple stakeholders that go to affect the latter's evaluations of the quality of the organisation's products and services (Schuler, 2004; MacMillan et al., 2005; Stensaker, 2015). Such an approach is in accord with the dictionary definitions of the concept as the overall quality or character as seen or judged by people in general. Yang (2007) describes the concept as comprising collective representations that are shared in the minds of an organisation's multiple publics overtime. Similarly, Delgado-Marquez et al. (2012) indicate that it implies the accumulation and representation of the history of a firm's interactions with various stakeholders that culminate in a combination of trustworthiness, quality and influence.

According to (Fombrun, 1996, p. 37), corporate reputation is 'the overall estimation in which a company is held by its constituents', while Fombrun and VanRiel (2003) describe it as multiple stakeholders' aggregate impressions about an organisation's ability to fulfil expectations overtime. Similarly, Milewicz and Herbig (1994) indicate that institutional reputation is formed through a process that culminates in evaluations and judgements of various groups who interact with an organization over time. Stensaker (2015) corroborates an assertion by Johnson et al. (2001) that an organization's reputation emanates from consensus judgments that represents global assessments of both internal and external stakeholders' perceptions resulting from its past actions. Thus, this approach to conceptualising corporate reputation views the concept as an accumulation and representation of an organisation's interactions with many stakeholders, who are likely to have divergent interests.

A less common specific-audience-based definitional perspective of the concept points to the existence of multiple reputations among various stakeholders of an organisation (Wartick, 1992). Barnett et al. (2006), for example, believe in this view and so recommend against omnibus definitions that present reputation as a global evaluative assessment of an organisation (Bromley, 2000).

Whatever the approach to defining and conceptualising the concept, some common threads that run through scholarly works are that organisational reputation is long term (social cognitions that develop over time in the minds of stakeholders); it is cumulative (formed when institutions are noted to repeatedly and consistently exhibit certain behaviours over a considerable period of time); it borders on consistency of organisational behaviour; it is also evaluative in nature; and affects multiple stakeholders constituencies (including internal and

external stakeholders). It involves stakeholders' global perception of the organisation that hinges on past transactional experiences and may be viewed as a reflection of an organization's history that communicates the quality of its products or services in comparison with those of its competitors.

In their affirmation of the fact that corporate reputation is built over time, Ostrowski et al. (1993), in their study into customer loyalty in the airline industry, argue that evaluations of corporate reputation that are based on current or single flight are insufficient in determining overall customer impression of the service provider. A consistent and significant relationship between the reputation of an airliner and customer loyalty is also suggested in that study.

Corporate reputation can also emanate from a particular stakeholder's perception and impression about an organisation's interactions with other stakeholders. According to Wartick (1992), institutional reputation results from a single stakeholder's perception in respect of how well an organization meets the demands and expectations of other stakeholders; a clear extension of the concept to include the perception of a particular stakeholder group in relation to how repeatedly able the organization is in meeting the expectations of adjacent stakeholder groups. Ertug et al. (2016) corroborate the above position, but found, however, that stakeholders differ in the extent to which their evaluations of institutions are influenced by how neighbouring audiences are treated (Steven et al., 2016).

Additionally, corporate reputation has been conceived by some researchers as a fluid concept that changes over time. Researchers who share this opinion are of the view that corporate reputation has a temporal component that reflects changing stakeholders' evaluations of an organisation over time. Highhouse et al. (2009) suggest that corporate reputation is global but temporally stable (Blanca et al., 2013). This is a departure from the popular view that espouses the concept as both enduring and all encompassing. Gioia et al. (2000), for example, view reputation as lasting, cumulative, and global, while Elsbach (2006, p. 17) define it as 'enduring status categorizations of the quality of an organization as perceived by external audiences and stakeholders'. In comparison with corporate image, Walker (2010, p.370) envisages corporate reputation as 'a relatively stable, issue specific aggregate perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects compared against some standard'.

Blanca et al. (2013) corroborates the former viewpoint by positing that, although reputation does not fluctuate on a daily basis, it can be altered abruptly as a result of unforeseen events. While appreciating the potential fluidity of the concept, this study subscribes to the views of Gotsi and Wilson (2001), which is also supported by Abratt and Kleyn (2012), that corporate reputation is a stakeholder's overall evaluation of a company over time. This evaluation is based on the stakeholder's direct experiences with the company, any form of communication and symbolism that provides information about the firm's actions and/or a comparison with the actions of other leading rivals'. University reputation in the context of this study represents undergraduate students' global, cumulative and long lasting evaluations and perceptions of a university that is predicated on own, as well as adjacent stakeholder constituents' (including other students') interactions with the institution that ultimately determine the esteem in which it is held by the student body, relative to the competition.

4.3.2 Definitional Perspectives and Conceptual Relationships between Identity, Image and Reputation

The relationship between organisational identity, image and reputation is an issue of contention in the branding literature. While it is not the intention of this study to delve into definitional tangles that characterise extant literature, it is believed that a good understanding of these concepts is important due to the sustainable competitive advantage that emanate from their intangible capabilities (Omar et al., 2009, Keller, 2013; Sasmita and Suki, 2015). While some researchers consider organisational identity as a precursor of image and reputation, there are others in the minority who treat identity as an all encompassing construct that subsumes image and reputation. The relationship between image and reputation has similarly been treated from converging and contrasting perspectives.

Abratt and Kleyn (2012) distinguish between corporate identity and corporate image as what the firm is and what the firm is perceived to be, respectively. These two concepts are also different from corporate reputation, which involves impressions that stakeholders hold about an organisation (Aaker, 1991, 1995). Thus, corporate reputation emanates from external stakeholder perception about the organisation and its processes as a result of past transactional experiences, while corporate identity involves internal organisational efforts aimed at improving external stakeholder perception. Abratt (1989) stresses that, although corporate identity and corporate image are often used interchangeably, corporate identity is an index of the physical and behavioural indicators conceived and controlled by a company,

while corporate image is a global impression formed in the minds of customers (Steiner et al., 2013).

From a communication perspective, Schmeltz (2014) subscribes to the dominant body of branding knowledge, treating corporate identity as a precursor of brand image by conceptualising the concept as comprising all elements that are developed by an organisation to communicate to its stakeholders in order to develop a positive image. This author similarly subsumes identity under reputation by treating identity as a corporate communication mechanism that builds and protects strong reputation. Kapferer (2004) and Srivastava (2010) treat brand image as a synthesis of various brand messages including those captured in the organisation's identity; so do Williams and Van Dyke (2008) and Cornelissen (2011) who consider organisational identity as a precursor to image and reputation by arguing that corporate identity is a value concept that affects images and ultimately reputations. Thus, apart from placing identity under image, these authors also consider organisational reputation as the ultimate among the three constructs. Researchers like Margulies (1977); Olins (1989); Hatch and Schultz (2004) also perceive identity as a concept that mirrors reputation to stakeholders while treating the latter as an aggregate of several images (Christensen and Askegaard, 2001).

Making a case for the influence of higher education institutions' images and reputation on students' retention decisions, Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001) corroborate Fombrun's (1996) allusion to the existence of multiple images among numerous constituents (e.g. students and employees) that culminates in an institutions' reputation. Gotsi and Wilson (2001) categorise extant academic work on the concepts of corporate image and reputation into analogous and differentiated schools of thoughts and subscribe to the latter. They argue that the concepts are different but intertwined in a dynamic 'bilateral relationship' in which an organisation's 'everyday' images and its reputation (overall evaluation) influence each other. This observation is contrary to the view of Steiner et al. (2013) that reputation is the subjective reflection of an institution's actions that create an external image. Abratt and Kleyn (2012) also allude to the existence of multiple reputations among organisations' different stakeholder groups and argue that, with time, these reputations consolidate into its brand image. They however add to the quagmire by arguing that there exists multiple, fragmented images which evolve to become 'stakeholders' perception of the reputations of the organisation' (pp 1050).

In their analysis of brand identity variables of higher education institutions, Bosch et al. (2006) also treated identity and reputation as antecedents of institutional image. In that study, reputation is treated as a variable of identity, which in turn leads to higher educational institutions' image. Stensaker (2015) also maintains that institutional identity can be used to create a powerful and consistent image for a university. Similarly, Bosch et al. (2006) indicate that brand identity is shaped by four independent variables, namely; personality, performance, relationship and reputation, thereby considering reputation as a determinant of organisational identity.

Cornelissen (2011) argues that all communicational efforts of corporate entity should be managed and directed at 'establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organisation is dependent' (p. 5). Apart from pointing to the prominence of reputation in corporate communication endeavours, he also suggests the existence of multiple reputations among different stakeholder groups for the same institution that need to be managed to ensure coherence in the way the institution projects itself to stakeholders. Interestingly, Alessandri et al. (2007) places image under identity with both leading to reputation by positing that an institution's projected image leads to its identity, which ultimately leads to its reputation.

Lievens et al. (2007) believe that corporate identity is managed by creating an appealing image for both internal and external customers of the organisation; while Steiner et al. (2013) posit that university identity is constructed by organizational identity, symbolic identity, image, and reputation; thus treating reputation and image as determinants of institutional identity. VanRiel and Balmer (1997) state that corporate identity is influenced by various factors, including changes in the external environment, corporate reputation, and organizational performance. In their perception, both image and reputation are considered to be largely an interpretation of perceptions of how an organization is seen from the outside; while treating image as immediate, short-term, external stakeholder perceptions that are based on impressions and attitudes toward the organization (Heding et al., 2009). Thus, they consider identity as emanating from internal organisational efforts.

Commenting on the interconnection between the three concepts, Brown et al. (2006) indicate that the three concepts are simply complementary and that a strong organizational identity provides a firm foundation for the external image of a university, which in turn leads to its

reputation (Gioia et al., 2000); and advocates for identity and image congruence. This indicates that an external image that is perceived to be very different from the university identity will call for identity change to ensure consistency, as according to the authors, a conspicuous image-identity gap might indicate the institution's inability to carve an image that matches stakeholder expectations (Morphew and Hartley, 2006; Stensaker, 2015). In the light of the need for congruence between the concepts, Balmer and Greyser (2006) addressed corporate identity as the "identity wheel of change," where change is a constant feature of an institution's life; implying that new trends in the areas of its operations, industry pressures, or management can trigger the need for a corporate identity change (Melewar and Akel, 2005).

It is evidently clear then, that there is a lack of unanimity in the manner in which the three concepts are conceptualised, understood and treated. This researcher agrees with the assertion by Abratt and Kleyn (2012) that the constructs are not interchangeable although there are overlaps in the manner in which they are measured and managed. This study views corporate identity as concerning itself with internal institutional efforts to portray itself in a manner it wishes to be envisaged; corporate image involves stakeholders' perceptions of and impressions about an organisation (Abratt and Kleyn 2012), which ultimately go to determine the overall reputation of the organisation that is predominantly predicated on the accumulation of historical experiences over time. Whatever the level of disagreement, however, a good understanding of the concept is paramount in understanding, building and maintaining university brand equity. From the foregoing, it is hypothesised that:

H1: *There is a positive relationship between university image and the reputation of university institutions in Ghana.*

H2: *University identity impacts positively on the reputation of university institutions in Ghana.*

4.3.3 Relationship between University Identity and University Preference

Corporate identity contributes to organisations' fortunes by differentiating them from competitors (Balmer and Greyser, 2006). It creates strong relationships with stakeholders (Lorange, 2005) and delivers value, which in turn enables companies to achieve their strategic objectives (Melewar, 2008). Although extant literature abundantly establishes the relevance of organisational identity in determining the equity of university institutions

(Abratt, 1989; Riel, 2005; Cornelissen, 2011; Steiner et al., 2013; Goia et al., 2014; Schmeltz, 2014; Xie et al., 2015), literature relating to brand identity in educational settings is limited (Alessandri et al., 2007). According to Coleman et al. (2011), little of what exists has been subjected to rigorous empirical investigation.

Steiner et al. (2013) argue that it has become important for universities to build distinct identities that attract students and also faculty to meet universities' urgent need for top competence. In the light of this, a growing number of universities have started to develop and implement corporate identity management programmes as part of their strategic growth and expansion programmes (Melewar and Akeel, 2005; McAlexander et al., 2006). Bosch et al. (2006) and Melewar and Akeel (2005) stress the importance of such organisational elements as visual and verbal identity, behaviour, culture, brand name, positioning statement and brand symbols in building brand identity for educational institutions; while Steiner et al. (2013) stress on regulations, rules and procedures as affecting university identity strategy.

In the light of the growing relevance of university identity, Lawlor (1998) also suggests that institutions should shift their focus from cost reduction and concentrate more of their attention on identity building that creates the desired image among their target audiences. In the opinions of Bunzel (2007) and Jevons (2006), much of higher education branding efforts have been focused on such identity elements as logos, mottos, mascots, names, and communication materials that are intended to promote those elements (Argenti, 2000). While the indiscriminate ad-hoc use of these elements can be effective in promoting the university externally (Jevons, 2006), the prevailing over-reliance on them suggests some lack of appreciation of the all-encompassing nature of the university brand (Ng and Forbes, 2009 in Pinar et al., 2014). Such efforts are only considered to be external-focused and fail to appreciate the holistic nature of the brand that requires a deliberate and coordinated approach to build.

Therefore a well-managed, strategic corporate identity can help institutions to develop a competitive edge (Olins, 1995), as an appealing identity attracts higher patronage (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Paramewaran and Glowacka, 1995; Coleman et al., 2011; Steiner et al., 2013; Goia, 2014; Xie et al., 2015). As observed by Behrman et al. (1998), a number of institutions have increased their investments in their efforts to positively distinguish themselves from their competitors by strengthening the elements of their images of which corporate identity is

part. In the opinions of Milo et al. (1989) and Weissman (1990), these concepts are extensively used as positioning instruments in educational services management in order to influence students' choice of a higher education institution. Therefore the identity of a higher education institution is critical in shaping consumers' (students') attitudes (Ivy, 2001; Pinar et al., 2011) to the extent that students' willingness to apply to an institution is impacted upon by the level of congruence between their self-identity (Tajfel, 1978; van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2010; da Silveira et al., 2013; Garnett, 2014) and the identity of the institution. The next theoretical proposition therefore relates to the relationship between university identity and university preference among students in Ghana. It is thus hypothesised that:

H3: *University institution identity has a positive effect on students' university preference.*

4.3.4 Relationship between University Image and University Preference

The image of higher educational institutions influences the attitudes of their stakeholders as it serves as a critical component in the latter's evaluation and, ultimately, perception of the institutions' overall service quality (Finch et al., 2013; Torres et al., 2015). According to Du preez (2015), consumers respond favourably to brands that have distinct and strong brand images (Anselmsson et al., 2014; Jumiaty and Norazah, 2015; Chinomona., 2016), and students are no exception (Goia et al., 2014). For that reason, higher education institutions are admonished to adapt successfully proven image theories from other service and product sectors to attract students (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Schofield et al., 2013); while Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001) argue that the combined effect of an institution's image and its reputation increases students' loyalty.

In their observation, Behrman et al. (1998) noted that institutions have increased their investments in programmes that enhance their prestige for quality, based on the realisation that universities with distinct and appealing images are likely to be more competitive. Just like organisations in the tangible products industry, universities consciously institute measures that differentiate them by developing management practices that highlight their uniqueness, portray their consistency and present them as credible, reliable, responsive, and trustworthy in the eyes of their numerous stakeholders (Paramewaran and Glowacka, 1995).

In their study of antecedents and consequences of Open University brand image, Hosseini and Nahad (2012) indicate that universities have realised the role of distinguished imagery in students' university selection. Due to competitive pressures in the industry all over the world, portraying unique and desirable attributes that indicate a strong university image has been instrumental in the attraction and retention of current and prospective students (Palacio et al., 2002; Mourad et al., 2011; Brown and Carasso, 2013).

Sevier (2002) singled out image as the most important factor in students' decisions to attend a university. Similarly, Goia et al. (2014) maintain that in a competitive global market place, university image determines the marketability of programmes, and affects student attraction, retention and funding opportunities. Ivy (2001, 2008) underscores the relevance of image in students' choice of university institutions in South Africa by indicating that inconsistent portrayal of university imagery could be responsible for some of the significant falls in student enrolments.

To ensure the creation and maintenance of a healthy university image that would ensure student preference, patronage and loyalty, Theus (1993) has also conscientised management about the multiplicity of university stakeholder interests and the need to appreciate and balance same. The foregoing suggests that image considerations are pivotal in influencing students' perception of university quality, which ultimately affects brand preference (Johan et., 2014). As Paden and Stell (2006) acknowledge, the image of an educational institution influences the higher education brand and thus impacts on institutions' selection processes (Dawn, 2014). The next hypothesis of this study is thus stated below:

***H4:** University institution image has a positive effect on students' university preference.*

4.3.5 Relationship between University Reputation and University Preference

Organisational reputation has received considerable attention in extant literature due to its demonstrable link to positive customer attitudes to organisations and their products (Bartikowski and Walsh, 2011; Suomi et al., 2014), satisfaction (Davies et al., 2002) and in the long haul, superior customer loyalty (Caruana and Ewing, 2010). According to Tolbert (2014), educational institutions are engaged in active communication to the end of evoking specific reputations in the minds of their numerous stakeholder constituents, enhancing their

intellectual capital and attracting good employees (Brown and Whysall, 2010).

Reputation management is a far reaching endeavour that impacts the evaluations and attitudes of important stakeholders including students and research financiers, as well as government authorities (Rindova et al., 2010). Blanca et al. (2013) argue that service providers have used reputation to evaluate themselves while Williams and Omar (2014) maintain that the success of higher education institutions is largely attributable to their pursuit of good reputation. Arambewela and Hall (2009) indicate that university reputation management is a long and arduous endeavour that requires commitment to quality teaching and research (Kati et al., 2014). Earlier, Arpan et al. (2003) identified a preponderance of elements such as size of the institution, location, appearance, scope of programmes, faculty excellence, extent of endowments, student diversity, campus morale, service to the community, and institutional visibility, among others that need to be addressed in an effective reputation management endeavour.

In the higher education industry, as in other experience and credence laden service sectors whose quality can only be determined during and after consumption, institutional reputation can be used as an effective means of predicting the future outcomes of the service production process, as well as being one of the most reliable cues to signal the institution's ability to fulfil students' needs (Krishnan and Hartline, 2001). Mazzarol (1998) argue that perceived quality of institutional reputation is among the factors that influence students' choice of foreign institutions. In a similar study, Mazzarol and Soutar (2012) identified strong education institution reputation as key in competing in the global education industry, while Berger and Wallingford (1996) mentioned "reputation" and "academics" as the two most important considerations in choosing a university. Wilbur (1988) also isolated academic reputation as having the most enduring impact on students' perception of a university.

Similarly, Gray et al. (2003) identified university's learning environment, reputation, graduate career prospects, destination, and cultural integration as the main brand positioning dimensions for higher education institutions. Stakeholders are likely to talk about positive and memorable experiences they have when interacting with university institutions, which word-of-mouth can engender credibility and trust thereby positively affecting the image of the institution (Delgado-Marquez et al., 2012). Blanton (2007) observes that there is a high likelihood for customers to patronise institutions with high levels of recognition. In his

findings, image and reputation of some universities have been argued to be even more important than actual teaching quality (Kotler and Fox, 1995).

Stolz et al. (2010) maintain that, as higher education become progressively internationalised , institutional performance and reputation have been instrumental in global university rankings because of their ability to simplify the complexity in which the world of higher education is shrouded. Such rankings, in the opinion of Tofallis (2012), have a powerful influence over all stakeholders in the knowledge service industry. Thus, such reputation-based positions in the world rankings provide evidence of institutions' academic quality; and as indicated by Blanca et al. (2013), degrees obtained from highly ranked (reputable) institutions are more valuable in the market, as they aid students in acquiring jobs after graduation (Morrish and Lee, 2011).

Therefore, a good number of studies have found that high reputation is beneficial to institutions due to the stock of social capital and goodwill it generates (Zavyalova et al., 2016); and in the context of the knowledge service industry, university reputation provides students with satisfaction, with students' assessment of the reputation of courses or universities likely to affect their decision to drop out (Palacio et al., 2002). Perhaps this is the reason why top ranked universities experience very low withdrawal rates (Williams and Omar (2014). During their early days in universities where students have insufficient experience based on which they can make any objective assessments, Blanca et al. (2013) argue that university reputation becomes a critical determinant in forming students' attitudes towards institutions and their programmes.

According to Delgado-Marquez et al. (2012), university reputation kicks in a virtuous cycle in which positive evaluations among students lead to trust, which further leads to positive evaluations of their experiences. These positive evaluations lead to quality perceptions of institutions and their programmes, and further, generate positive word of mouth, all of which ultimately culminate in improved university reputation. They add a twist to the issue by arguing that, due to their appeal to students and the attraction thereof, highly ranked reputable universities have the potential to internationalise and also attract top tier teachers. Zavyalova et al. (2016) also posit that universities with high reputation are likely to receive more donations from their alumni donors.

In determining the impact of brand equity on student choice of universities, Brewer and Zhao (2010) identified cost, course range, degree offering and academic reputation as pivotal considerations (Muffo and Whipple, 1982; Delaney, 1998). They concluded that universities with good reputation also have those levels of reputations positively impacting their affiliate institutions. Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001) emphasised positive effects of institutional image and institutional reputation on customer loyalty; and hence students' intention to undertake further studies with same university institutions. Therefore, students' impressions of the reputation of a university is important in attracting and retaining them (Standifird, 2005; Stensaker, 2015). The foregoing presupposes that the reputation of a university institution potentially has an impact on students' university preference (Chapleo, 2010; Mourad et al., 2011; Pinar et al., 2014); thus, leading to the next hypothesis as stated below:

***H5:** There is a positive relationship between university institutional reputation and students' university preference.*

4.3.6 Relationship between Perceived Institutional Service Quality and University Preference

Owing to the relevance of quality perception in consumer preference (Moshe, 2013; Wang, 2013; Allameh et al., 2015; Dedeoğlu and Demirer 2015) and retention (Sayyed et al., 2015), the relationship between perceived quality and brand evaluation has been well researched (Kenyon and Sen, 2012; Jorge, 2015). It is amply established that brand preference increases as perceived quality increases (Chiu et al., 2010; Chomvilailuk and Butcher, 2010; Kondasani and Panda, 2015), indicating that overall consumer perception of product value is strongly associated with brand preference.

Extant literature identifies a number of factors that directly influence students' perception of the university brand (Kurz et al., 2008). These factors include quality of staff, location, size, history and international agreements (Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003; Chen, 2008; El Mahdy and Mourad, 2008; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2008; Mourad et al., 2011). Others include facilities, curriculum content and design, contact personnel, social activities, assessment, learning style and medium of instruction (Denise, et al., 2015). According to Grönroos (1984), the performance of contact personnel and the nature of the customer/personnel interactions that take place during the service encounter influence the outcome of service evaluations. The behaviours and attitudes of staff are therefore indicative of the level and

quality of services offered by the service firm, which exert influence on customer satisfaction (Crosby et al., 1990). Bitner (1990) confirms that the human interaction component has an important effect on customers' evaluative process with regard to service offerings (Vera, 2015).

In their research on the impact of teaching quality on learning in higher education, Honore (2003) believes that, besides course design and interaction between lecturers and students, students' personal needs and professional proficiency of instructors also significantly affect learning in higher education institutions and hence affect students' preference for universities. In the opinion of Guolla (1999), teaching quality is positively correlated with students' course satisfaction as well as instructor satisfaction. Therefore, perceived quality of a university institution is vital in students' decision to enrol.

Various studies into general higher education service delivery and students' satisfaction have identified a variety of instrumental intrinsic and extrinsic attributes (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2006; Olsen et al., 2011) including location and facilities for learning, and appropriate level of respect for students among instructors. Students' participation, teaching skill, lecturers' attitude toward teaching, technology, course management, support services and after-school communication have also been cited (Binner et al., 1994; Urdan and Weggen, 2000). As part of scholarly works on ensuring quality interaction between faculty and students to enhance the latter's evaluation, perception and preference for university institutions, Rueda (2002) posits that qualified faculty need to perform certain key functions including upgrading students' capabilities effectively, enhancing students' knowledge and skills, improving students' behaviours and attitudes, and engendering a sense of belongingness among students by encouraging them to make contributions towards overall institutional goals. For the purposes of this study, perceived quality implies students' judgment about the superiority of a university institution that is based on their subjective evaluation of its quality, relative to its competitors.

According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2008), if there could be any compromises in university choice, perhaps one of the last elements to be considered would be the quality of staff, particularly faculty, as they are in charge of the actual delivery of the core service of knowledge delivery. In ascertaining the impact of affiliate universities' reputation on brand image of parent universities, Brewer and Zhao (2010) singled out teaching quality as the most

important factor that enhances the reputation and the brand of a university. In their school evaluation, perception and selection process, prospective students' considerations are found to include academic reputation, service, employment prospect and teaching quality (Council of Ontario Universities, 2003).

In his conceptualisation of the concept of perceived quality in the service sector, Gronroos (1984) identified two service quality dimensions in his perceived service quality model - technical quality dimension (what service is provided) and functional quality dimension (how the service is provided) (Lee and Chen, 2012; Jepsen et al., 2015). In university education provision, which is dominated by experience and credence qualities, students tangibilise the service encounter by evaluating quality attributes associated with the process of its delivery. Perceived service quality of higher education institutions undoubtedly has an impact on their reputation and ultimately, the equity of their brands (Gronroos, 1984; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1992; Mourad et al., 2011; Cristina et al., 2013; Bekir and Halil, 2015). Blanca et al. (2013) for example, conclude that higher education institutions with high perception of quality teaching and research have good reputation among students. Kotler and Fox (1995) maintain that the actual quality of an institution is often of less importance than its prestige, or reputation for quality, because it is the university's perceived excellence that informs school selection decisions of prospective students. The foregoing thus leads to the following hypothesis of the study:

H6: *Perceived institutional service quality is positively correlated with students' preference for university institutions in Ghana.*

4.3.7 Relationship between Graduate Employability and University Preference

Graduate employability is an issue of importance for the higher education industry (Leonard Holmes, 2013; Denise, 2014; Jackson, 2014; Samo and Ivan, 2014). According to Yorke (2006) in Holmes (2013), graduate employability involves a set of achievements (skills and personal attributes) that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy at large. Thus, the concept of graduate employability involves a set of diverse skills and personal attributes that are believed to enhance an individual's potential to secure and succeed in a good job (Knight and Yorke, 2004). It involves the ability to apply graduates' knowledge, skills and understanding to employers' context, which effectively

involves the possession of relevant abilities, as well as the understanding to interpret and adapt oneself to employers' contexts (Garnett, 2014). From Yorke's (2006) definition, employability can be said to be context specific and can be viewed from a number of perspectives ranging from the nature of employment, the needs of a specific employer, the lives of the individuals involved, the skills, understanding and attributes that students will need to develop in order to improve their employability, as well as the outcomes of employments (Blanca et al., 2013; Pavlin and Svetlik, 2014).

Holmes (2013) examines three competing perspectives on employability, termed as possessive, positioning and processual approaches. The possessive perspective, which dominates extant employability literature emphasises skills and attributes (Yorke, 2006; Blanca et al., 2013; Jackson, 2014). As Lauder et al. (2006) maintain, students are moving from a state of inquisitive learning to acquisitive learning, which equips them with attractive credentials as they demand their rights as customers in a labour market. Jackson (2014) identifies technical expertise, generic skill mastery and graduate identity as instrumental in graduate employability considerations. According to Pool and Sewell (2007) in Jackson (2014), graduate employability requires the development of a wealth of attributes, skills and knowledge to enable graduates to acquire jobs and perform on their jobs; suggesting that higher education programmes be expanded to include business-related skills. This suggestion was made in a study in which the idea of the inclusion of such contemporary job oriented courses as financial management, business communication skills, information and communications technology (ICT) and knowledge-based businesses was supported by graduates of all faculties and age groups.

The positioning perspective focuses on outcomes of employability, which relates to Yorke's (2006) 'success in employment', with the potential to benefit students themselves, as well as a number of stakeholders (Yorke, 2004, 2006, in Holmes, 2013). Favourable employment outcomes are vital for higher education providers to attract potential students who significantly fund their operations (Bourner and Millican, 2011; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Lastly, the processual perspective relates to enhancing the process of job acquisition and graduate identity and considers interview skills that enable good job acquisition as important. Blanca et al. (2013) believe that, by placing lots of emphasis on skills acquisition that enable employability, not much attention has been paid to the process of gaining employment like interview skills, which they consider as fundamental in

increasing the probability of students successfully acquiring jobs in the first place. According to Brown and Hesketh (2004), possessing a degree remains a threshold requirement in the UK (like most parts of the world) with employers increasingly expecting applicants to possess a variety of likeable personal attributes and generic soft and hard skills.

In their work on the effect of numeracy skills on graduate employability, Tariq and Durrani (2012) reveal that employers attach a high level of importance to graduates' numeracy skills thereby pointing to the potential of poor numeracy skills to limit graduate employability potential, irrespective of the subject area concerned. Hoyles et al. (2002) also indicate growing demand among employers for mathematically literate graduates, alongside other soft qualifying criteria like honesty and integrity, basic literacy skills, oral communication skills, reliability, and good work ethics (IoD-Institute of Directors, 2007; Jackson, 2014). In the context of this study, graduate employability implies students' ability to acquire jobs with relative ease, which can be linked to their graduating from particular university institutions.

In response to the growing relevance of graduate employability, higher education institutions all over the world are redesigning their academic programmes and extra-curricular activities to enhance undergraduates' employability skills (Knight and Yorke, 2004). In the opinion of Tomlinson (2008), undergraduates are not oblivious to this reality and expect their institutions to run programmes that ensure the development of employable skills; although some researchers argue that multifarious employable skills initiatives implemented by higher education institutions do not necessarily guarantee skills transferability onto the job market (Washer, 2007).

In their study on recent graduates' absorption into the Australian labour market, Li and Miller (2013) indicate that employment outcomes are greatly affected by positive perception of institutional reputation, although they maintain that this is a poor indicator of educational quality as employers are unlikely to have an objective account of the educational quality of institutions they employ from (Smith and Ennew, 2000; Brown and Hesketh, 2004). Blanca et al. (2013) conclude that higher education institutions with high perception of quality teaching and research have good reputation among students, as qualifications from highly ranked universities are considered to be more valuable on the job market (Morrish and Lee, 2011; Shah et al., 2015). Blanca et al. (2013) also argue that degrees obtained from highly ranked (highly perceived) institutions are more valuable in the job market, thereby aiding students in

acquiring jobs after graduation. Accordingly, Tolbert (2014) observes that educational institutions engage in active communication to the end of evoking specific reputations in the minds of their numerous stakeholder constituents, enhancing their intellectual capital and attracting good employees (Brown and Whysall, 2010). Therefore, aside hard numeracy skills acquisition, employability considerations of university institutions include the development of soft likeable personal attributes, convincing graduate identity through interview skills, as well as working on their own quality perception and reputation among students and employers. The foregoing amply indicates that graduate employability has the potential to add to students' overall perception of university institutions and hence affect their preference for institutions. From the review of the literature, the following hypotheses are formulated:

***H7:** Graduate employability positively affects students' university preference in Ghana.*

***H8:** Perceived institutional service quality is positively correlated with graduate employability.*

The next section presents the conceptual framework for the thesis which contains the constructs under study and the proposed relationships thereof.

4.4 Conceptual Framework for the Study

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the SBBE constructs discussed above were drawn from existing studies by Mourad et al. (2011) and Pinar et al. (2014) in which a wide array of university brand equity antecedents were identified as presented in figure 4.1. In their study, Mourad et al. (2011) grouped brand equity attributes within the university setting into three broad categories of consumer attributes, awareness attributes and image attributes as presented in part 'A' of figure 4.1. This categorisation, which was applied to the Egyptian higher education industry, followed an earlier work by Vorhies (1997), which categorised determinants of university brand equity under consumer attributes, provider attributes, marketing activities, product attributes and symbolic attributes. Mourad et al. (2011) explained the consumer attributes category as relating to students' previous experience with the university service and its provider, as well as such socio-economic factors as academic qualification, gender, age and income levels. They explained the awareness dimension as comprising promotional activities and word-of-mouth.

The image attributes category was sub-categorised into service, symbolic and provider attributes, with service attributes comprising price (tuition fees) (Keller, 1993; Chen, 2008), perceived quality of service provision (Scott, 2000; Smith and Ennew, 2000; Kurz et al., 2008) and after sales service (Kent et al., 1993; Vorhies, 1997). Provider attributes represent organizational elements such as location (Kurz et al., 2008), country of origin (Scott, 2000; Smith and Ennew, 2000) stakeholder relationships (Vorhies, 1997; Chen, 2008) and university staff. Lastly, symbolic attributes encompass market position, social image and brand personality and identity, which they termed as ‘overall image and reputation of the university institution’ (Scott, 2000; Smith and Ennew, 2000; Temple, 2006; Chen, 2008).

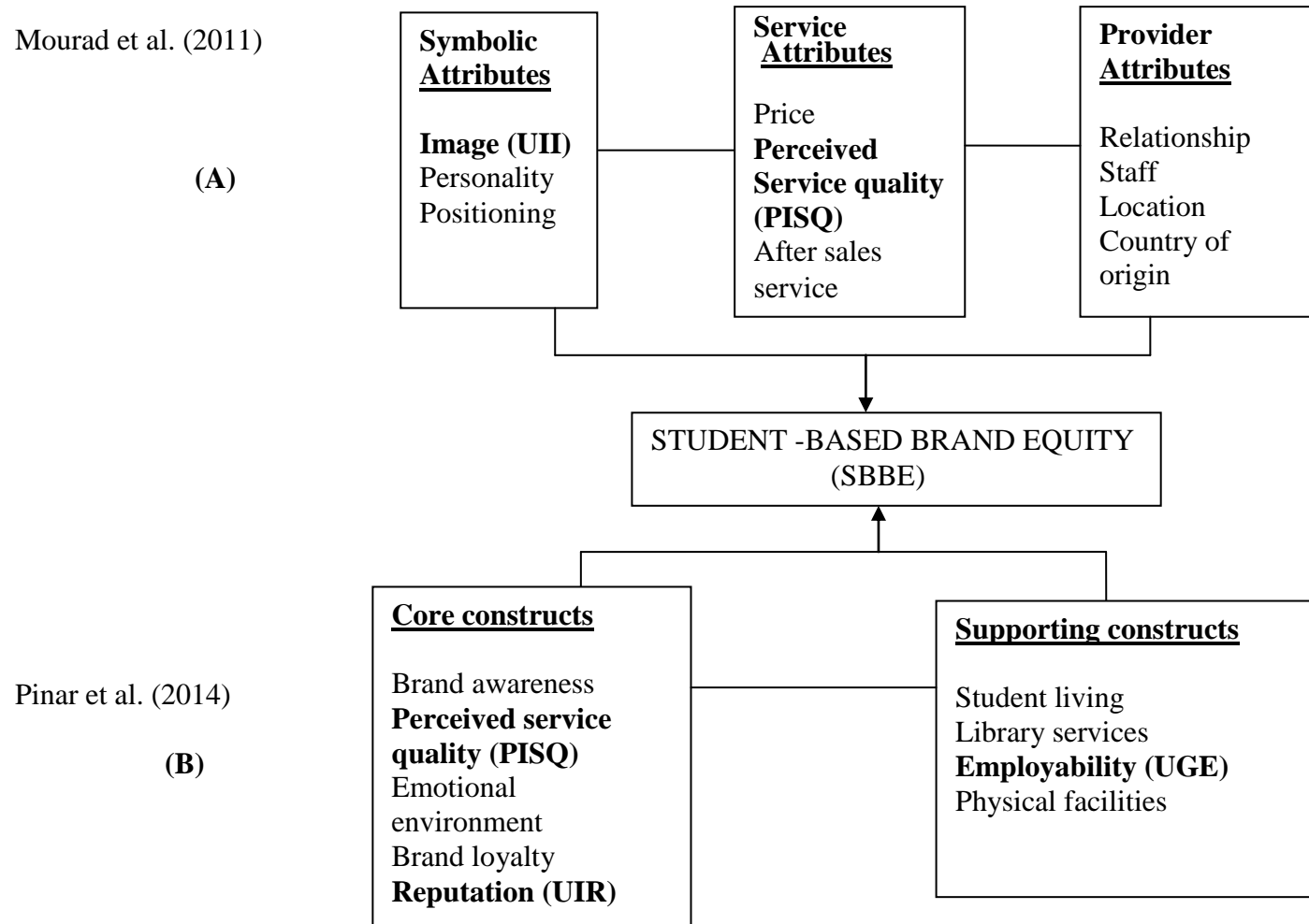
In that study, while the awareness and consumer dimensions had no significant relationships with SBBE, significant positive relationships were found between SBBE and a number of image dimensions as follows: image and personality under symbolic attributes; price and perceived quality under service attributes; and relationships, staff, country of origin and international relations/reputation under provider attributes. The university institution image and perceived institutional service quality constructs in this study were adopted from that study to ascertain their relationships with university preference of undergraduate students in Ghana.

In appreciation of the multi-faceted nature of the university brand, Pinar et al. (2014) adopted a holistic approach in their SBBE antecedent identification by combining core and supporting dimensions of the university experience as presented in part ‘B’ of figure 4.1. The core dimensions (Ng and Forbes (2009) in Pinar et al., 2014) encompassed elements that enhance students’ university experience and hence create value for the brand including, learning environments, brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand emotions, brand trust, and reputation. The supporting dimension on the other hand, include dormitory facilities, dining services, career services, library services and other such ancillary student services that complement the holistic complexity of the university experience that create the brand. The study obtained positive relationships between some of both core and supporting dimensions on one hand, and SBBE on the other as follows: among the core dimensions are brand awareness, perceived service quality, emotional environment, brand loyalty and university reputation. For the supporting dimensions, factors identified that obtained positive relationships with SBBE were student living, library services, career

development and physical facilities.

For the purpose of this study, three dimensions of university brand equity namely; university reputation, university graduate employability and perceived institutional service quality were adopted from that study. University identity, a fifth dimension has also been identified for investigation due to its ubiquity in the university branding literature (Melewar and Akel, 2005; Balmer and Greyser, 2006; Alessandri et al., 2007; Balmer and Liao, 2007; Lowrie, 2007; Cornelissen, 2011; Keller, 2013; Steiner et al., 2013; Suomi et al., 2014; Garnett, 2014; Goia et al., 2014; Schmeltz, 2014; Xie et al., 2015). The extensive feature of these adapted constructs in the higher education branding literature provides confidence in their selection for empirical investigation in this study (Mackay, 2001).

Figure 4.1: Antecedent (SBBE) Dimensions by Mourad et al. (2011) and Pinar et al. (2014)



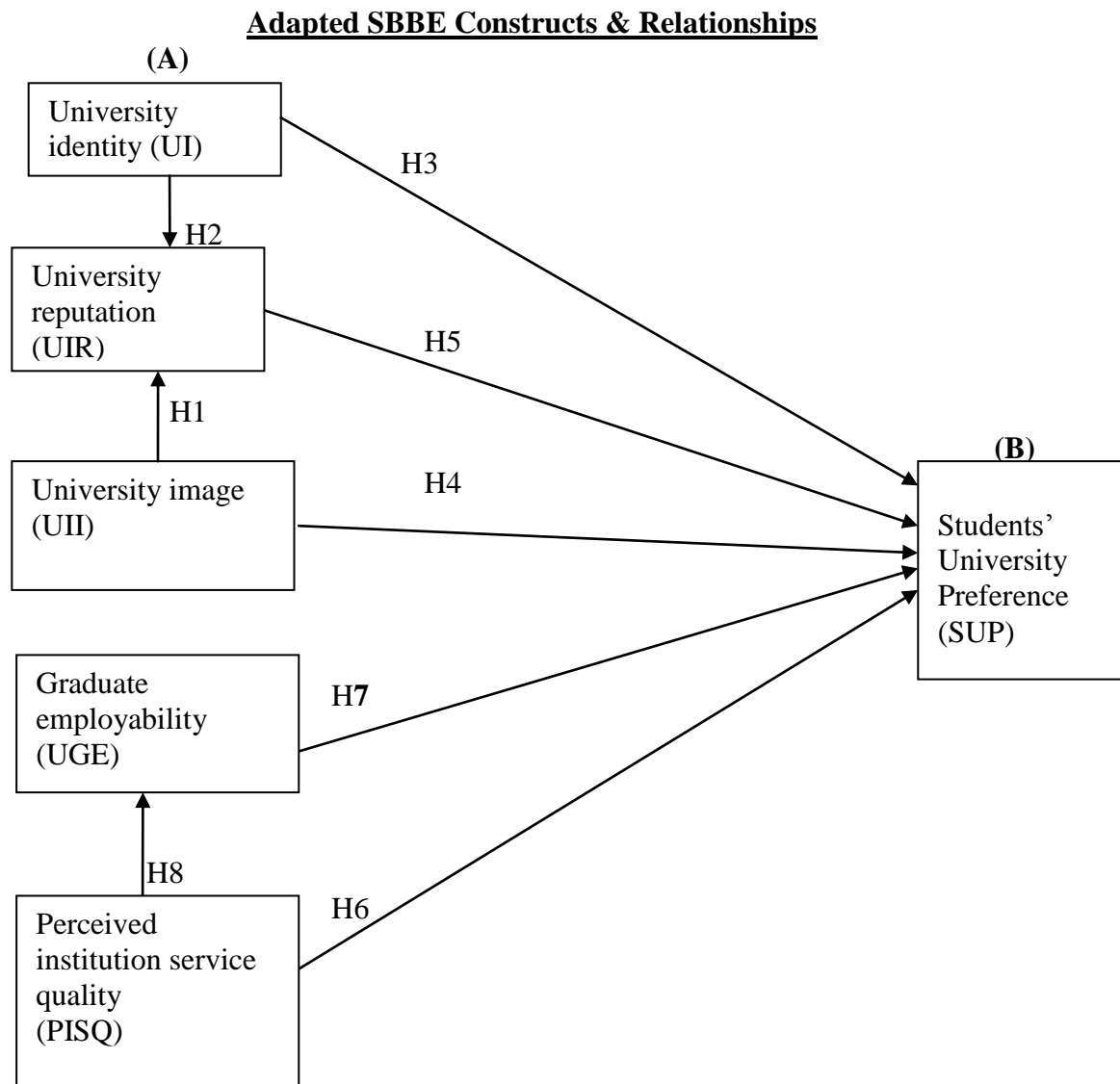
Source: Mourad et al. (2011); Pinar et al. (2014)

The conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure 4.2, and contains the above-discussed antecedents of SBBE drawn from the studies by Mourad et al. (2011) and Pinar et al. (2014). The framework is in two parts. The first part, labelled ‘A’ presents the independent SBBE constructs adopted for this study, namely; perceived institutional service quality (PISQ), university graduate employability (UGE), university institution reputation (UIR), university institution image (UII) and university institution identity. The second part of the model labelled ‘B’ presents the dependent variable namely; students’ university preference (SUP) whose relationships with the above-mentioned independent variables this study sought to test within the context of Ghana’s university industry.

In the conceptual framework, the following hypothetical relationships are proposed to assess whether the five SBBE constructs affect university preference of Ghana’s undergraduate students’ population :

- H1 represents the first hypothetical statement that university image has a positive effect of university reputation;
- H2 proposes that university identity leads to university reputation;
- H3 proposes a positive relationship between university identity and university preference;
- H4 proposes a positive relationship between university image and university preference;
- H5 proposes a positive relationship between university reputation and university preference;
- H6 proposes a positive relationship between perceived university service quality and university preference;
- H7 proposes a positive relationship between university graduate employability and university preference; while
- H8 proposes that perceived university service quality and graduate employability are positively correlated.

Figure 4.2: Researcher's Conceptual Framework of Relationship between SBBE Constructs and University Preference



Source: Mourad et al. (2011); Pinar et al. (2014)

From a student perspective, this study aims at determining whether university image, university identity, university reputation, university graduate employability and perceived institutional service quality, having been established as SBBE antecedents in extant literature (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Vorhies, 1997; Mourad et al., 2011; Pinar et al., 2011, 2014), would have any effect on students' preference for university institutions in the emerging, sub-Saharan African country of Ghana.

Extant literature is replete with studies that examine antecedents of university brands and brand equity (Mourad et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014); none however exist that links identified antecedents to university preference among students. This study therefore takes the debate a step further in filling this void in the university branding literature by assessing the relationships between the five university brand equity constructs and university preference as captured in the researcher's conceptual model in Figure 4.2. Taking a cue from Pinar et al. (2014), this study is also a departure from the exclusively external-focused communicative approach (Ng and Forbes (2009) in Pinar et al., 2014). It adopts dimensions that relate to both internal and external environments that also appreciate the inherent divergence in the multifaceted attributes that synthesise into strong university brands.

4.5 Summary

Branding has become a strategic tool by which universities develop their unique and meaningfully differentiated and appealing identities to communicate to and attract students (Jevons, 2006; Williams and Omar, 2014). Increasingly therefore, there has been growing emphasis on brand management as an avenue for cutting through the competitive clutter (Mourad et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014).

Therefore, in conceptualising consumer based brand equity in the university setting, such elements of the university environment as infrastructure, supportive university environment, faculty and tuition quality, advisory and counselling, fees, alumni relations, ranking, reputation, identity and image among others, have been relevant (Eagle and Brennan, 2007; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2008; Adu, 2009; Cubillo-Pinilla et al., 2009; Effah et al., 2009; Ho and Wang, 2011; Mourad et al., 2011; Pinar et al., 2014). Following on the heels of the studies by Mourad et al. (2011) and Pinar et al. (2014) on antecedents of brand equity in higher education, this study ascertains the relationships between five empirically identified dimensions of SBBE and students' preference for university institutions in Ghana as presented in Figure 4.2.

The chapter has sought to conceptualise student-based brand equity and student university preference in the context of this study. It has presented in detail the two main studies from which the constructs under study were adapted. The chapter has also reviewed literature on the five main SBBE constructs, emphasising their various definitions and conceptualisations,

that lead to the formulation of hypotheses that must be tested through the appropriate strategies, methods and processes as presented in the next chapter.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A. (1995). *Building Strong Brands*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A. (1996). Measuring brand equity: across products and markets. *California Management Review*, 38(3), 102-20.
- Abratt, R. (1989). A new approach to the corporate image management process. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 5(1), 53-76.
- Abratt, R., & Kleyn, N. (2012). Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate reputations: Reconciliation and integration. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46(7/8), 1048–1063.
- Adu, K. H. (2009). *Private higher education on the rise*. Available at www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story. Date accessed 02/03/12.
- Alamro, A. & Rowley, J. (2011). Brand strategies of Jordanian telecommunications service providers. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18(4), 329-48.
- Albert, S., & Whetten, D. A. (1985). Organizational Identity. In L. L. Cummings & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behaviour*, 7, 263–295. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Alessandri, S. W., Yang, S.-U. & Kinsey, D. F. (2007). An integrative approach to university visual identity and reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 9(4), 258-70.
- Allameh, S. M., Pool, J. K., Jaber, A., Salehzadeh, R. & Asadi, H. (2015). Factors influencing sport tourists' revisit intentions: The role and effect of destination image, perceived quality, perceived value and satisfaction. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 27(2), 191 – 207.

- Anselmsson, J., Bondesson, N. V. & Johansson, U. (2014). Brand image and customers' willingness to pay a price premium for food brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 23(2), 90 – 102.
- Arambewela, R., & Hall, J. (2009). An empirical model of international student satisfaction. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 21(4), 555–569.
- Argenti, P. (2000). Branding B-schools: reputation management for MBA programs. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 3(2), 171-178.
- Arpan, L., Raney, A., & Zivnuska, S. (2003). A cognitive approach to understanding university image. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 8(2), 97–113.
- Australian Bureau Statistics. (2010). *Education and training experience 2009*, Cat. 6278.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Balmer, J.M.T., & Greyser, S. (2002). Managing the multiple identities of the corporation. *California Management Review*, 44(3), 72-86.
- Balmer, J. M. T. & Greyser, S. A. (2006). Corporate marketing: integrating corporate identity, corporate branding, corporate communications, corporate image and corporate reputation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(7/8), 730-41.
- Balmer, J. M. T. & Liao, M. (2007). Student corporate brand identification: an exploratory case study. *International Journal of Corporate Communications*, 12(4), 356-375.
- Barich, H. & Kotler, P. (1991). A framework for marketing image management. *Sloan Management Review*, 32(2), 94-104.
- Barnett, M. L., Jermier, J. M., & Lafferty, B. A. (2006). Corporate reputation: The definitional landscape. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 9, 26–38.
- Bartikowski, B., & Walsh, G. (2011). Investigating mediators between corporate reputation and customer citizenship behaviours. *Journal of Business Research*, 64(1), 39–44.
- Behrman, J., Kletzer, L., McPherson, M. & Schapiro, M. O. (1998). Microeconomics of

- college choice, careers, and wages. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 559, 12-23.
- Bekir, B. D. & Halil, D. (2015). Differences in service quality perceptions of stakeholders in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(1), 130– 146
- Berg, P.O., & Kreiner, K. (1990). Corporate architecture: Turning physical settings into symbolic resources. In P. Gagliardi (Ed.), *Symbols and artefacts: Views of the corporate landscape*, 41–67. New York: de Gruyter.
- Berger, K. A. & Wallingford, H. P. (1996). Developing advertising and promotion strategies for higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 7(4), 61-72.
- Blanca L, D.M., Yaroslava, B. & Luisa, D.-M. (2013). Being highly internationalised strengthens your reputation: an empirical investigation of top higher education institutions. *High Education* (2013), 66, 619–633.
- Blanton, J. (2007). Engagement as a brand position in the higher education marketplace. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 7(2), 143-54.
- Biel, A. L. (1992). How brand image drives brand equity. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 12, 6-12.
- Binner, P. M., Dean, R. S. & Millinger, A. F. (1994). Factors underlying distance learner satisfaction. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 4, 232-8.
- Binsardi, A. & Ekwulugo, F. (2003). International marketing of British education: research on the students' perception and the UK market penetration. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 21(5), 318-27.
- Bitner, M. J. (1990). Evaluating service encounters: the effects of physical surroundings and employee responses. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(2), 69-82.

- Boivie, S., Graffin, S. D., Richard J. & Gentry, R. J. (2016). Understanding the Direction, Magnitude, and Joint Effects of Reputation When Multiple Actors' Reputations Collide. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(1), 188-206.
- Bosch, J., Venter, E., Han, Y., & Boshoff, C. (2006). The impact of brand identity on the perceived brand image of a merged higher education institution. *Management Dynamics*, 15(2), 10–30.
- Bourner, T., & Millican, J. (2011). Student-community engagement and graduate employability. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 13(2), 68–85.
- Brewer A. & Zhao, J, (2010). The impact of a pathway college on reputation and brand awareness for its affiliated university in Sydney. *International Journal of Education Management*, 24(1), 34-47.
- Bromley, D. B (2000) Psychological aspects of corporate identity, image and reputation. *Corporate reputation review*, 3, 240-252.
- Brown, R. & Carasso, H. (2013). *Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK Higher Education*. Routledge, UK: London.
- Brown, T. J., Dacin, P. A., Pratt, M. G., & Whetten, D. A. (2006). Identity, intended image, construed image, and reputation: An interdisciplinary framework and suggested terminology. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34, 99–106.
- Brown, M., & Whysall, P. (2010). Performance, reputation, and social responsibility in the UK's financial services: A post- 'credit crunch' interpretation. *The Service Industries Journal*, 30(12), 1991–2006.
- Brown, P. & Hesketh, A. (2004). *The Mismanagement of Talent: Employability and Jobs in the Knowledge Economy*. King's Lynn: Oxford University Press.
- Bunzel, D. (2007). Universities sell their brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 16(2), 152-3.

- Byron, S. (1995). Brand equity and market-based assets of professional service firms. *Journal of Professional Services Marketing*, 13(1), 3-7.
- Caruana, A., & Ewing, M. T. (2010). How corporate reputation, quality, and value influence online loyalty. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9/10), 1103–1110.
- Chapleo, C. (2007). Barriers to brand building in UK universities? *International Journal of Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 12(1), 23 –32.
- Chapleo, C. (2010). What defines “successful” university brands? *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 23(2), 169-183.
- Chen, L.-H. (2008). Internationalization or international marketing? Two frameworks for understanding international students’ choice of Canadian universities. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 18(1), 1-33.
- Chinomona, R. (2016). Brand communication, brand image and brand trust as antecedents of brand loyalty in Gauteng Province of South Africa. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 7(1), 124 – 139.
- Chiu, K. K.-S., Lin, R.-J., Maxwell, K. H. & Huang, L.-H. (2010). Power of branding on internet service providers. *The Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 50(3), 112-120.
- Chomvilailuk, R. & Butcher, K. (2010). Enhancing brand preference through corporate social responsibility initiatives in the Thai banking sector. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 22(3), 397-418.
- Christensen, L. T., & Askegaard, S. (2001). Corporate identity and corporate image revisited. A semiotic perspective. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35, 292–315.
- Cobb, C. (2001). *The concept of brand identity in relation to students’ intent-to-persist*. Doctoral thesis. University of Oklahoma, UMI No. 3006667.

- Coleman, D., de Chernatony, L., & Christodoulides, G. (2011). B2B service brand identity: Scale development and validation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40, 1063–1071.
- Cornelissen, J. (2011). *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice*. (3rd ed.). London, UK: Sage.
- Corte, V.D., Piras, A. & Zamparelli, G. (2010). Brand and image: the strategic factors in destination marketing. *International Journal of Leisure and Tourism Marketing*, 1(4), 358-377.
- COU (2003). 2002 *University Applicant Survey*. Council of Ontario Universities, Toronto.
- Cristina, C.-P., Jean-Pierre, L.-M. & Isabel, N.-C. (2013). Perceived quality in higher education: an empirical study. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 31(6), 601 – 619.
- Crosby, L. A., Evans, K. R. & Cowles, D. (1990). Relationship quality in services selling: an interpersonal influence perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, 54, 68-81.
- Cubillo-Pinilla, J. M., Zuniga, T., Losantos, I. S. & Sanchez, J. (2009). Factors influencing international students' evaluations of higher Education Programs. *The Journal of American Academy of Business*, 15(1), 270-8.
- da Silveira, C., Lages, C., & Simoes, C. (2013). Reconceptualizing brand identity in a dynamic environment. *Journal of Business Research*, 66, 28 –36.
- Davies, G., Chun, R., Da Silva, R. V., & Roper, S. (2002). *Corporate reputation and competitiveness*. Routledge, UK: London.
- Dawn, T. (2014). An Exploration of the Use of Branding to Shape Institutional Image in the Marketing Activities of Faith-Based Higher Education Institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, 2014, 13(4), 233–249.
- Dean, D., Arroyo-Gamez, R.E., Punjaisri, K. & Pich, C. (2016). Internal brand co-creation: The experiential brand meaning cycle in higher education. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(8), 3041–3048.

- de Chernatony, L. (2006). *From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation*. Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
- de Chernatony, L., & Cottam, S. (2006). Internal brand factors during successful financial services brands. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(5/6), 611–633.
- de Chernatony, L., Drury, S., & Segal-Horn, S. (2004). Identifying and sustaining services brands' values. *Journal of Marketing Communication*, 10(2), 73– 93.
- Dedeoğlu, B. B. & Demirer, H. (2015). Differences in service quality perceptions of stakeholders in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(1), 130 – 146.
- Delaney, A. M. (1998). *Parental income and students' college choice process. Research findings to guide recruitment strategies*. Paper presented at Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Minneapolis, MN.
- Delgado-Ma´rquez, B, Yaroslava, B. and Luisa D.M. (2012). Higher education in a global context: Drivers of top-universities' reputation. *Problems of education in the 21th century*. Vol 40, 2012.
- Denise, J. (2014). *Factors influencing job attainment in recent Bachelor graduates: evidence from Australia*. High Education, 68, 135–153.
- Denise, M. J., Melinda, M. V. & Stephen, T.T. T. (2015). The association between learning styles and perception of teaching quality. *Education and Training*, 57(5), 575 – 587.
- Du preez, R. (5015). Towards a 21st century university: Teachings from consumer behaviour applicable to higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 29(5), 140– 155.
- Eagle, L. & Brennan, R. (2007). Are students customers? TQM and marketing perspectives. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 15(1), 44-60.

- Edmiston, D. (2008). An examination of integrated marketing communication in US public institutions of higher education. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 8(3),152–175.
- Effah, P., Newman, E. & Pillay, P. (2009). *Tertiary Education Financing in Ghana. Partnership for Higher Education in Africa*. New York.
- El Mahdy, M. & Mourad, M. (2008). *Higher Education in Egypt. Higher Education in Africa: Internationalization Dimensions*. Co-published by the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Centre for International Higher Education (CIHE), Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College.
- Elsbach, K. D. (2006). *Organizational perception management*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ertug, G., Yogev, T., Lee, Y. G., Hedstrom, P. (2016). The Art of Representation: How Audience-specific Reputations Affect Success in the Contemporary Art Field. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(1), 113-134.
- Faircloth, J. B., Capella, L. M., & Alford, B. L. (2001). The effect of brand attitude and brand image on brand equity. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Summer, 61-75.
- Finch, D., McDonald, S. and J. Staple. (2013). Reputational interdependence: An examination of category reputation in higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* 23(1), 34–61.
- Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Reputation. Realizing value from the corporate image*. Harvard Business School. MA: Boston.
- Fombrun, C. J. & Van Riel, C. B. M. (2003). *Fame and Fortune: How Successful Companies Build Winning Reputations*. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Garnett, J. (2014). Musician and teacher: employability and identity. *Music Education Research*, 16(2), 127–143.

- Gatfield, T., Braker, B. and Graham, P. (1999). Measuring communication impact of university advertising materials. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 4 (2), 73-9.
- Gioia, D., Schultz, M., & Corley, K. (2000). Organizational identity, image and adaptive instability. *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 63–81.
- Goia, T. M., Goib, L. C. & Wong, D. (2014). Constructing a brand identity scale for higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2014, 24(1), 59 –74.
- Gokhan, E., Tamar, Y., Yonghoon, G. L. & Peter, H. (2016). The Art of Representation: How Audience-specific Reputations Affect Success in the Contemporary Art Field. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(1), 113-134.
- Gotsi, M. & Wilson, A. (2001). Corporate reputation: seeking a definition. *Corporate Communications*. 6(1), 24-30.
- Gray, B. J., Fan, K. S. & Llanes, V. A. (2003). Branding universities in Asian markets. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 12(2/3), 108-122.
- Gray, J. G. (1986). *Managing the corporate image: The key to public trust*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Griskevicius, V. & Kenrick, D. T. (2013). Fundamental motives: how evolutionary needs influence consumer behaviour. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 23(3), 372-386.
- Gronroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18(4), 36-44.
- Guolla, M. (1999). Assessing the teaching quality to student satisfaction relationship: applied customer satisfaction research in the classroom. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 7(3), 87-97.

- Hankinson, G. (2004). Relational network brands: towards a conceptual model of place brands. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(2), 109-21.
- Harris, F., & de Chernatony, L. (2001). Corporate branding and corporate brand performance. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(3/4), 441 –446.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2003). Bringing the corporation into corporate branding. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(7/8), 1041 – 1064.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2004). Scaling the Tower of Babel: Relational differences between identity, image and culture in organizations. In M. J. Hatch, M. Schultz, & H. Larsen (Eds.), *Organizational identity—a reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heding, T., Knudtzen, C. F., & Bjerre, M. (2009). *Brand management: Research, theory and practice*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hemsley-Brown, J. & Goonawardana, S. (2007). Brand harmonization in the international higher education market. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 942-8.
- Hemsley-Brown, J. & I. Oplatka. (2006). Universities in a competitive global marketplace: A systematic review of the literature on higher education marketing. *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 19(4), 316–338.
- Henkel, M. (2005). Academic identity and autonomy in a changing policy environment. *Higher Education*, 49(1/2), 155–176.
- Highhouse, S., Broadfoot, A., Yugo, J. E., & Devendorf, S. A. (2009). Examining corporate reputation judgments with generalizability theory. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(3), 782–789.
- Ho, H. & Wang, F. (2011). Prestige, Parallel or Predatory –Pricing strategies among Taiwanese universities. *International Journal of Marketing studies*, 3(3), August 2011.

- Holmes, L. (2013). Competing perspectives on graduate employability: Possession, position or process? *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(4), 538–554.
- Honore, S. (2003). Learning to lead with e-learning. *Training Journal*, January, 16-22.
- Hosseini, M. H. & Nahad, F. R. (2012). Investigating antecedents and consequences of open university brand image. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 4(4), 68-77.
- Howard, D. & Kerin, R. (2013). A surname brand effect explanation for consumer brand preference and advocacy. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(5/6), 362–370.
- Hoyles, C., Wolf, A., Molyneux-Hodgson, S. & Kent, P. (2002). *Mathematical skills in the workplace*. Final Report to the Science, Technology and Mathematics Council, Institute of Education, University of London, London. Available at:
<http://www.tfhe.net/report/downloads/report/whole.pdf>. Date accessed: 3rd April 2012.
- Hu, J., Liu, X., Wang, S. & Yang, Z. (2012). The role of brand image congruity in Chinese consumers' brand preference. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(1), 26–34.
- Institute of Directors (IoD) (2007). *Graduates' employability skills*. Institute of Directors Skills Briefing. IoD, London.
- Ivy, J. (2001). Higher education institution image: a correspondence analysis approach. *International Journal of Education Management*, 15(6/7), 276-82.
- Ivy, J. (2008). A new higher education marketing mix: the 7Ps for MBA marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22(4), 288-299.
- Jackson, D. (2014). Factors influencing job attainment in recent Bachelor graduates: evidence from Australia. *High Education*, 68, 135–153.
- Jepsen, D. M., Varhegyi, M. M., & Teo, S. T. T. (2015). The association between learning styles and perception of teaching quality. *Education and Training*, 57(5), 575–587.
- Jevons, C., (2006). Beyond product's brand management. Universities: a prime example of branding going wrong. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 15, 466–467.

- Johan, A., Niklas, V. B. & Ulf, J. (2014). Brand image and customers' willingness to pay a price premium for food brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 23(2), 90–100.
- Johnson, M. D., Gustafsson, A., Andreassen, T. W., Lervik, L., & Cha, J. (2001). The evolution and future of national customer satisfaction index models. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 22, 217–245.
- Jorge, V. (2015). Perceived brand quality as a way to superior customer perceived value crossing by moderating effects. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 147–156.
- Jumiati, S. & Norazah, M. S. (2015). Young consumers' insights on brand equity: Effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 43(3), 276–292.
- Kapferer, J.N (2004). *The new strategic brand management*. London: Kogan Page.
- Kapferer, J.N (2008). *The New Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*, 4th ed. Kogan, London.
- Kati, S., Päivikki, K., Ulla, H., Charles, H.-T. & Jukka, K. (2014). Focusing on dilemmas challenging reputation management in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(4), 461-478.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 1-2.
- Keller, K. L. (2001). Building customer-based brand equity: Creating brand resonance requires carefully sequenced brand-building efforts. *Marketing Management*, 10(2), 14–19.
- Keller, K.L. (2003). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*, (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Kennedy, S. H. (1977). Nurturing institutional image. *European Journal of Marketing*, 11(3), 120-64.
- Kent, W. E., Lian, K., Khan, M. & Anene, J. (1993). Colleges' hospitality programs: perceived quality. *Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 34(6), 90-7.
- Kenyon, G. & Sen, K. (2012). A model for assessing consumer perceptions of quality. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 4(2), 175–188.
- Knight, P. & Yorke, M. (2004), *Learning, Curriculum and Employability in Higher Education*, Routledge Falmer, London.
- Kondasani, R. K. R. & Panda, R. K. (2015). Customer perceived service quality, satisfaction and loyalty in Indian private healthcare. *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 28(5), 452-467
- Kotler, P. & Fox, K. F. A. (1995). *Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions*. (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Krishnan, B. C. & Hartline, M. D. (2001). Brand equity: is it more important in services? *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(5), 328-42.
- Kurz, K., Scannell, J., & Veeder, S. (2008). Willingness to pay: Making the best case for institutional value and return on investment. *University Business*, 11(5), 31–32.
- Lauder, H., Brown, P., Dillabough, J., & Halsey, A. (2006). Introduction: The prospects for education: Individualization, globalization, and social change. In H. Lauder, P. Brown, J.-A. Dillabough, & A.H. Halsey (Eds.), *Education, globalization and social change* (pp. 1–70). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lawlor, J. (1998). Brand identity. *Currents*, 24(9), 16–23.

- Lee, M. R. & Chen, T. T. (2012). Revealing research themes and trends in knowledge management: from 1995 to 2010. *Knowledge-Based Systems*, 28(1), 47-58.
- Lehtinen, U. & Lehtinen, J. R. (1992). *Service quality: a study of quality dimensions*. Working paper, Service Management Institute, Helsinki.
- Li, I., & Miller, P. (2013). The absorption of recent graduates into the Australian labour market: Variations by university attended and field of study. *Australian Economic Review*, 46(1), 14–30.
- Lieven, T., Grohmann, B., Herrmann, A., Landwehr, J.R. & Tilburg, M. (2015). The effect of brand design on brand gender perceptions and brand preference. *European Journal of Marketing*, 49(1/2), 146–169.
- Lievens, F., Van Hove, G. and Anseel, F. (2007). Organizational identity and employer image: towards a unifying framework. *British Journal of Management*, 18(1), 45-59.
- Lorange, P. (2005). Communication and strategic processes. In P. S. Brønn & R. W. Berg(Eds.), *Corporate communication: A strategic approach to building reputation* (2nd ed.), 41-57. Oslo, Norway: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Lowrie, A. (2007). Branding higher education: equivalence and difference in developing identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 990-999.
- Luis, J., Javier, M. and Rubio, O.N. (2011). The relative importance of brand-packaging, price and taste in affecting brand preferences. *British Food Journal*, 113(10), 1229–1251.
- Mackay, M. M. (2001). Evaluation of brand equity measures: Further empirical results. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 10(1), 38–51.
- MacMillan, K., Money, K., Downing, S., & Hillenbrand, C. (2005). Reputation in relationships: Measuring experiences, emotions and behaviors. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 8(2), 214–232.

- Margulies, W. (1977). Make the most of your corporate identity. *Harvard Business Review*, 55(4), 66–77.
- Mathew, J., Eileen, W. M. & Deborah, S. (2012.). University branding: Understanding students' choice of an educational institution. *Journal of Brand Management* 20(1), 1-12.
- Matthew, T. L., Ipin, A. W., Chu, R., Ting-Hsiang, T. (2014). Do perceived CSR initiatives enhance customer preference and loyalty in casinos? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 26(7), 1024-1045.
- Mazzarol, T. (1998). Critical success factors for international education marketing. *International Journal of Education Management*, 12(4), 163-175.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G. (2008). *The Global Market for Higher Education: Sustainable Competitive Strategies for the New Millennium*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G.N. (2012). Revisiting the global market for higher education. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 24(5), 717-737.
- McAlexander, J. H., Koenig, H. F. & Schouten, J. W. (2006). Building relationships of brand community in higher education: a strategic framework for university advancement. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 6(2), 107-18.
- Mei T. G., Chai, L. G. & David W. (2014). Constructing a brand identity scale for higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2014, 24(1), 59–74.
- Melewar, T. C. (Ed.). (2008). *Facets of corporate identity, communication and reputation*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Melewar, T. C. & Akel, S. (2005). The role of corporate identity in the higher education sector: a case study. *Corporate Communications*, 10(1), 41-57.
- Milewicz, J. & Herbig, P. (1994). Evaluating the brand decision using a model of reputation building. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 3(1), 39-47.

- Milo, K., Edson, K. C. & McEuen, V. (1989). The impact of negative publicity on institutional reputation and student college choice. *College and University*, 64(3), 237-45.
- Morphew, C. C. & Hartley, M. (2006). Mission statements: A thematic analysis of rhetoric across institutional type. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77(3), 456–471.
- Morrish, S. C., & Lee, C. (2011). Country of origin as a source of sustainable competitive advantage: The case for international higher education institutions in New Zealand. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19(6), 517–52.
- Moshe, S. (2013). Managing and improving service quality in higher education. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 5(3), 309–320.
- Mourad, M. (2010). Internationalisation: a new positioning strategy in the higher education market. *International Journal of Management in Education*, 4(2), 185-200.
- Mourad, M., Ennew, C. & Kortam, W. (2011). Brand equity in higher education. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(4), 403-420.
- Mourad, M. (2013). Conceptualizing brand equity in the higher education market: an exploratory study. *American Marketing Association / Winter 2013*.
- Muffo, J. A. & Whipple, T. W. (1982). *The use of an expectancy-value model in studying a university's image*. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Denver, CO.
- Nicholls, J., Harris, J., Morgan, E., Clarke, K. & Sims, D. (1995). Marketing higher education: the MBA experience. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 9(2), 31-38.
- Nilson, T. (2000). *Competitive Branding Winning in the Market Place with Added Value Brands*. (3rd ed.), Wiley, Chichester.
- Ng, I. & Forbes, J. (2009). Education as service: the understanding of university experience

- through the service logic. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19(1), 38-64.
- Nguyen, N. and Leblanc, G. (2001). Corporate image and corporate reputation in customers' retention decisions in services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 8(4), 227-36.
- O'Cass, A. & Grace, D. (2003). An exploratory perspective of service brand associations. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 17(55), 452-75.
- Olins, W. (1989). *Corporate identity: Making strategy visible through design*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Olins, W. (1995). *International corporate identity*. London: Laurence King.
- Olsen, N.V., Menichelli, E., Meyer, C. & Naes, T. (2011). Consumers liking of private labels: an evaluation of intrinsic and extrinsic orange juice cues. *Appetite*, 56(3), 770-7.
- Omar, M., Williams, R. L. & Lingelbach, D. (2009). Global brand market-entry to manage corporate reputation. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(3), 177-87.
- Ostrowski, P. L., O'Brien, T. V. & Gordon, G. L. (1993). Service quality and customer loyalty in the commercial airline industry. *Journal of Travel Research*, 32(2), 16-24.
- Paden, N. & Stell, R. (2006). Branding options for distance learning programs: managing the effect on university image. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 3(8), 45-54.
- Palacio, A. B., Meneses, G. D. & Pe´rez, P. J. (2002). The configuration of the university image and its relationship with the satisfaction of students. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 40(5), 486-505.
- Parameswaran, R., & Glowacka, A. E. (1995). University image: An information processing perspective. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 6(2), 41–56.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. & Berry, L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implication for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, 49(4), 41-50.

- Pavlin, S., & Svetlik, V. (2014). Employability of higher education graduates in Europe. *International Journal of Manpower*, 35(4), 418–424.
- Pedro, M. T., Mário, G. A. & João, V. L. (2015). Determining the causal relationships that affect consumer-based brand equity: The mediating effect of brand loyalty. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 33(6), 944–956.
- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt T. E. (2014). University brand equity: an empirical investigation of its dimensions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(6), 616 – 634.
- Price, I., Matzdorf, F. & Agathi, H. (2003). The impact of facilities on student choice of University. *Facilities*, 21(10), 212-222.
- Rassler, J., & Abratt, R. (2009). Assessing the impact of university reputation on stakeholder intentions. *Journal of general management*, 35(1), 35-45.
- Richard, C. (2016). Brand communication, brand image and brand trust as antecedents of brand loyalty in Gauteng Province of South Africa. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 7(1), 124–139.
- Rindova, V., Williamson, I. & Petkova, A. (2010). When is reputation an asset? Reflections on theory and methods in two studies of business schools. *Journal of Management*, 36(3), 610–619.
- Rueda, M. (2002). How to make e-learning work for your company. *Workspan*, 45(12), 50-3.
- Rundle-Thiele, S. & Mackay, M. (2001). Assessing the performance of brand loyalty measures. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(7), 529-46.
- Samo, P., & Ivan, S. (2014). Employability of higher education graduates in Europe. *International Journal of Manpower*, 35(4), 418– 424.

- Sasmita, J. & Suki, N. M. (2015). Young consumers' insights on brand equity: Effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 43(3), 276 – 292.
- Sayyed, M. A., Javad, K. P., Akbar, J., Reza S. & Hassan, A. (2015). Factors influencing sport tourists' revisit intentions: The role and effect of destination image, perceived quality, perceived value and satisfaction. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 27(2), 191–207.
- Schmeltz, L. (2014). Identical or Just Compatible? The Utility of Corporate Identity Values in Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility. *International Journal of Business Communication* 2014, 51(3), 234–258.
- Schofield, C., Cotton, D., Gresty, K., Kneale, P. & Winter, J. (2013). Higher education provision in a crowded marketplace. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 35(2), 193–205.
- Scott, D. (2000). One day and a lifetime of brand lessons. *Brandweek*, 41(34), 30-2.
- Schuler, M. (2004). Management of the organizational image: A method for organizational image configuration. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 7(1), 37–53.
- Schultz, D. E. & Block, M. P. (2014). Sales promotion influence on consumer brand preferences/purchases. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 31(3), 212–217.
- Sevier, R. (2002). *Building a brand that matters*. Hiawatha, IA: Strategy Publishing.
- Shah, M., Grebennikov, L. & Nair, C. S. (2015). A decade of study on employer feedback on the quality of university graduates. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 23(3), 262–278.
- Shahijan, M. K., Rezaei, S. & Amin, M. (2015). International students' course satisfaction and continuance behavioural intention in higher education setting: an empirical assessment in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 17(1), 45-70. Available at:

- http://fac.ksu.edu.sa/sites/default/files/shahijan_rezaei_amin_2015.course_satisfaction.pdf. Date accessed: April, 2016.
- Sharma, A. A., Raob, V. R. & Poplic, S. (2013). Measuring consumer-based brand equity for Indian business schools. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2013, 23(2), 175–203.
- Smith, R. & Ennew, C. (2000). *Service quality and its impact on word of mouth communication in higher education*. Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing Annual Conference, University of Derby, Derby, 5-7 July.
- Srivastava, R. K. (2010). Understanding brand identity confusion. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(4), 340–352.
- Standifird, S. S. (2005). Reputation among peer academic institutions: An investigation of the US News and World Report's rankings. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 8(3), 233–244.
- Steiner L., Agneta, C., Sundstrom, K. and Sammalisto, K. (2013). An analytical model for university identity and reputation strategy work. *Higher Education*, 65, 401–415.
- Stensaker, B. (2015). Organizational identity as a concept for understanding university dynamics. *High Education*, (2015), 69, 103–115.
- Steven, B. Scott, D. G. & Richard, J. G. (2016). Understanding the direction, magnitude, and joint effects of reputation when multiple actors' reputations collide. *Academy Management Journal*. 59(1), 188-206.
- Stolz, I., Hendel, D. D., & Horn, A. S. (2010). Ranking of rankings: Benchmarking twenty-five higher education ranking systems in Europe. *Higher Education*, 60(5), 507–528.
- Suomi, K., Kuoppakangas, P., Ulla Hytti, U., Hampden-Turner, C. & Kangaslahti, J. (2014). Focusing on dilemmas challenging reputation management in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(4), 461–478.

- Tajfel, H. (1978). *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Academic Press, London, 61-76.
- Tariq, V. N. & Durrani, N. (2012). Factors influencing undergraduates' self-evaluation of numerical competence. *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology*, 43(3), 337-56.
- Temple, P. (2006). Branding higher education: Illusion or reality? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 10(1), 15-19.
- Lieven, T., Grohmann, B., Herrmann, A., Landwehr, J.R. & Tilburg, M. (2015). The effect of brand design on brand gender perceptions and brand preference. *European Journal of Marketing*, 49(1/2), 146 – 169.
- Tingchi L., Ipin A. W., Chu R. and Ting-Hsiang T. (2014). Do perceived CSR initiatives enhance customer preference and loyalty in casinos? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* (26)7, 1024-1045.
- Theus, K. T. (1993). Academic reputations: the process of formation and decay. *Public Relations Review*, 19(3), 277-91.
- Tofallis, C. (2012). A different approach to university rankings. *Higher Education*, 63(1), 1–18.
- Tomlinson, M. (2008). The degree is not enough: students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29(1), 49-61.
- Torres, P. M., Augusto, M. G., & Lisboa. J. V. (2015). Determining the causal relationships that affect consumer-based brand equity: The mediating effect of brand loyalty. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 33(6), 944–956.
- Upshaw, L. (1995). *Building brand identity, a strategy for success in a hostile marketplace*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

- Urdan, T. A. & Weggen, C. C. (2000). *Corporate E-learning: Exploring a New Frontier*. Berwyn, PA: WR Hambrecht & Co.
- Van Knippenberg, D., & van Schie, E. C. M. (2010). Foci and correlates of organizational identification. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 73, 137-147.
- VanRiel, C. (2005). Defining corporate communication. In P. S. Brønn & R. W. Berg (Eds.), *Corporate communication: A strategic approach to building reputation* (2nd ed., 21-40). Oslo, Norway.
- VanRiel, C.B.M. & Balmer, J.M.T. (1997). Corporate choice. *Management*, 10(4), 26-38.
- Vera, J. (2015). Perceived brand quality as a way to superior customer perceived value crossing by moderating effects. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 147–156.
- Vorhies, D. W. (1997). Building strong brands. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(3), 260-1.
- Walker, K. (2010). A systematic review of the corporate reputation literature: definition, measurement, and theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 12(4), 357-87.
- Wang, E. S. T. (2013). The influence of visual packaging design on perceived food product quality, value, and brand preference. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 41(10), 805–816.
- Wang, E. S. T. (2015). Effect of food service-brand equity on consumer-perceived food value, physical risk, and brand preference. *British Food Journal*, 117(2), 553-564.
- Wartick, S. L. (1992). The relationship between intense media exposure and change in institutional reputation. *Business and Society*, 31, 33-49.
- Washer, P. (2007). Revisiting key skills: a practical framework for higher education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 13(1), 57-67.

- Weissman, J. (1990). Institutional image assessment and modification in college and universities. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 6(1), 65-75.
- Wilbur, S. (1988). *Assessing a university's image for short-term and long-term enrolment planning*. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Phoenix, AZ.
- Williams, R. L. Jr. (2012). *Branding through renaming for strategic alignment in service organizations*. Doctoral thesis. Napier University, Edinburgh.
- Williams, R., & Omar, M. (2014). How branding process activities impact brand equity within higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 1 –10.
- Williams, R., & Van Dyke, N. (2008). Reputation and reality: Ranking major disciplines in Australian universities. *Higher Education*, 56(1), 1–28.
- Xie, C., Richard P., Bagozzi K. & Meland, V. (2015). The impact of reputation and identity congruence on employer brand attractiveness. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 33(2), 124-146.
- Yang S. U. (2007). An integrated model of organisation-public relations outcomes, organisational reputation and their antecedents. *Journal of Public Relation Research*, 19(2), 91-121.
- Yorke, M. (2006). *Employability in Higher Education: What It Is – What It Is Not*. Higher EducationAcademy.http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/employability/id116_employability_in_higher_education_336.pdf. Date accessed: May, 2012.
- Zavyalova, A., Pfarrer, M. D., Reger, R. K. & Hubbard, T. D. (2016). Reputation as a benefit and a burden? How stakeholders' organizational identification affects the role of reputation following a negative event. *Academy of Management*, 59(1), 253-276.

Zeithaml, V. A. & Bitner, M. J. (2006). *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus across the Firm*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that underpins the study and details strategies and methods employed in collecting and analysing data, as well as philosophical positions that underlie the choice of strategies and methods. Methodology refers to philosophical assumptions that inform a particular study whereas methods imply specific techniques and processes for collecting and analysing data informed by those philosophical assumptions (White, 2000). Methodology decisions influence the manner in which data are collected, analysed and interpreted and so determine how research aims and objectives are achieved (Gill and Johnson, 2010).

The chapter begins with an introduction to the general epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin social research and attempts to relate the inherent theoretical, conceptual and philosophical assumptions to the current study. Principally, the rest of the chapter focuses on the following:

- Research paradigm;
- Research design;
- Data types and sources;
- Sampling procedure;
- Research instruments and administration of those instruments; and
- Methods of data synthesis, analysis and interpretation of research findings.

The chapter concludes by presenting ethical considerations of the study including data management, storage, archiving and disposal in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

5.2 Philosophical Stance and Research Paradigms Underpinning the Study

Two separate methodological orientations dominate research in social sciences: quantitative and qualitative. The difference between the two lie in the philosophical assumptions made about the nature of the social world (ontology) and the grounds of knowledge about the social world (epistemology). The quantitative paradigm/approach dominated social and behavioural studies for most part of the twentieth century. The last quarter of the century, however, saw the qualitative paradigm gradually gain prominence (Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009).

There are deeply ingrained ontological assumptions that affect our views and impressions of the difference between what is real and what is not, as well as attribute what we deem as real to one set of phenomena over others. It is important that these underlying assumptions are identified, established and considered, so that researchers are not blinded to certain relevant aspects of the phenomena under investigation. Such awareness would also avoid implicit assumptions, which have the potential to relegate those aspects to the background, take them for granted and hence shield them from questioning, consideration or discussion (Bryman, 2012). There is also the obvious need to understand the link between the two philosophical thrusts since ontological positions or assumptions held by researchers about the nature of reality tend to influence epistemological choices and hence research procedures adopted and ultimately conclusions drawn.

5.2.1 Ontological Assumptions

In the context of the social sciences, Blaike (2000) describes ontology as comprising claims about what actually exists, what that which exists looks like, what major components make it up and the nature of interaction that ensues among its constituent units. He describes the root definition of ontology as the “science or study of being”. In short, ontological inquiries seek to describe our view (whether claims or assumptions) on the nature of reality, and specifically, whether that which is claimed to be real is an objective/external reality that really *is*, or whether *it* is a subjective/internal creation of our minds. Adopting the example of a workplace report, Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) highlight the complexity inherent in such phenomena as culture, power and control, and pose the question as to whether such reports capture and describe what is really happening, or are only authors’ impressions of what is going on; whether what is reported is what really exists or is simply an illusion. The two poles of ontological assumptions relate to whether reality exists only through experience of it (constructionism), or independently of those who live it (objectivism); whether reality is an internal, unwitting fabrication by those who experience it or an actual, external reality independent of social actors. The centrality of ontological assumptions thus lies with the nature of social phenomena: whether social reality is external to social actors or constructed by them (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

5.2.2 Objectivist Ontology

Inspired by the natural sciences, the ontological position of objectivism considers social phenomena as confronting us as an external reality that is beyond the reach and influence of social actors themselves; that, structures, rules and regulations, hierarchies, missions and other such elements of social configuration constitute a reality that is totally outside the control of those who inhabit it. Social dwellers simply learn, internalise, copy, follow and abide by such structured rigidities without contributing whatsoever to its shape or form. It is argued that data from objects that exist separate from and independent of the researcher (an external reality) is less open to bias and therefore more objective, in the context of social research (Saunders and Thornhill, 2007).

5.2.3 Constructivist Ontology

The ontological position of constructivism holds that social order and their meanings come about through the actions of social actors themselves. It considers and envisages the social setting as a social product; that social actors have a role to play in shaping social order and that so far as social interaction continues to ensue, social order continues to be under a state of revision and change. Social actors themselves thus construct social order. This position is antithetical to the position that society is pre-fabricated and that individuals within the social setting are merely conforming to structures that predate them. Regardless of the appreciation that some formal structures predate particular actors at any point in time, the constructivist assumption views the social setting and processes that make it up as an emergent reality that is in a constant state of construction and reconstruction by social actors, in appreciation also of the active role of individuals in the construction of that reality. This assumption therefore stresses the active involvement of individuals inhabiting social settings in the construction of social reality and urges researchers to consider the way in which social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them which totally constrains them.

The social order of the university environment is believed, under this philosophical assumption, to be in a constant state of renewal, revision, reviewing, realignment, reorganisation, etc. (Bryman, 2008) to reflect the order of change, which in itself is a product of the university actors themselves. This is in contrast to the objectivist ontological stance that argues the pre-existence and independent rigidity of structures and rules in the university environment to which actors, including students, simply robotically comply.

5.2.4 Epistemological Assumptions

Strongly tied to the nature of reality (ontology) is what constitutes knowledge of that reality.

Blake (2000) views epistemology as the theory or science of the methods or grounds of knowledge. For him, concerns of epistemology border on claims or assumptions about what can be known about what exists; how that which exists may be known and possible ways of gaining knowledge of that which can be considered as real.

In their contribution to this philosophical exposition, Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) inquire about how knowledge is generated; what criteria distinguishes good from bad knowledge; and how reality should be described and presented. They summarise epistemology as knowing how one can know. According to Chia (2002), epistemology is about ‘how possible it is to know what can be known; it relates to methods and standards through which reliable and verifiable knowledge is produced considering views about the most appropriate ways of enquiring into the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith et al., 2004); the sources and limits of knowledge; as well as how knowledge can be produced and argued for (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008).

Like ontology, the epistemological philosophy presents two positions on what can be considered as acceptable knowledge in studying social phenomena: Positivism and Interpretivism (Bryman and Bell, 2007). According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), the positivist strand of epistemology, a corollary of the natural sciences, presumes that a social world exists that is external and theory neutral; whereas the subjective interpretivist epistemology presumes no access to the external world beyond our own observations and interpretations of it.

5.2.5 Positivist Epistemology

Proponents of positivism are of the belief that methods used in the natural sciences are also applicable to the study of social phenomena; that the social world can be studied scientifically and so advocate the application of natural science methods to the study of social order. It asserts the deductive generation of testable hypotheses to explain social phenomena in a value-free manner that affirms the position that knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that form the basis of laws. Like realism (Chia, 2002; Hatch and Cunliffe 2006; Saunders and Thornhill, 2007), positivism supports the assertion that the social setting constitutes a reality that is separate from our description of it and that our ability to

understand and effect social change is contingent on our appreciation of the prevalence of structures and generative mechanisms that underpin social order.

The positivist strand of epistemology is thus an offshoot of natural science and is characterised by the testing of hypotheses developed from existing theory (hence deductive or theory testing) through measurement of observable social regularities. This position presumes that the social world exists objectively and externally. It is hinged on the values of reason, truth and validity and thrives purely on facts that are gathered through direct observation and experience of social patterns and adopts empirical measurements using hard quantification and statistical analysis (Blaike, 1993, 2000; Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006; Saunders and Thornhill, 2007; Easterby-Smith et al., 2004; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Positivists are of the stance that knowledge is valid only if it is based on observation and measurement of pre-existing external patterns and regularity, whose cause and effect relationships are generalisable, thereby lending themselves to predictive outcomes. In relation to the university context, the positivists assumption is that what actually constitutes social order can only be ascertained and established through scientific measurement of such insider stakeholder behaviours as those exhibited by students, as well as systems and structures that naturally independently underpin those structured university environments (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006).

5.2.6 Interpretivist Epistemology

The thrust of interpretivism is that meaning is embedded in participants' experiences and is mediated through researchers' own perceptions, impressions and experiences (Neuman, 2000; Bryman, 2012). Proponents of the interpretivist strand of epistemology are of the view that social research requires a research logic and procedure that appreciate and hence reflect the distinctiveness and complexity inherent in social interaction relative to the natural order. The fundamental assumption here is that social actions become meaningful and better appreciated when studied through the eyes of the actors themselves. This position supports the admonition that social researchers should endeavour to gain access to people's common-sense thinking and interpret social actions from the latter's own internal perspectives.

The interpretivist paradigm emphasises empathetic understanding of human actions and is very much in league with the phenomenological perspective (Heap and Roth, 1973) which is about how individuals make sense of the world around them and the need for researchers to

control their misconceptions in order to make reliable meaning of social order. This position is described by Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) as anti-positivist in appreciation of the stand that individuals and groups make sense of situations based upon their own experiences, memories and expectations. Meaning is therefore under constant construction and re-construction over time through participants' experiences resulting in many differing interpretations, which cumulatively create a social reality in which people live and act.

Also key to the interpretivist assumption is the existence of multiple realities (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) as all knowledge is relative to the knower. Researchers under this philosophical paradigm aim to work alongside others in making sense of, drawing meaning from, and creating realities in understanding different points of view, and ultimately interpreting these qualitative realities in the context of their peculiar academic experiences (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). This approach is therefore inductive or theory building that seeks to discover and understand meanings of social order as well as the contextual factors that determine and influence interpretations of those meanings. Given the subjective nature of this paradigm, and the emphasis on language, it is associated with qualitative approaches to data gathering (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). It is this contextuality that denies research underpinned by this paradigm extensive generalisability (Saunders and Thornhill, 2007).

A caution associated with the use of this paradigm relates to the institution of conscious measures to avoid or at least reduce bias as all interpretations are framed within the mind of the researcher. Adopting this inductive paradigm would imply that contextual factors that influence students' interpretations of the reality of the university environment are understood. The interpretivist/constructionist paradigm in the context of this study helped discover how students make sense of the university setting based on their individual experience, memories and expectations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). This can be tested through a study of the interplay of factors that both underlie and form part of the university environment (Bryman, 2012).

5.2.7 Realism/ Post-Positivism

Post-positivism, also referred to as realism is a research paradigm that is envisaged to cure the philosophical dogmatism associated with the adoption of either positivism or interpretivism. Situated between positivism and interpretivism, realism combines parts of

both philosophies and so addresses limitations like over-determinism and relativism that characterise positivism and interpretivism respectively (Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009). Realism subscribes to the existence of real structures that are independent of human consciousness, but that knowledge of that reality is socially created through social conditioning (Saunders et al., 2007).

Like positivism, realism is concerned with the existence of actual/real independent structures and how those structures interact and behave. It holds the view that rational and objective facts must be gathered through direct observation and experience of social reality, and that empirical measurements that uses quantification and statistical analysis must be adopted in studying social phenomena (Blaike, 1993, 2000; Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006; Saunders and Thornhill, 2007). Like interpretivism however, realism asserts the validity of claims that beside science and observation, realities exist (either proven or otherwise), and should be recognised and studied as such. It thus subscribes to the possible existence of different, qualitative realities that need to be appreciated, understood and interpreted in the context of their peculiar circumstances (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). It therefore allows for qualitative approaches to data gathering (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Critical realism encompasses all forms of realism (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). It advocates the existence of multiple realities that exist at different levels and stresses that researchers work alongside others in making sense of, drawing meaning from, understanding different points of view, and ultimately interpreting qualitative realities of peculiar social environments and their experiences (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006).

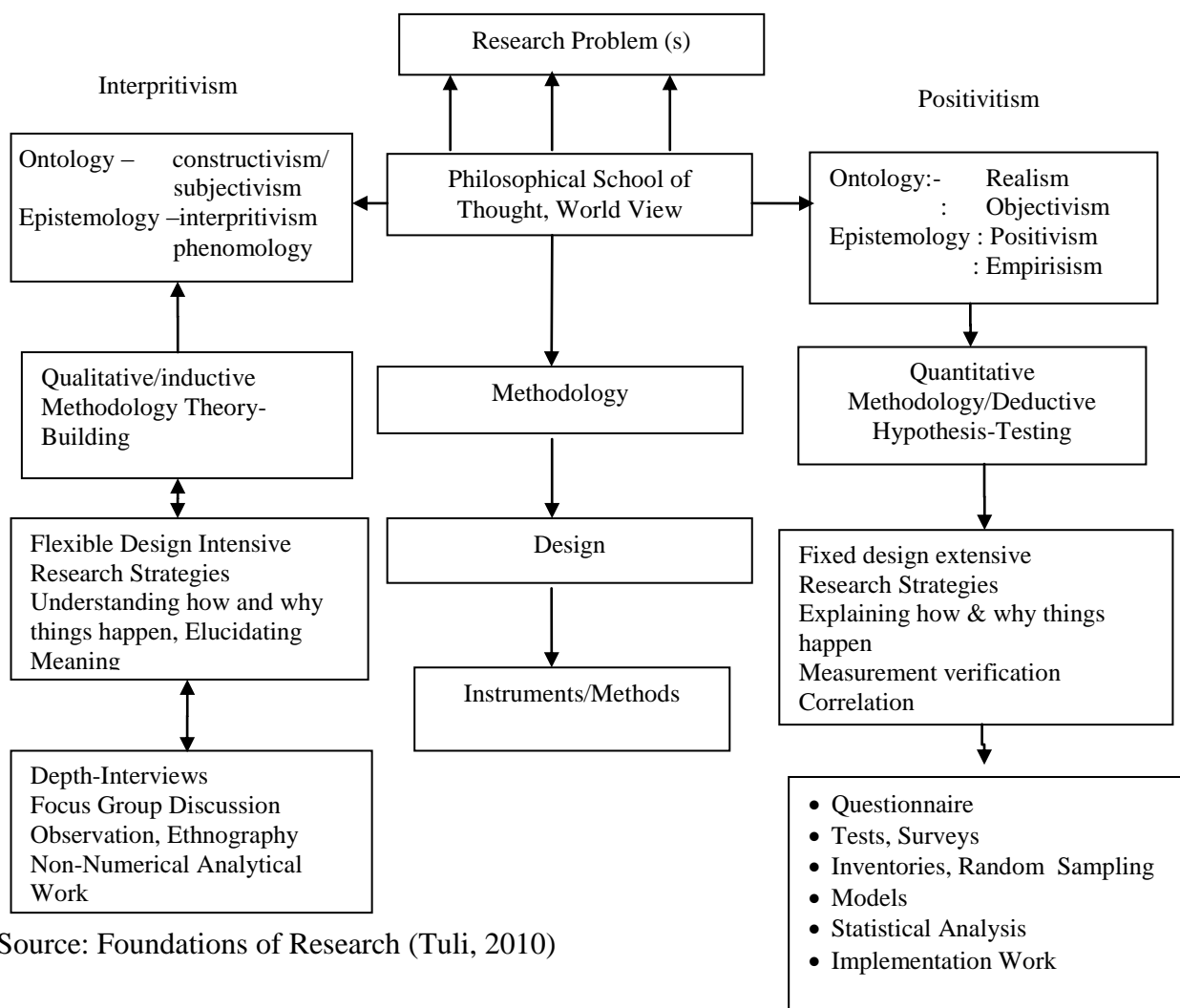
5.3 Identification of Research Paradigms

Extant literature on the above philosophical traditions in social science indicates clearly that neither of the two epistemological perspectives (positivism and interpretivism) is better than the other, as they both present strengths and weaknesses in our quest to understand social phenomena (Tuli, 2010). In favour of this position, Cohen et al. (2000) assert that no research methodology is better or worse than the other as both qualitative and quantitative strategies have proved to be useful in most research endeavours; what is critical is the selection of the appropriate methodology for a particular enquiry. Neuman (2003) adds that methodologies simply represent different ways of observing, measuring and understanding social reality; and

so the adoption of particular research methodologies depends on ‘fitness of purpose’ (Tuli, 2010).

Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that research paradigms represent the net that contains researchers’ epistemological, ontological and methodological premises in making an informed choice from competing methodologies in social research that are based on different philosophical assumptions about the purpose of science and the nature of social reality (Neuman, 2003). Ontological and epistemological assumptions therefore culminate in appropriate paradigms which in effect drive methodology for research design and ultimately, research instruments employed. Therefore a review of the positivist and interpretivist paradigms, as indicated in Figure 5.1, helped the researcher to determine the appropriate choice of research methodology to be employed in studying the relationships between the SBBE constructs investigated and university preference of students.

Figure 5.1: Research Paradigms



Source: Foundations of Research (Tuli, 2010)

5.4 Choice of Research Paradigm

The choice of an appropriate research paradigm is an important aspect of research design (Saunders and Thornhill, 2007). A paradigm is a set of assumptions linked together in an investigation of the world that guides researchers in addressing problems that are worthy of study. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) describe a research paradigm as an interpretive framework; a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Social research designs fall under two main paradigms - theory development and theory testing; positivist against phenomenology; qualitative against quantitative (de Vaus, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Malhotra, 2004; Bryman, 2012); inductive against deductive (De Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2012); the epistemological position of positivism against interpretivism (De Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2012); and the ontological stance of objectivism against constructionism (Blaike, 1993; Bryman, 2012), among others. There are ample scholarly writings to suggest that, despite this arbitrary dichotomy as indicated by the above bipolar positions, in actual research situations, the two approaches are not mutually exclusive as they are intertwined in an endless cycle of theory development and testing (de Vaus, 2002; Malhotra, 2004; Bryman, 2012). The two positions thus simply complement each other in a cycle that perpetuates social research.

This study adopts the middle-ground paradigm of pragmatism under the research philosophy of realism. This position mitigates the philosophical dogmatism that characterises the either-or, over-deterministic positions in research designs that assume the bi-polar positions of positivism and interpretivism (Howe, 1988; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). It is a philosophical position that brings qualitative and quantitative methods of research into a compatible relationship and affords the application of mixed-methods design in social research (Greene, 2007; Maxwell and Mittapalli (2010) in Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The pragmatism paradigm adopts a flexible, research questions/objectives-driven approach that blurs the distinct contrast between the positions of objectivity and subjectivity, and therefore enables study objectives to guide the choice of methods (Sobb and Perry 2005; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Arguing in favour of pragmatism, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) maintain that pragmatism must be regarded as a foundation of mixed-method research because it rejects the incompatibility debate and so presents a very practical and applied research philosophy.

According to Creswell (2012), pragmatism allows for the use of multiple–methods, different viewpoints, and different assumptions as well as different forms of data collection and analysis in investigating social phenomena. It is in this light that Reichardt and Cook (1979) asserted that researchers should not be confined to either quantitative or qualitative paradigms but rather be flexible enough to use both in addressing same research questions. This study adopts pragmatism because of the author’s belief in the synergistic effects of combining qualitative and quantitative methods in adding depth and meaning to the understanding of the relationships between the SBBE constructs studied and university preference among students.

5.5 The Mixed-Methods Approach

This research adopts a mixed-methods paradigm that affords the merits of both quantitative and qualitative research designs in appreciation not only of the fact that each method is saddled with its own limitations (as the two methods compensate for each other’s flaws), but also that the two methods are not antithetical in trying to describe, understand, explain, interpret and predict the social world (Bryman, 2012). Extant literature on research methodology is replete with the application of mixed methods (Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Critical advantages have been cited in adopting mixed–methods as it acknowledges the compatibility that lies between qualitative and quantitative research strategies. Bryman (2008, 2012) asserts that the so-called ‘paradigm wars’ have been replaced by an era of ‘paradigm peace’ as the mixed-methods blend attempts to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research strategies (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It is in this light that Bahari (2010) opines that the notion that one research strategy is more outstanding than the other is a myth. In his opinion, Malhotra (2010) states that it is prudent for researchers to view qualitative and quantitative research as complementary, rather than competing alternatives.

Hussein (2009) also states that the use of the mixed-methods approach affords a great possibility of neutralising the flaws of one method and strengthening the benefits of the other for better research results, since they afford a strong base for investigating phenomena from both objective and subjective perspectives (Al-Shirawi, 2012). Again, Hinds (1989) acknowledges that combining both qualitative and quantitative methods increases researchers’ ability to rule out rival explanations of observed change and reduces scepticism of change-related findings.

The popular claim in favour of such a mixture is that quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other, and affords more robust analytical grounding due to their respective strengths (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Wolfram and Hassard, 2005; Ivankova et al., 2006; Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009; Modell, 2009). According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), it is not the intention of researchers who adopt the mixed-methods blend to replace either of these approaches but rather to tap into the synergistic benefits of the blend and minimize the drawbacks associated with applying either quantitative or qualitative strategies in isolation.

Some analysts have however argued that it is impossible to lump a view of social order that is fixed and objectively verifiable with a view of social meaning that is mainly constituted by subjective experiences (Ahrens and Chapman, 2006). In the opinion of Modell (2009), such a blend constitutes an eclectic mix of research practices that emanates from incongruous ontological positions; and that theoretical triangulation does not necessarily increase validity, because while such a combination can add range and depth, it does not necessarily add accuracy.

In his defence of the paradigmatic marriage, Howe (1988) stressed the palpable compatibility between quantitative and qualitative methods and denies the assertion that such a blend is epistemologically incoherent. As observed by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), although the mixed-method research approach is not flawless, it is able to bring together the insights provided by qualitative and quantitative research into a feasible solution. Upon content analysis of articles derived from mixed methods research, Bryman (2012) identifies a number of ways in which the researcher can benefit by employing mixed methods, including triangulation, offsetting, completeness, process, and credibility (Gilbert, 2011).

5.5.1 Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research is one in which the researcher usually makes knowledge claims based on constructivist/interpretivist perspectives (Creswell, 2012) including such strategies as narratives, case studies, focus groups and in-depth interviews, which emphasise words rather than quantification (Bryman, 2012). The qualitative part of this research is underpinned by the inductive-inclined interpretivist and constructionist philosophies, which recognise the active role of individuals in the construction and study of social reality (Blaike, 2000). These philosophical orientations see the university environment as a social setting in which social

actors like students have a role to play in shaping up the reality that characterises the university experience. These qualitative driven assumptions argue that meaning is embedded in participants' experiences and is mediated through researchers' own perceptions, impressions and experiences (Neuman 2000; Bryman, 2012); and that social research requires a research logic and procedure that appreciates and hence reflects the distinctiveness and intricacy inherent in social interactions.

A fundamental assumption in the context of this study is that happenings in the university setting become meaningful and better appreciated when studied through the eyes of the university actors themselves. This position supports the admonition that social researchers should endeavour to gain access to people's common-sense thinking and interpretation of their actions from their own internal perspectives (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). This approach is therefore inductive or theory building that seeks to discover and understand meanings of social order, as well as the contextual factors that underlie and influence interpretations of those meanings (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Bryman, 2012).

Saunders and Thornhill (2007), however, indicate that the outcomes of the inductive, constructionist/interpretivist paradigm have qualitative contextuality that affords researchers limited opportunity to generalize findings. The interpretivist/constructionist perspectives in the context of this study helped discover how students make sense of the university settings based on their individual experiences, memories and expectations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) in respect of the dimensions studied and their relative effects on university preference. In-depth interviews with smaller samples were therefore considered appropriate (De Vaus, 2002; Malhotra, 2010; Bryman, 2012).

The aim of the qualitative research process is to encourage research participants to speak freely about their understandings, feelings and impressions about the respective SBBE constructs; and exercise their thoughts on the nature of relationships that exist between the constructs and their preference for universities in Ghana. The adoption of the qualitative method in this study stems from the researcher's need to understand and/or interpret students' experiences and impressions through informal, formal and face-to-face interactions within the university environment in relation to the constructs under study. In-depth interviews were used to collect data for this part of the study.

5.5.2 Quantitative Methods

Quantitative research, on the other hand, is underpinned by the positivist/objectivist philosophical orientations that are characterized by the formulation of hypotheses from existing theory to be subjected to empirical scrutiny. This deductive approach focuses purely on facts gathered through direct observations and experiences and is thus based on the values of logic, reason, truth and validity. It is based on quantification of empirical data gathered by the use of structured survey questionnaires and analysed statistically (Blaike, 1993; Saunders and Thornhill, 2007). In respect of external validity and generalisability, this approach enables researchers to generalise from a sample to an entire population so that inferences can be drawn about some characteristics, attitudes, or behaviours of the population (Creswell, 2009).

The assumption underlying the quantitative part of this study is that there are universal laws that govern and regulate the university environment, and so uncovering these existing structures would help the researcher to describe, predict and unveil the nature of relationships between the constructs under study from students' perspectives. This researcher therefore tested hypotheses generated from a review of the literature in order to discover, analyse and report any patterned behaviour among students as regards the phenomenon being investigated. This study sought evidence of regularity of patterned behaviour among students in their preference for university institutions under the assumption that the university environment constitutes a social reality that can be studied scientifically. Questionnaires were used as the instrument for collecting data in this part of this mixed-methods study.

5.6 Approach to Mixed-methods and Sequence of Data Collection

There are close to forty mixed-methods research designs (Ivankova et al., 2006), two most prominent and popular of which are parallel mixed design and sequential mixed design (Teddle and Tashakkori, 2009). In the former case, the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study occur simultaneously with each strategy dealing with different research questions of the same study. The sequential mixed design on the other hand applies the qualitative and quantitative strands in a chronological order, with questions for one phase depending upon the previous (Teddle and Tashakkori, 2009).

The sequential mixed-methods design was adopted for this study. Firstly, the qualitative method of in-depth interviewing was carried out to address specific research objectives as outlined in Table 5.1. In addition, the interviews were used to generate ideas for questionnaire design to ensure validity and reliability in the quantitative research, which was undertaken subsequent to the qualitative study. This is in tandem with the established position in the literature that the sequential method is used where the results of one method are essential for planning the next stage in the research process (Filed and Morse, 1985; De Vaus, 2002).

Table 5.1: Aligning Research Objectives with Paradigms and Methods Employed

Research Objective	Paradigm	Method Adopted
RO1. To ascertain whether student-based brand equity (SBBE) and university preference are related in Ghana.	Qualitative	In-depth Interviews
	Quantitative	Questionnaire
RO2. To identify the nature of relationships between some specific SBBE constructs and university preference in Ghana.	Qualitative	In-depth Interviews
	Quantitative	Questionnaire
RO3. To examine the associations among some selected SBBE determinants in Ghana.	Quantitative	Questionnaire
RO4. To ascertain the applicability of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) concept to the Ghanaian university context.	Qualitative	In-depth Interviews
	Quantitative	Questionnaire

Source: Researcher's compilation

The rest of the sequential process involved the collection of quantitative data by the use of questionnaires. This approach to data collection is supported by Teddie and Tashakkori (2010) and Greene (2007), who state that qualitative methods can be used to help explain

quantitative findings.

5.7 Research Design

This is a descriptive study that adopts the use of survey and face-to-face in-depth interviews to examine the relationship between student-based brand equity (SBBE) and preference for university institutions in Ghana. Surveys enable the collection of a structured and systematic data set that allows systematic comparison between cases of similar features (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman, 2012). It is an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomena of interest and their environments are indiscernibly intertwined (Cavaye, 1996). It involves the collection of data in relation to same variables from a group of respondents with similar characteristics (Czaja and Blair, 2005).

Areas of inquisition through survey include respondents' behaviours, intentions, attitudes, attributes, awareness, motivations, demographic and lifestyle characteristics. It ascertains the nature and extent of variations in variables and aims at drawing causal inferences by carefully comparing various characteristics of cases (De Vaus, 2002; Malhotra, 2010). In relation to research objectives, surveys are distinguished by the form of data collected, as well as methods employed in the analysis of data (De Vaus, 2002). Techniques for collecting data in surveys include questionnaires, systematic observations, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. Anonymous self-administered questionnaires that are used in surveys enable researchers to collect data on potentially sensitive topics (Czaja and Blair, 2005).

Interviews complement questionnaires used in surveys as they offer greater flexibility relative to other data collection methods (Bryman and Bell, 2007) and enable respondents to gather more thorough data on issues identified in questionnaires. Additionally, interviews enable probing as the researcher is able to pick up such important non-verbal gestures as frowns, nervous tappings, gesticulations and other body language from respondents that go to add to and deepen the meaning of hard data (Gorden, 1980; Healey and Rawlinson, 1994; Arksey and Knight, 1999). As a descriptive study, data collection through in-depth interviews and questionnaires were used.

5.8 Data Types and Sources

This study employed both secondary and primary data.

5.8.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data is existing data whose collection predates a particular study and has been collected for purposes that are different from the study at hand. This type of data is relatively easy to collect; it is inexpensive and can be collected within a limited period. (Malhotra, 2011). For secondary data, academic studies on brand management, university branding and higher education literature, particularly university education were used. Secondary data was also collected from the university institutions under study, as well as such education-oriented organisations and institutions as the Ministry of Education, Association of African Universities, National Accreditation Board, National Council for Tertiary Education and National Statistical Services, all in Ghana. Websites of such international bodies as the United Nations, the World Bank, UNESCO, University World News, etc. were contacted. For literature review, development of conceptual framework and formulation of relevant hypotheses for the study, scholarly literature were accessed from such online sources as Emerald Insight, Ebscohost, Proquest and Google Scholar.

5.8.2 Primary Data

Primary data is data that is collected for the purpose of addressing specific research objectives (Creswell, 2012). Methods employed in collecting primary data include surveys, case studies, experiments, focus groups and in-depth interviews. For the purpose of addressing the objectives of this study, survey and in-depth interviews were used to collect primary data from undergraduate students selected from university institutions in Ghana.

5.9 Population of the Study

This study focuses on universities in Ghana. All other tertiary education institutions in the country are not included in it. The population for this research comprises the general undergraduate students' body of both public and private universities in Ghana. Students are key and active 'fabricators' of the social order that the university community presents. This study therefore focused on their perspective in ascertaining the effect of university brand equity on university preference. Students were targeted because they are the primary publics of universities' marketing and recruitment efforts (Ivy, 2008). They are the main consumers of educational services (Ng and Forbes, 2009; Pinar et al., 2011, 2014) and the overall university experience. Students therefore constitute the focal group whose needs need to be understood (Gray et al., 2003), appreciated and balanced against the institution's mission.

They simply are the reason for universities' existence. More so, this study considered student-based brand equity (SBBE), which suggests an exclusive student perspective. In Ghana and other sub-Saharan African university settings where fees from students constitute the main, if not the only, source of funding (Varghese, 2006), focusing on students in university branding endeavours is considered appropriate.

Current students were used because it was believed that they would have first-hand experience of the university environments and services and so would be better placed to undertake a more informed evaluation of the institutions (Mourad et al., 2011) in respect of the variables under study. This is particularly so in a service environment characterised by experience and credence qualities (Krishnan and Hartline, 2001), where quality is only discernible during and after consumption (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Mitchell, 1999; Laing et al., 2002). Despite the potential merits of their inputs in a study of this nature, prospective and past students were not included as it was believed that the SBBE focus could be compromised that way.

The study also exclusively used undergraduate students since most of the institutions selected ran no postgraduate courses; a situation that could compromise sample homogeneity and reliability of findings. This is because anecdotal evidence suggests that post graduate students have more exposure than their undergraduate counterparts and so their impressions of what constitutes quality, their image orientation and overall tastes and preferences that underpin their university preference are likely to be different. Part-time students were also not included in the sample as the study intended to use only students with full-time, first-hand interaction with the university institutions. By design, part time students in Ghana's universities mainly attend evening and weekend sessions and are mostly full-time workers who spend their weekday working hours at their work places, physically detached from the universities. They therefore do not spend sufficient time at the universities based on which they can objectively evaluate the institutions. It was believed that any blend between full and part-time students would produce a mix of respondents whose responses would not ensure the level of coherence expected of an academic work of this nature. All in all, the exclusive reliance on current undergraduate students fulfils the study's purpose of ascertaining the relative strengths of the selected constructs in influencing university preference among the general undergraduate population in Ghana. The main weakness in relying exclusively on current

students for information, however, is that their views and opinions may differ from those of past and prospective students.

5.10 Qualitative Approach

This section presents qualitative research procedure adopted for the study.

5.10.1 Qualitative Sampling – Sample Frame and Sample Size

The sample frame for the qualitative research comprised undergraduate students from four universities based in Accra, the capital of Ghana where most of the universities in the country are either situated or headquartered. The institutions in question are University of Ghana, Central University, Methodist University College and Valley View University. Five (5) undergraduate students were selected from each of the three private universities, while the remaining ten (10) were selected from University of Ghana (public), the most populous university in the country (NAB, 2015). This is presented in Table 5.2. McGivern (2003) suggests that a sample size between 20 and 30 is appropriate in understanding respondents' collective views and opinions on issues. Ritchie et al. (2010) in Mason (2010) justify the use of relatively smaller sample sizes in qualitative research by indicating that more data does not necessarily increase accuracy, because there is a tendency for diminishing returns to set in as sample size becomes larger.

Table 5.2: Sample Size from Selected Universities for the Qualitative Research

Name of University	Number of Students Selected
Central University	5
Methodist University College	5
Valley View University	5
University of Ghana	10
Total	25

Source: Researcher's compilation

5.10.2 Qualitative Sampling Technique

The judgemental sampling method was employed to select the four universities. This is a form of convenience sampling method which is used where there is the need for the

researcher to exercise judgement in ensuring that the sample selected is representative of the population (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2012). The above universities were selected as there was the need to use a reliable sample of public and private universities. The convenience sampling method was adopted in selecting undergraduate students who were available and prepared to participate in the interviews. The exclusive selection of students is due to the fact that this study aims at ascertaining students perspective on the influence of the brand equity constructs under investigation on university preference.

5.10.3 Qualitative Data Collection Instrument

In order to conduct the interviews in an organised manner, an interview guide containing open-ended questions was prepared, which bordered on the dimensions of SBBE, as indicated in the conceptual framework for this study. The constructs include university image, university reputation, university identity, graduate employability and perceived university service quality; while the substantive issue was to ascertain how influential the aforementioned elements were in university preference among students in Ghana. (See appendix C for Interview Guide). The interview questions were adopted from existing measurement scales by Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001), Gronroos (2001), Yoo and Donthu (2001), Sweeney and Soutar (2001) and Gray et al. (2003), which are extensively used by researchers in the field of service brand equity and university branding (Kang and James, 2004; Mourad et al., 2011; Pinar et al., 2014). Items from these widely used scales were modified to suit the circumstances of this study.

5.10.4 Qualitative data Administration

Methods of collecting qualitative data may be either direct or indirect (Malhotra, 2010). Where the indirect approach is adopted, the purpose of the study is not disclosed to respondents who participate in the study without knowing the true intent behind the study. Conversely, the direct approach is adopted where participants are informed about the purpose of the study, which can also be determined by the nature of questions asked. The direct technique of semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth interview was considered suitable in the circumstances of this study because of its proven ability to penetrate 'complex and ambiguous' issues (Gummesson, 2005, pp.309).

According to Zikmund (2000), qualitative data collection through in-depth interviews afford researchers the opportunity to evaluate alternative variables and themes, and solicit ideas from relevant individuals, that address research problems (de Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2012). The depth and richness of data collected through in-depth interviews are remarkable as they enable researchers to delve deeper into respondents' thoughts, attitudes, behaviours, impressions, opinions, beliefs, feelings and aspirations (Chisnall, 1992; Malhotra, 2010; Ritchie and Lewis, 2011; Bryman, 2012), which are otherwise inaccessible.

The researcher sent letters to the selected universities, which formally informed the institutions and sought permission for the exercise to take place (See appendix A). On the days of the interviews, respondents were informed of the ethical guidelines that governed the conduct of the research as presented in Section 5.12. The researcher began the interviews by asking general questions relating to university preference of respondents. In the next set of questions, the five SBBE constructs were taken in turns to address the research objectives.

The three-part interview structure proposed by Guion et al. (2006) was adopted. The first part recorded date, time and place of interview as well as any observed circumstance, which might affect the conduct and outcome of the interviews. The second part contained the interview questions proper and came with a corresponding blank page for recording any during-interview observations; while the last part was devoted to post-interview comments. The introductory questions sought to ascertain from respondents if they had any preference for particular universities in the country as well as ascertain, generally, what factors affected their preference. The next set of questions bordered around the five SBBE constructs under study. Each of the constructs had a number of questions, in addition to follow-up questions, which arose from answers given by respondents in the course of the interviews. The concluding set of questions elicited recommendations from respondents with regard to what universities in Ghana could do to improve their preference among students. Respondent's age and gender were also indicated.

In the course of the interviews, simple and straightforward questions were asked that were devoid of ambiguity and unnecessary complexities to ensure that respondents clearly understood questions posed and were not confused in any way (Bryman, 2012). A careful assessment was made of how respondents' answers related to the research objectives. Contradictions, nuances, hesitations, emotions and non-verbal signs were all noted (Mason,

2002). Probing was used to achieve depth of answers in terms of penetration, exploration, elaboration and explanation (Ritchie and Lewis, 2011). A research memoir was used, which served as an operational record of non-verbal cues like facial expressions, gesticulation, hesitation, smiles, frowns and other such body gestures that deepened the meaning of responses obtained. All interviews were tape recorded, and in all, twenty two (22) out of the twenty five (25) respondents fully co-operated for the study. The interviews took place in a space of three weeks between May and June, 2016, and on average, the interviews lasted for 45 minutes.

5.10.5 Qualitative Data Analysis Procedure

In analysing qualitative data for the study, the researcher considered the suitability of different methods such as content analysis, grounded theory, hermeneutic analysis, phenomenological analysis and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was adopted because of its flexibility in identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998). The choice of this method of analysis was based on the fact that it enables the identification of a limited number of major themes, which adequately reflected the textual data found in them (Cramer and Howitt, 2008). By adopting this method, the researcher was able to link and compare various responses and opinions expressed by participants in the course of the study (Ibrahim, 2012). Thus, the thematic analysis method was considered well-suited for this study as it enables researchers to decipher, examine and interpret meaningful patterns or themes that emerge out of data collected (Malhotra, 2010).

The use of other approaches to analysing qualitative data underscores the fact that thematic analysis is not without limitations. Some critics of thematic analysis are of the view that it is poorly demarcated (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001), as there is an absence of clear and concise guidelines, which confirms the often cited arbitrariness of qualitative research (Antaki et al., 2002). While its flexibility can be envisaged in a positive light, its demerits reside in the difficulty of developing specific guidelines for analysis although some scholars assert that a rigorous thematic approach can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The adoption of the thematic analysis method for this research is in conformity with the middle position paradigm of pragmatism adopted by this researcher which emphasises analytical methods that are research question driven and devoid of methodological stringency (Holloway and Todres, 2003).

The six-step procedure proposed by Braun and Clark (2006) to thematic analysis was adopted. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim; data were then organized into easily retrievable sections. Each interview was given a unique number and saved in a secure file on the computer. Below is a description of how the author applied the thematic analysis in line with the above-mentioned model.

Data familiarisation was undertaken by re-reading the transcribed interviews carefully, with a view to identifying patterns within the data that were coherent (Bazeley, 2009). The tapes were played and listened to in order to ensure that data collected were familiar before the actual analysis began. Data familiarisation spanned the stages of data gathering from the interviewing to the transcription phase. This first step in the thematic analysis process particularly enabled effective coding to be undertaken. Initial codes generation was undertaken, which was guided by key elements within the framework under consideration, informed by extant literature as spelt out in Chapter Four.

Each case was then individually examined to identify thematic patterns within each interview transcript. All texts considered to be associated with some thematic idea were then grouped together so they could be examined together to enable comparisons between different cases. The process continued inductively with the data-led approach at this second stage of coding where codes were allowed to emerge from the data as part of the noticing process (Seidel, 1998). Free nodes were created for new codes that emerged. Theme applicability to the selected extracts, as well as the entire data set, was carefully checked at this review stage of the thematic analysis process. The literature and data gathered were then revisited to make sure that themes were well-defined and labelled. Clear data patterns and data relationships then emerged for reporting. Subsequently, report writing was done including verbatim reporting of responses that were instructively revealing, as presented in Chapter Six.

5. 10.6 Validity Measures (Confirmability) for Qualitative Findings

In ensuring that findings obtained from the in-depth interviews were devoid of the researcher's biases and interests and to ensure that credibility measures were used to authenticate information obtained through the interviews, respondent validation and member checking were undertaken to confirm the findings of the study (Creswell, 2012). In doing so, the researcher presented a summary of the research findings to the respondents either by email or in separate follow-up meetings, asking them whether they believed the conclusions

drawn reflected their opinions. All 22 respondents confirmed that the summary of findings adequately and accurately represented their opinions on the subjects under consideration. As regards member checking as a means of confirming the findings, respondents were asked to comment on the accuracy of verbatim quotes while their approval was sought to use their direct personal quotes in writing this report. All respondents whose direct quotes appeared in the analysis gave their consent. The following section presents procedures adopted for the quantitative research.

5.11 Quantitative Approach

This section presents quantitative research procedure adopted for the study.

5.11.1 Quantitative Sampling – Sample Frame and Size

The sample frame for the quantitative study consisted of students of six public and six private universities across the geographical space of Ghana. The public universities are University of Ghana, Cape Coast University, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Education, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration and University of Development Studies. The six private universities are Central University, Valley View University, Methodist University College, Ashesi University, Kings University College and Regent University College. Although the universities selected have varying levels of awareness and public repute in Ghana, evidence on the ground indicates that they have all recorded phenomenal growth in infrastructure, programmes on offer and student enrolments over the last decade (NCTE, 2013). The selected universities are also located in a broad spread of geographical settings with varying socio-economic characteristics, which ensured that the sample selected was representative of the entire Ghanaian undergraduate student population.

The selection of these diverse public and private universities with both converging and contrasting characteristics is thus in respect of reliability, and subsequently, generalisability (De Vaus, 2002). In all, a sample size of 720 undergraduate students made up of an equal number of 60 students each from the selected twelve (12) universities was used for this study as presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Sample Size from Selected Universities for the Quantitative Research

Name of University	Number of students selected
Public Universities	
1. University of Ghana	60
2. University of Cape Coast	60
3. University College of Education	60
4. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology	60
5. Ghana Institute of Management & Public Administration (GIMPA)	60
6. University of Development Studies	60
Private Universities	
1. Central University College	60
2. Valley View University	60
3. Ashesi University	60
4. Methodist University College	60
5. Kings University College	60
6. Regent University College	60
Total	720

Source: Researcher's compilation

The sample size for this study is consistent with guidelines laid down by Comrey and Lee (1992), which states that, in determining sample size adequacy, a sample size of 500 is very good whereas a size of 1000 is described as excellent. According to Saunders and Thornhill (2007), sample size emanates from a blend between researchers' judgments and scientific calculations. Among the factors that underpinned the sample size determination for this study were the degree of variation of the student population characteristics, anticipated response rate, degree of sample reliability, analytical methods to be employed, as well as the time span in which the study was to be undertaken (Creswell, 2012).

5.11.2 Quantitative Sampling Technique

For the quantitative study, the universities were selected purposively as there was the need to use a reliable sample of public and private universities. Neuman (2000) suggests that the purposive sampling method is used when selecting cases that are particularly informative. Parahoo (2006), however, argues that purposive sampling is weak and results in low

credibility as participants are self-selected, and may not reflect the population from which the sample is selected. It is also argued that the validity of results could be compromised as there are differences in beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of those who agree to participate in a study and those who do not (Parahoo, 2006). This method is however effective where there is the need to obtain relevant information from specific quarters that meet specific research objectives (Saunders and Thornhill, 2007). In the context of this study, the method was applied to the selection of the university institutions in order to collect data from a broad range of institution types that are also spread across the country (Mourad et al., 2011). From each of the twelve universities, four (4) classes were selected, by the purposive sampling method, which took class sizes into consideration. Fifteen (15) students were then selected, by the lottery method, from each of the four classes, making a total of sixty (60) students for each of the twelve (12) universities as presented in Table 5.3.

5.11.3 Quantitative Data Collection Instrument - Questionnaire

Questionnaires were the main instruments used in collecting quantitative data for this study. According to Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007), no prior studies have developed any universally accepted scale to measure university brand equity and its dimensions that could guide the development of successful branding strategies for higher education institutions. The questionnaire design for this study was therefore guided by literature on brand equity measurement and brand preference, as well as past validated research instruments in other product and service industries. The design was also guided by themes derived from the in-depth interviews that represented the interpretivist/constructivist strand of this mixed-methods study.

A 39-item scale was developed to determine possible relationships between five empirically proven university brand attributes and university preference, as indicated in the conceptual framework (Figure 4.2) in Chapter Four. All questionnaire variables were measured on a seven-point Likert scale of 1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree to measure the degree of respondents' agreement or disagreement and adequately capture the intensity of their impressions (Bell, 2005), as it offered respondents the room to express their opinions on issues raised (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 1997).

The questionnaire is divided into three parts as follows:

i) Part One (Introduction)

This part begins with an introductory statement that presents the issue under investigation, as well as the import of the study. The introductory statement further informs respondents about the voluntary nature of their participation; urges respondents to be as honest as possible and assures them of anonymity and confidentiality. Under this part, respondents were asked to indicate their most preferred university from a list of ten universities in Ghana. All items in the body of the questionnaire (part 2) related to respondents' most preferred university, as the study sought to determine possible relationships between the SBBE constructs presented in the instrument and respondents' university preference. Specifically, respondents were required to indicate the levels of their agreement or disagreement to items featured under the respective dimensions.

Eight items were used to measure brand preference under part one. The first four items were borrowed from Sirgy et al. (1997); also used by Jamal and Good (2001), Hellier et al. (2003) and Tolba and Hassan (2009); while the remaining four were sourced from Berry (2000). The concluding section of part one sought to determine why some respondents were not in attendance of their most preferred university.

ii) Part Two (Body)

This part is divided into six sections in line with the key dimensions under investigation as presented in the conceptual model in Chapter Four. Contents of the sections are presented below:

Section one (Questions 3 & 4): University awareness – Although brand awareness is not the focus of this study, respondents' level of knowledge and their sources of information about their most preferred university were deemed important. That section under part two of the questionnaire presents six items that aim at providing some insight into sources and depth of respondents' knowledge about their most preferred university. There are also seven items in that section that seek to ascertain the specific media channels that provide respondents with information about their most preferred university.

Section two (Question 5): University image – This section features eight items. The first four items were sourced from Kang and James (2004), which came from Gronroos (2001),

while the last four came from Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001).

Section three (Question 6): University reputation - The six items used in measuring this construct were sourced from Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001).

Section four (Question 7): University identity – For this SBBE construct, five items were borrowed from Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001); and were also adopted by Mourad et al. (2011).

Section five (Question 8): Perceived institutional service quality – This dimension uses seven items from the following sources: The first two items were borrowed from Yoo and Donthu (2001); the third item from Pinar et al. (2014); the next three items from Sweeney and Soutar (2001); while the last item came from the qualitative results of this study.

Section six (Question 9): Graduate employability – Five items were used to measure this construct; the first two items came from Gray et al. (2003); while the remaining three were sourced by Mourad et al. (2011).

iii) Part Three (Respondents' Bio Data)

Under part three of the questionnaire, respondents' bio data titled 'consumer attributes' like gender, age, income and type of current university of attendance (private/public) were presented. The instrument ended by offering respondents the opportunity to make any general comments they considered relevant to the study. (See Appendix D for a copy of the questionnaire).

The instrument featured mainly closed-ended questions for respondents to offer relevant responses to questions asked. Close-ended questions are generally quicker and easier to answer and require minimal writing (Saunders and Thornhill, 2007). Types of questions contained in the instrument included categorical (where one option is selected from a number of responses); numerical (where respondents select from a list of numerical answer options); dichotomous (where respondents choose from only two-answer alternatives); multiple-choice (where a number of mutually exclusive options are given from which respondents select a response); and multiple response questions (where respondents are allowed to choose more than one option where necessary (McMillan and Weyers, 2007). The researcher ensured that the questions were unambiguous, clear, concise and understandable in order to avoid the drudgery associated with questionnaires that are unclear and too demanding (Malhotra and

Burks, 2000). Jargons, biased words, leading questions, double-barrelled questions, negative questions, and hypothetical questions were avoided to achieve reliability and high response rates (Dillman et al., 1993; Bryman, 2012).

5.11.4 Questionnaire Pre-testing

According to Churchill (1991), data collection should always be preceded by an adequate pre-test of the survey instrument. It involves a dry-run of the entire research process with the intention of identifying potential validity, reliability and fieldwork challenges before rolling out the main research (Webb, 2000). Questionnaire pre-testing offers a number of benefits, including:

- Ensuring clarity of instructions aimed at guiding respondents for smooth execution of the research instrument;
- Ensuring clarity, relevance and logical sequencing of individual questions contained in the instrument, which will in turn affect response quality and suitability of data collected for analysis;
- Assessing the validity of questions and hence the likely reliability of data collected, which ultimately affects the generalisability of findings;
- Avoiding data recording problems;
- Identifying potential fieldwork difficulties and ensuring that all anticipated technical and operational issues are addressed (Oppenheim, 1984);
- Detecting key issues missed out in the questionnaire; and
- Ascertaining the feasibility of duration set out for the completion of the questionnaire (Luck and Rubin, 1987).

The questionnaire was pre-tested prior to roll out to ensure that respondents had no difficulty understanding the questions; and also to ensure face, internal, construct and, subsequently, external validity. Two separate pre-tests were conducted. Firstly, the instrument was evaluated by colleagues in the marketing department at Central University, who are experts with a breadth of experience and could draw on their specialist knowledge in brands management and consumer preference (DeVaus, 2002; Bryman, 2012). This exercise ensured simplicity and relevance of the individual items, as well as the sequencing and coherence of the instrument. Following feedback received, the wording and flow of items under some of the dimensions were revised. The second set of pre-tests was conducted among students from

four universities based in Accra. In all, a total of forty (40) questionnaires were administered to students who were conveniently selected for that exercise. Reliability analyses were performed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α). The instrument was further modified upon pre-testing where some items were either changed or totally removed from the instrument.

The pre-test exercise enabled the study to achieve internal validity (to ensure that the survey instrument measures what it purports to measure (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). It ensured that the instrument was comparable to existing validated instruments on brand equity to achieve criterion validity; while its content-validity ensured that questions asked were relevant to the SBBE dimensions being investigated. The pre-tests also ensured construct-validity by focusing on the objectives of the study rather than on the abstract dimensions in the conceptual model (Scott and Mazhindu, 2005); while face-validity was achieved by ascertaining and confirming the relevance, accuracy, completeness and reliability of the instrument with colleagues in the marketing department. Finally, the exercise ensured external validity, implying that responses gathered from the sample through the survey instrument were reflective of the entire population to enable generalisability of findings (De Vaus, 2002; Malhotra, 2010; Bryman, 2012). In respect of reliability, which borders on the consistency of research findings, the pre-tests ensured that the instrument was designed in such a way that the same results would be obtained should the questionnaire be administered to the same respondents twice (Bryman, 2012). A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.96 was obtained indicating a very high level of internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951; Scott and Mazhindu, 2005) of the instrument.

5.11.5 Questionnaire Administration

The researcher visited the universities during which time was taken to explain to their management, the nature and motive of the study, as well as its scope and content and why these tie in with the circumstances of the universities. Anticipated benefits of the research findings to various industry and research stakeholder communities, including the universities themselves were also discussed. Ethical procedures to be followed to avoid undue intrusion and obstruction, and to protect respondents' anonymity, confidentiality and overall wellbeing were also laid out (Kvale (1996), together with suitable modalities for the completion and retrieval of the questionnaires.

Following this first level of contact, the respective Heads of Departments (HODs) were contacted. After discussing the sampling plan with them, the respective lecturers whose classes fell within the survey administration parameters were contacted. With the exception of a few instances, not much difficulty was encountered in gaining the necessary approval. These initial visits were followed by mails, which formally informed the institutions and sought permission for the exercise to take place (See appendix A).

On the days of the administration, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to students selected from each class, and the group administration method (Mourad et al., 2011; Pinar et al., 2014) was employed, where students self-completed questionnaires directly given to them by the researcher. According to Hinson and Sorensen (2006), Ghanaians are more comfortable completing questionnaires that are personally delivered and explained to them by the interviewer. Two Mphil students were recruited to offer support throughout the questionnaire administration to ensure that the enormity of the task was not overwhelming, as that could compromise the researcher's professionalism. Before completing the questionnaires, the instructions for the survey were read out to the respondents; questions that arose were then answered. Respondents were informed about relevant ethical practices governing the study. In a few instances where some respondents needed further clarification while completing the questionnaires, the necessary support was provided to ensure that the instruments were properly completed. The questionnaires were retrieved from each class after their completion. Data were collected sequentially - from one university to another. The average duration for completing the surveys was 35 minutes. Out of the 720 questionnaires distributed, 95 were either incomplete or poorly completed. Ultimately, 625 fully completed questionnaires were retrieved across the twelve universities. These usable questionnaires were analysed constituting 87 per cent of all questionnaires administered. The questionnaire administration spanned a duration of two months; between July and August, 2016.

5.11.6 Data Preparation and Data Entry

Retrieved completed questionnaires were checked for completeness and to rid them of illegibility, inconsistency, ambiguity and unsatisfactory responses (Malhotra and Burks, 2000; De Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2012). Coding instructions were developed in a coding book to aid the coding process. The data were then coded by assigning a code to each response. A

data summary sheet was designed to record all codified responses prior to data entry. The data summary sheet listed the actual questions and their labels against codified responses from each questionnaire, which were checked regularly to minimise the incidence of coding errors. Codified responses were then carefully entered into the SPSS software for analysis to begin.

5.11.7 Quantitative Data Analysis Procedure

Firstly, the author assessed the suitability of data for the analysis to be conducted. As a result of the high response rate, non-response bias was not undertaken (Ledden et al., 2011). Next, since all data for this quantitative research was conducted using a single data instrument, a test for common method variance bias was conducted using the Harman's (1967) one factor test. Additionally, a test for normality of data distribution was undertaken. This study followed the approach adopted by Lings and Greenley (2010) by conducting Skewness, Kurtosis, Komogorov-Smirnov tests and Shapiro-Wilk test. For a data set to be normally distributed, Skewness and Kurtosis should be zero and the Komogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test should not be statistically significant. These were done with the help of IBM SPSS version 20 software.

Secondly, the constructs measuring the dimension of brand equity and brand preference were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis in order to verify the factor structures. To do so, the author used partial least squares (PLS) (SmartPLS Release: 2.0 (beta)), (Ringle et al., 2005; Lings and Greenley, 2010) for the following reasons:

1. Normality diagnostics showed that the data is not normally distributed (Chin and Newstead, 1999; Wold, 1982);
2. PLS is suited for predictive models using much smaller or much larger samples (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2011);
3. Theory on university brand equity is limited (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Coleman et al., 2011; Williams, 2012; da Silveira et al., 2013); and the PLS method is applicable where existing theory is limited (Acedo and Jones, 2007; Ainuddin et al. 2007).

For a scale to pass the confirmatory factor analysis test, convergence and discriminant validity must be met. To satisfy the conditions for convergent validity, the following steps are recommended:

1. All factor loadings should be significant; that is loadings of 0.6 or higher (Chin, 1998);
2. Composite Reliability (CR) of each construct should be 0.7 or higher (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988; Hair et al., 1998); and
3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) estimates should be 0.5 or higher (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988; Hensler et al., 2009).

To satisfy the conditions for discriminant validity, the square root of the minimum average variance extracted (AVE) must be higher than the highest inter-construct correlation (Fornell and Lacker, 1981; Barclay et al., 1995). Optionally, an author may examine the item cross loadings to ensure that there are no significant cross loadings.

Thirdly, structural model efficiency were examined as PLS does not generate overall goodness of fit indices. This study utilized a diagnostic tool presented by Tenenhaus et al. (2005), known as the goodness-of-fit (GoF) index to assess the model fit. GoF is measured using the geometric mean of the average communality and the average R^2 (for endogenous constructs) (Ali et al., 2016). Other model efficiency techniques employed in this study include model's predictive accuracy (R^2) (Chin, 1998), model's predictive relevancy (Q^2) (Ali et al., 2016; Fornell and Cha, 1993; Chin, 2010) and effect sizes (f^2) (Ali et al., 2016; Chin, 2010).

Hoffmann and Brinbrich (2012) provided a goodness-of-fit index cut-off values of 0.1, 0.25 and 0.36 for small, medium and large model fits respectively. Chin (1998) recommends R^2 value of 33% or more to indicate good explanatory power for an endogenous construct. Q^2 value greater than 0 shows predictive relevance (Ali et al., 2016; Fornell and Cha, 1993; Chin, 2010). Cohen (1988) provided effect size cut-off values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 for small, medium and large effect sizes respectively for the selected exogenous variable.

Finally, the significance of each path was tested using bootstrap t-values (5000 sub-samples) (Efron and Gong, 1983; Tortosa et al., 2009), a procedure available in PLS. This procedure was to ascertain whether relationships between the various constructs under investigation

were significant. For a path to be significant, bootstrap t-value should be greater than 1.96 (two-tailed test).

5.12 Ethical Considerations

In conducting the study, strict ethical guidelines were adhered to. For both the qualitative and quantitative parts of the study, ethical guidelines prescribed by the Market Research Society's code of conduct, the Data Protection Act of 1998, the Human Right Act of 1998, and Government of Ghana's regulations on market research were observed. In the questionnaire design, simple, unambiguous questions were asked to ensure that respondents were not confused in any way. Leading and biased questions were avoided. The questionnaire was made as succinct as possible to ensure that respondents were not over-burdened. Questions that were too sensitive with the potential to dig too deep into respondents' private lives were avoided. Respondents were assured of confidentiality as information volunteered were to be treated as such; respondents were not required to reveal their identities. Coercion and manipulation of respondents in the conduct of interviews was avoided.

In the conduct of the interviews, the intent behind the research was openly declared while covert means of data collection from participants was avoided. Due respect was given to respondents' privacy, which ensured that data were collected in an atmosphere devoid of any stress or embarrassment. Respondents were informed at the beginning of the interviews that they were not obliged to answer any questions that would make them feel uncomfortable; they were also assured of their liberty to terminate the interview at any point should they experience discomfort. All audio recordings as well as sensitive personal information shall be destroyed immediately after a successful Viva.

5.13 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology that underpins this study, highlighting and justifying the research paradigm, design and methods employed in collecting and analysing data to address the objectives set out for the thesis. It has also presented philosophical nuances, chiefly the epistemological and ontological assumptions, and has established the middle position paradigm of pragmatism under the philosophy of realism as underlying the adoption of a qualitative-quantitative mixed-methods design. Population, sample frame, sample size and sampling methods have also been discussed. The chapter has further explained the use of in-depth interviews and surveys as data collection methods for the

qualitative and quantitative studies respectively, as well as the use of an interview guide and questionnaire as instruments for data collection. Procedures adopted for the administration of the research instruments have also been discussed in this chapter. Moreover, methods of data synthesis, analysis and interpretation of research findings have been clearly laid out. In concluding, the chapter has presented ethical guidelines observed including the management, storage, and disposal of data in accordance with relevant data protection legislations. The next chapter presents an analysis of qualitative data, which was obtained by means of in-depth interviews.

REFERENCES

- Acedo, F. J., & Jones, M. V. (2007). Speed of internationalization and entrepreneurial cognition: Insights and a comparison between international new ventures, exporters and domestic firms. *Journal of World Business*, 42, 236-252.
- Ahrens, T. & Chapman, C. S. (2006). Doing qualitative research in management accounting: Positioning data to contribute to theory. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 31(8), 819-841.
- Ainuddin, R. A., Beamish, P. W., Hulland, J. S., & Rouse, M. J. (2007). Resource attributes and firm performance in international joint ventures. *Journal of World Business*, 42, 47–60.
- Al-Shirawi, A. M. (2012). *Measuring the Level of Market Orientation among Financial Services providers in a Resource-based Economy: Organisational and Customer Perspectives*. PhD Thesis, Brunel University, London. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 2, 43-49.
- Ali, F., Zhou, Y., Hussain, K., Nair, P. K. & Ragavan, N. A., (2016). Does higher education service quality effect student satisfaction, image and loyalty? *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 24 (1), 70-94.
- Antaki, C., Young, N. & Finlay, W. M. L. (2002). Shaping clients' answers: Departures from neutrality in care-staff interviews with people with a learning disability. Disability & approach in the beverage industry in Turkey. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 23(3), 237-48.
- Arksey, H. & Knight, P. (1999). *Interviewing for social scientists*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Bahari, F. S. (2010). Qualitative versus Quantitative Research Strategies: Contrasting Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions. *Journal of Technology* 52, 17-28.

- Barclay, D., Thompson, R., and Higgins, C. (1995). The Partial Least Squares (PLS) Approach to Causal Modeling: Personal Computer Adoption and Use an Illustration. *Technology Studies* 2(2), 285-309.
- Bazeley, P. (2009). *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project*. (4th ed.). Maidenhead,: Open University Press.
- Berry, L. (2000). Cultivating service brand equity. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(1), 128-37.
- Blaike, N. (1993). *Approaches to social enquiry*. (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Blaike, N. (2000). *Designing social research*. (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Braun, V. & Clark, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, (13)2, 77-101.
- Bryman, A. (2006). Paradigm Peace and the Implications for Quality. *International Journal Social Research Methodology*, 9(2), 111–126.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. (4th ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. (4th ed). Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2007). *Business research methods*. (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis*. Burlington, Ashgate.
- Cavaye, A. L. M. (1996). Case study research: a multi-faceted research approach for Information Systems. *Information Systems Journal*, 6, 227-242.

- Chia, R. (2002). The production of management knowledge: Philosophical underpinnings. In: Partington, D. (ed) *Essential skills for management research*. (1st ed.). Sage, London.
- Chin, W. W. (1998). The partial least squares approach to structural equation modelling. *Modern Methods for Business Research*, 295(2), 295-336.
- Chin, W. W. (2010). How to write up and report PLS analyses, in Esposito Vinzi, V., Chin, W.W., Henseler, J. and Wang, H. (Eds), *Handbook of Partial Least Squares: Concepts, Methods and Application*, Springer, Berlin, 645-689.
- Chin, W. W., & Newsted, P. R. (1999). Structural Equation Modelling Analysis with Small Samples Using Partial Least Squares, in *Statistical Strategies for Small Sample Research*, Rick Hoyle (ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999, 307-341.
- Chisnall, P. (1992). *Marketing Research*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.
- Churchill, G. A. J. (1991). *Marketing Research; Methodological Foundation*. (5th ed.). London: Dryden Press International Edition.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioural sciences*. (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. (5th ed), London: Routledge Palmer.
- Coleman, D., de Chernatony, L., & Christodoulides, G. (2011). B2B service brand identity: Scale development and validation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40, 1063–1071.
- Comrey, A. L. & Lee, H.B. (1992). *A first course in factor analysis*. (2nd ed.), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Hillsdale.
- Cramer, D. & Howitt, D. (2008). *Introduction to research methods in psychology*. 2nd Edition. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Creswell, J. W., (2003). *Research Design Qualitative and Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*. Thousand Oaks CA. Sage Publications.

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). Editorial: mapping the field of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 3(2), 95-108.
- Creswell, J., W. (2012). *Educational research. Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (4th ed). Edward Brothers Inc.
- Cronbach, L.J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297-334.
- Czaja, R. & Blair, J. (2005). *Designing surveys. A guide to decisions and procedures*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- da Silveira, C., Lages, C. & Simoes, C. (2013). Reconceptualizing brand identity in a dynamic environment. *Journal of Business Research*, 66, 28–36.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2003). The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In: Denzin, N. and Lincoln Y. (ed). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (ed) (2003) Handbook of Qualitative Research.
- deVaus D. (2002). *Surveys in Social Research*. (5th ed.). Routledge, London.
- Diamantopoulos, A. & Schlegelmilch, B. (1997). *Taking the Fear Out of Data Analysis: A Step-by-Step Approach*. London: The Dryden Press.
- Dillman, D. A., Sinclair, M. D. & Clark, J. R. (1993). Effects of questionnaire length, respondent-friendly design, and a difficult question on response rates for occupant-addressed 23 census mail surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 157, 289-304.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Lowe, A. (2004). *Management research, an introduction*. (2nd Ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Efron, B. & Gong, G. (1983). A leisure look at the bootstrap, the jackknife, and cross validation. *The American Statistician*, 37(1), 36-48.
- Eriksson, P. & Kovalainen, A. (2008). Qualitative methods in business research. (1st ed.). *European Journal of Marketing*, 29(4), 57-66.

- Field, P. A. & Morse, J. A. (1985). *Nursing Research: The Application of Qualitative Research*. London: Croom Helm.
- Fornell, C. & Cha, J. (1993). *Partial Least Squares (PLS)*. Working paper, University of Michigan Business School, Ann Arbor.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.
- Gerbing, D. W. & Anderson, J. C. (1988). An updated paradigm for scale development incorporating unidimensionality and its assessment. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20(1), 63-70.
- Gilbert, N. (2011). *Researching Social Life*, (3rd ed), Sage Publications Ltd, London.
- Gill, J. & Johnson, P. (2010). *Research methods for managers*. (4th ed). London: Sage Publications.
- Gorden, R. L. (1980). *Interviewing: Strategy, techniques and tactics*. Homewood: Dorsey.
- Gray, B. J., Fan, K. S. & Llanes, V. A. (2003). Branding universities in Asian markets. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 12(2/3), 108-122.
- Greene, J. C. (2007). *Mixed methods in social inquiry*. San Francisco: John Wiley.
- Gronroos, C. (2001). The perceived service quality concept – a mistake? *Managing Service Quality*, 11(3), 150-2.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (ed) (2003) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Guion, L. A., Deilh, D. C. & McDonald, D. (2006). *Conducting an In-depth Interview*. University of Florida (IFAS Extension) Family Youth and Community Sciences Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, University of Florida. FCS6012.

- Gummeson, E. (2005). Qualitative research in marketing: Road-map for a wilderness of complexity and unpredictability. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39(3/4), 309-327.
- Hair, J. F. J., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L. & Black, W. C. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis*, Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Hair, J. F.J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2011). PLS-SEM: Indeed, a silver bullet, *The Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 19(2), 139-152.
- Harman, H. H. (1967). *Modern Factor Analysis*, (2nd ed). University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Hatch, M. J. & Cunliffe, A. L. (2006). *Organisation theory*. (2nd ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Healey, M. J. & Rawlinson, M. B. (1994). Interviewing techniques in business and management research. In: Wass, V.J. and Wells, P.E. (ed), *Principles and practice in business and management research*. Dartmouth, Aldershot. 123-146.
- Heap, J. L. & Roth, P. A. (1973). On phenomenological sociology. *American Sociological Review*, 38, 354-367.
- Hellier, P. K., Geursen, G. M., Carr, R.A. & Rickard, J. A. (2003). Customer repurchase intention: a general structural equation model. *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 37(11), 1762-1800.
- Hemsley-Brown, J. & Goonawardana, S. (2007). Brand harmonization in the international higher education market. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 942-8.
- Hemsley-Brown, J. & Oplatka, I. (2006). Universities in a global marketplace. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 19(4), 316-38.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2009). The use of partial least squares path modeling in international marketing. In R. R. Sinkovics & P. N. Ghauri (Eds.), *Advances in International Marketing*, 20, 277-319. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.

- Hinds, P. S. (1989). Method triangulation to index change in clinical phenomena. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 11(4), 440-447.
- Hinson, R. & Sorensen, O. (2006). E-business and small Ghanaian exporters: Preliminary micro firm explorations in the light of a digital divide. *Online Information Review*, 30 (2), 116-138.
- Hoffmann, A. & Birnbrich, C. (2012). The impact of fraud prevention on bank-customer relationships: an empirical investigation in retail banking. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 30(5), 390-407.
- Holloway, I. & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative Research*, 3(3), 345-357.
- Howe, K. R. 1988. Against the quantitative-qualitative incompatibility thesis or dogmas die hard. *Educational Researcher*, 17, 10-16.
- Hussein, A. (2009). The use of triangulation in social sciences research: Can qualitative and quantitative methods be combined? *Journal of Comparative Social Work*, 1, 1-12.
- Ivankova, N. V., Creswell, J. W. & Stick, S. (2006). Using mixed methods sequential explanatory design: From theory to practice. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 3-20.
- Ibrahim, M. A., 2012. *Thematic Analysis: A critical Review of its Process and Evaluation* WEII International European Academic Conference Proceedings. Zagreb, Croatia.
- Ivy, J. (2008). A new higher education marketing mix: the 7Ps for MBA marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22(4), 288-299.
- Jamal, A. & Good, M. (2001). Consumers and brands: a study of the impact of self-image congruence on brand preference and satisfaction. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 19(7), 482-92.
- Johnson, R. & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.

- Kang, G. D. & James, J. (2004). Service quality dimensions: An examination of Grönroos's service quality model. *Managing Service Quality*, 14(4), 266–277.
- Krishnan, B. C. & Hartline, M. D. (2001). Brand equity: is it more important in services? *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(5), 328-42.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews – An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Laing, A., Lewis, B., Foxall, G. & Hogg, G. (2002). Predicting a diverse future: directions and issues in the marketing of services. *European Journal of Marketing*, 36(4), 478-97.
- Ledden, L., Kalafatis, S. P., Mathioudakis, M. (2011). The idiosyncratic behaviour of service quality, value, satisfaction, and intention to recommend in higher education: An empirical examination. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27(11–12), 1232–1260.
- Lings, I. N. & Greenley, G. E. (2010). Internal market orientation and market oriented behaviours. *Journal of Service Management*, 21(3), 321-343.
- Luck, D. J. & Rubin, R. S. (1987). *Marketing Research*. (7th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall International.
- Malhotra, N. K. & Burks, D. (2000). *Marketing Research: An Applied Approach*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Malhotra, N. K. (2004). *Marketing research: an applied orientation*. (4th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Malhotra, N. K. (2010). *Marketing research: An applied orientation*. (6th ed.). Global edition. England: Pearson Education.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews: Forum: *Qualitative Social Research (FQS)*, Volume 11, No. 3, Art. 8
- Maxwell, J. A., & Mittapalli, K. (2010). Realism as a stance for mixed method research. In Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and*

- behavioral research*, 2nd edition (pp. 145-167). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McGivern, Y. (2003). *The Practice of Market and Social Research: An Introduction*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- McMillan, K. & Weyers, J. (2007). *How to write dissertations and project reports*. Pearson Education Limited, London: Prentice Hall.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis; an expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- Mitchell, V. (1999). Consumer perceived risk: conceptualizations and models. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33(1/2), 163-195.
- Modell, S. (2009). In defence of triangulation: A critical realist approach to mixed methods research in management accounting. *Management Accounting Research*, 20(3), 208-221.
- Mourad, M., Ennew, C., & Kortam, W. (2011). Brand equity in higher education. *Marketing Intelligence Planning*, 29(4), 403-420.
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2015). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Date accessed: May, 2016.
- National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE). (2013). *Summary statistics for accredited tertiary education institutions*. 2011/2012 academic year.
- Neuman, W. L. (2000). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Neuman, W.L. (2003). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, (5th ed), Boston, Allyn & Bacon.
- Ng, I. & Forbes, J. (2009). Education as service: the understanding of university experience through the service logic. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19(1), 38-64.

- Nguyen, N. & Leblanc, G. (2001). Corporate image and corporate reputation in customers' retention decisions in services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 8(4), 227-36.
- Nunnally, J. C. & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory*. (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Oppenheim, A. N. (1984). *Questionnaire design and Attitude Measurement*. London: Heinemann
- Parahoo, K. (2006). *Nursing research: Principles, process and issues*. (2nd ed.). Basingstoke, Palgrave.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. & Berry, L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implication for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, 49(4), 41-50.
- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt T. E. (2014). University brand equity: an empirical investigation of its dimensions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(6), 616 – 634.
- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt, T. E. (2011). Utilizing brand ecosystem for branding and building brand equity in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 25(7), 724-739.
- Reichardt, C. S., & Cook, T. D. (1979). Beyond qualitative versus quantitative methods. In T. D. Cook & C. S. Reichardt, Eds., *Qualitative and quantitative methods in program evaluation* (pp. 7-32). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.
- Ringle, C. M., Wende, S., & Will, A. (2005). *SmartPLS 2.0 (M3) beta*, Hamburg: <http://www.smartpls.de>. Date accessed, 15th July, 2016.
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis, J. (2011). *Qualitative research practice for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage.

- Roulston, K. (2001). Data analysis and 'theorizing as ideology. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 279-302.
- Saunders, M. L. P. & Thornhill, A. (2007). *Research methods for business students*. (4th Ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hal.
- Scott, I. & Mazhindu, D. (2005). *Statistics for health care professionals; an introduction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Seidel, J. V. (1998) *Qualitative data analysis*. In: *The ethnography user's manual*. Available at <www.qualisresearch.com>. Date accessed: August 2013.
- Sirgy, M. J., Grewal, D., Mangleburg, T. F., Park, J., Chon, K. S., Claiborn, C. B., Johar, J. S. & Berkman, H. (1997). Assessing the predictive validity of two methods of measuring self-image congruence. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(3), 229-41.
- Sobb, R. & Perry, C. (2005). *Research Design and Data Analysis in Realism Research*. Thousand Oaks. Sage Publication.
- Sweeney, J. C. & Soutar, G. N. (2001). Consumer Perceived Value: The Development of a Multiple Item Scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 77, 203-220.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology; combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research*, Thousand Oaks, C.A. Sage.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (2010) (eds). *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research*, Thousand Oaks, C.A. Sage.
- Teddie, C. & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioural sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Tenenhaus, M., Vinzi, V., Chatelin, Y. M. & Lauro, C. (2005). *PLS path modelling. Computational Statistics and Data Analysis*, 48(1), 159-205.

- Tolba, A. H. & Hassan, S. S. (2009). Linking customer- based brand equity with brand market performance: a managerial approach. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 18(5), 356-66.
- Tortosa, V., Moliner, M. A. & Sanchez, J. (2009). Internal market orientation and its influence on organisational performance. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(11/12), 1435-1456.
- Tuli, F. (2010). The Basic of Distinction between Qualitative and Quantitative Research in Social Science: Reflection on Qutological, Espistemological and Methodological Perspectives (Review Article). *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Science*, 6, 97-108.
- Varghese, N. V. (2006). *Growth and Expansion of Private Higher Education in Africa*. International Institute for Education Planning, UNESCO.
- White, B. (2000). *Dissertation skills for business and management*. Cassell, London.
- Willms, D. G., Best, J. A., Taylor, D. W., Gilbert, J. R., Wilson, D. M. C., Lindsay, E. A. & Singer, J. (1990). A systematic approach for using qualitative methods in primary prevention research, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 14, 391–409.
- Webb, J. R. (2000). *Understanding and designing marketing research*. International Thompson Business Press, London.
- Williams, R. L. Jr. (2012). *Branding through renaming for strategic alignment in service organizations*. Doctoral thesis. Edinburgh Napier University.
- Wold, H. (1982). Systems under indirect observations using PLS. in Fornell, C. (Ed.), *A Second Generation of Multivariate Analysis*. Praeger, New York, NY.
- Wolfram C. J. & Hassard, J. (2005). Triangulation in organizational research: A representation. *Organization Studies*, 12(1), 109-133.
- Yoo, B. & Donthu, N. (2001). Developing and validating multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 52, 1-14.
- Zikmund, G. W., 2000. *Business Research Methods*. 6th ed., The Dryden Press, Harcourt College Publishers, New York.

CHAPTER SIX

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings and analysis of qualitative research undertaken through in-depth interviews. This qualitative part of the study is in line with the philosophical position that social order and its meanings come about through the actions of social actors and can be understood through the eyes of those actors themselves; in the context of this study, stakeholders of the university setting, particularly students. This section presents an analysis of interview responses in line with major themes generated with a view to addressing the specific research objectives as presented in Table 6.1. The aim is to ascertain the applicability of the specific SBBE constructs under investigation to the Ghanaian university setting. Questions asked in this part of the study therefore sought to ascertain respondents' opinions on the relationships between the university brand equity constructs under study and university preference of undergraduate students in Ghana. Table 6.1 presents the specific research objectives (RO1, RO2 and RO4) that the in-depth interviews sought to address.

Table 6.1: Research Objectives under Qualitative Analysis

Research Objective (RO)	Method of Analysis	Research Instrument
RO1. To ascertain whether student-based brand equity (SBBE) and university preference are related in Ghana;	Qualitative (And Quantitative)	In-depth Interviews (And Questionnaire)
RO2. To identify the nature of relationships between some specific SBBE constructs and university preference in Ghana;	Qualitative (And Quantitative)	In-depth Interviews (And Questionnaire)
RO4. To ascertain the applicability of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) concept to the Ghanaian university context.	Qualitative (And Quantitative)	In-depth Interviews (And Questionnaire)

Source: Researcher's compilation

6.2 Analysis of Qualitative Findings

The following section presents an analysis of qualitative data collected through the in-depth interviews.

6.2.1 Background of Respondents

This section presents data on respondents' age and gender as shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	13	59
Female	9	41
Total	22	100
Age Group		
18 -20	8	36
21 – 24	9	41
25 – 29	3	14
30 – 34	1	4.5
35 – 39	0	0
40 and above	1	4.5
Total	22	100

Source: Field data, 2016

Table 6.2 portrays a fair representation of both sexes in the interviews as 59% of the respondents were male while 41% were females. According to the table, respondents between the ages of 18 years and 24 years dominated the sample. Forty one percent of the respondents were in the 21-24 year group while 36% were aged between 18 years and 20 years. There was no representation from the over forty year group.

6.2.2 General Questions and Responses on University Preference

At the introductory part of the interviews, respondents were asked questions that bordered on their preference for university institutions in Ghana. Specifically, the participants were asked to indicate whether they had a preference for specific universities, and if they did, what factors generally accounted for that. Other questions related to why some were not in the attendance of their preferred universities, as well as whether they had any emotional attachment to their preferred universities.

Que1a: Is there any university you prefer to all others in Ghana?

Ans: All the twenty two participants of the in-depth interviews stated that they preferred particular universities. Overwhelmingly, nine of the respondents indicated that they preferred University of Ghana (UG/Legon) to all others. Six expressed their preference for Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) while four indicated their preference for Ashesi University. Two preferred Central University while one preferred Cape Coast University. Interestingly, seventeen of the participants preferred other universities to the ones they were attending.

A female student of University of Ghana stated:

“It couldn’t have been any other university. University of Ghana is the only university in Ghana, as far as I am concerned.”

A level 200 student of Kings University College noted:

“Like everyone I know, I have my preferred university; except that sometimes you don’t get what you want. I am here because I tried the big ones like University of Ghana and KNUST without any success. I still wish it was possible to change even at this stage.”

The foregoing indicated that, indeed, respondents preferred particular universities in the country.

Que 1b: Can you mention some factors that make you prefer particular universities?

Ans: Participants mentioned a wide array of factors that determine their preference for universities. Factors that were regularly cited in that regard included university image, reputation, popularity, credibility, employability, moral uprightness, affiliation and religious

orientation. Other factors mentioned were general campus environment, fees, physical infrastructure, teaching and learning facilities, faculty and teaching quality, overall perceived institutional quality, flexibility and word of mouth commendation. Seven respondents indicated that they preferred University of Ghana because of the availability of teaching and learning facilities, good faculty and good reputation.

A level 300 student of Central University noted:

“My preference for Legon is because it is Ghana’s premier university, with all the facilities and good lecturers in addition to good reputation. That is a quality university. Why would anybody go for anything less if the opportunity was there?... I couldn’t get a place there because my grades were not sufficient.”

A student of Methodist University College who preferred Ashesi University expressed her opinion this way:

“I like Ashesi because of the quality of teaching there. That is a very credible university because of its American connection. My friend goes there and she tells me a lot about how their graduates easily get jobs. I wasn’t able to go here because of the fees involved. It comes cheaper here.”

In his opinion, a level 100 student of Central University said moral uprightness and religious affiliation were his main reasons for choosing that university as expressed in the following words:

“I could have gone to any of the big names in town like Legon and the rest. I chose to come here because I am a member of International Central Gospel Church. I knew that level of moral discipline would be found here and I haven’t regretted it.”

The results therefore indicate that respondents had reason to prefer the universities they said they did.

Que 1c: What can make you prefer any other university than the one you currently prefer?

Ans: Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that there was very little likelihood that they would change their minds about their preferred universities. Most were of the view that things would have to go seriously wrong to make them change their minds.

A level 200 student of University of Ghana noted:

“I don’t believe anything can make me change my mind about Legon. All that I know is that this is the best university in the country and there is so much to show for that. Simply look at the physical surroundings; the infrastructure alone without even talking about the quality of education that you get. It’s simply the best.”

A student of Central University who preferred Ashesi University observed:

“Ashesi is a niche university that aims at delivering the best to the top class in Ghana. Who would not be happy to be associated with such an institution? Nothing will make me hope for a different university.”

From the responses, respondents saw no reason why they should change their minds about their most preferred university institutions.

Que 1d: Why are you currently not attending the university you say you prefer most?

Ans: Eleven of the respondents indicated that they could not attend their most preferred universities because they could not obtain the required grades from their pre-university examinations. Four cited financial challenges as being exclusively responsible for their inability to access their most preferred universities while two respondents mentioned inconvenient location.

The only student of University of Ghana who preferred Ashesi University noted:

“It had always been my dream to go to Ashesi but unfortunately my parents could not afford their fees. I am here because it is cheaper here.”

A student of Valley View University observed:

“I applied to do accounting at Legon but they gave me Philosophy because I couldn’t meet the School of Administration requirements. My passes were a bit weak.”

Some respondents thus were not in the attendance of their preferred universities for very tangible reasons.

Que 1e: Do you feel any emotional connection between you and your preferred university?

Respondents were nearly split in two halves in their answers to this question. Twelve of them indicated that they preferred particular universities because of what was physically evident in those institutions, while the remaining ten maintained that they felt emotionally connected to those institutions.

The following responses capture the two contrasting opinions:

A level 300 student of Methodist University who preferred University of Ghana opined:

“I like Legon because of what I see and hear about that university. The campus, the courses, the tuition and the general environment. Legon is simply superior in the country.”

Conversely, a student of University of Ghana maintained:

“ Legon is simply superior. It is just the feeling of being a member of the big family. Nothing comes closer to that.”

The above responses indicate that, while some students are emotionally attached to their most preferred universities, there are some others whose preference is based on what is physically evident in those institutions.

The remainder of this chapter presents an analysis of results in respect of the individual SBBE constructs underlying the study.

6.2.3 University Institution Image

This part of the interview sought to establish any possible relationship between the image of universities in Ghana and students' preference for universities.

Que 2a: How reliable is your most preferred university?

Ans: There was a dominant impression among respondents that their most preferred university was reliable. Respondents overwhelmingly believed that their most preferred universities delivered on their promise. Thirteen respondents thought of reliability in terms of the institutions ability to offer courses that enable graduates to acquire jobs. Five respondents also thought that their preferred universities could be relied upon to provide quality tuition.

A student of University of Ghana opined:

“Legon never disappoints; most of the top people in industry are from here. They offer courses that are relevant on the job market.... so yes one can be sure of getting a qualification that is recognised and respected out there.”

A Central University student who preferred a different university maintained:

“Ashesi provides world class quality tuition that is globally acceptable, so you are sure of getting quality lecturers to teach you once you are there.”

The responses thus far indicate that respondents thought their preferred universities were reliable.

Que 2b: What do you think about the level of service provided by your most preferred university?

Ans: Most respondents were of the view that their most preferred university provided top quality service to students. Specifically, eight respondents cited good communication between the institutions and students through their student services directorates. Five mentioned counselling and advisory services while two talked about rapport between faculty and students.

A student of Valley View university noted:

“Service quality is very high there. Students are treated with respect and they are made to feel valued. Lecturers are always prepared to help you with any difficulties you may have.”

Similarly, a student of Methodist University College who preferred University of Ghana indicated:

“There are effective formal structures in Legon that ensure good quality service to students. The systems are simply there, like career counselling which is very beneficial to students.”

The foregoing suggests that respondents perceived the general service environments of their preferred universities to be good.

Que 2c: Would you say that your preferred university is a successful one?

Ans: Unanimously, respondents believed that their preferred universities were successful in many respects. All the nine respondents who preferred University of Ghana maintained that it was a successful university citing its history in graduating most of the prominent people in industry. Two respondents who preferred Central University also commented on the institutions’ ability to produce many people in managerial positions in industry in its relatively short period of existence.

A student of Central University opined:

“Central has not been around for long; but look at the number of graduates from here who are occupying top positions out there. I think we are a success.”

A student of Valley View University insisted:

“Everybody talk about Ashesi because they have been successful in attracting the best students in the country. Although it is a small university, people crave to be there because of their success.”

Respondents therefore overwhelmingly believed that their most preferred universities were successful.

Que 2d: Does your preferred university contribute to society in any way?

Ans: Most respondents thought their preferred university contributes to society. Eighteen respondents believed that they had directly witnessed instances in which their preferred universities have offered some contribution to society. Fifteen of them also argued that providing graduates for the labour market is a form of societal contribution.

A student of Methodist University College observed:

“Yes Legon does so both directly and indirectly. They have scholarship programmes for brilliant students with poor backgrounds. They also contribute to many social events that help society, but don’t also forget that by providing so many graduates every year, that in itself is a big contribution to society.”

A student of Central University who preferred that institution noted:

“Corporate social responsibility is something that every university invests in. The founder has a scholarship scheme for brilliant but needy students. Even look at the compulsory community programme that students have to go through before graduating. All that is meant to improve society.”

From the above, it is evident that respondents believed their preferred universities contributed to society.

Que 2e: How sincere would you say your most preferred university is?

Ans: There was a dominant impression among respondents that their preferred university was sincere. Many drew a direct connection between sincerity and reliability, indicating that a reliable university is also likely to be sincere.

A student of University of Ghana maintained:

“Remember I said earlier that this university is a reliable one. By inference, it is also sincere. There is nothing like promising and failing here like we hear from other universities. I believe that is because of the structured systems in place here.”

A student of Central University who wished she was at Ashesi noted:

“Because of the level of discipline at that place, they cannot be insincere. The structures are just there to follow. Here there is discipline but I think it is better there.”

The foregoing indicated that respondents believed that their preferred universities were also sincere.

Que 2f: Do you know what your friends think of your preferred university?

Ans: Respondents mostly believed that their colleague thought positively about their most preferred university. Sixteen respondents thought that their most preferred universities are also perceived in a similar light by their colleagues. Respondents believed that their mates saw their preferred university as high class, reliable, successful and of good quality among other such complimentary words.

A student of Methodist University maintained:

“Most of my friends think of Legon the way I think of it. You know I am not the only person who would wish to have been there. We all think it is a reputable university that can offer a lot.”

A student of Central University noted:

“My friends think highly of Central because of the impression that I create out there. Those who are here know what is here, but for those who are not here, it is up to us to create

that good impression. They like it the way I do, although there are some who do not agree with me.”

A student of University of Ghana maintained:

“I know what they think of Legon because when we were at secondary school, we all wished to come here. So for those of us who are here and those who are not here, I think we all think this university is a top one that can be trusted to deliver.”

Respondents therefore believed that their friends thought positively about their preferred universities.

Que 2g: How do you compare this university to others in the country?

Ans: Respondents believed that their preferred universities compared positively with their competitors. Sixteen respondents maintained that their preferred universities were superior to all others in the country. Five maintained that their preferred universities were just as good as some other good top ones in the country while one respondent maintained that comparison was not the issue for her, intimating blind preference by insisting that it was simply a matter of preference.

She insisted:

“For me it is not a matter of whether they compare positively or negatively. As I indicated earlier, I feel I am attached to KNUST simply because I am. It doesn’t matter what other universities are doing.”

A student of Central University noted:

“This university compares favourably with any other university in Ghana and even abroad. Look at the infrastructure at Miotso, the range of courses we offer including architecture, pharmacy and Law. For me the image of the founder alone is so strong.”

The above indicates that respondents believed their preferred university compares very well with the competition.

Que 2h: Please comment on your general impression of this university.

Ans: Respondents spoke positively about their preferred universities. They believed their preferred universities offered good quality tuition, provided good students’ service, had attractive physical environments and facilities for research, teaching and learning. Other expressions used included good image, good reputation, good prospects for employment and ‘best university’ in the country.

A student of Central University noted:

“This is a good university. They have the physical facilities, IT facilities and also good lecturers. What moves me the most is the image of the founder? He is such a reputable man.”

The analysis of responses, thus far, indicates that respondents believed that their most preferred universities had good image, which observation further indicates that there is a strong connection between university image and university preference, in the opinion of the respondents.

6.2.4 University Institution Identity

This part of the interview sought to establish any possible relationship between university institution identity and students' preference for universities.

Que 3a: How popular do you consider your preferred university to be?

Ans: Respondents were unanimous in their assertion that their most preferred university was popular. Seventeen respondents believed their preferred universities were well known in Ghana while fifteen of them insisted that their preferred universities were preferred by most Ghanaians. Four respondents maintained that their preferred universities were popular internationally, particularly in the West African sub-region.

A student of Valley View University who preferred KNUST maintained:

“KNUST is the most popular universities in the country when it comes to science and technology. Everybody knows that if you are really into science that is the place to go.”

A student of University of Ghana who was happy to be in the attendance of her first choice university bragged:

“Of course we are popular; the only university in Ghana. Even in the midst of the foreign operators in this country Legon continues to be the most popular that everyone wants to go.”

Respondents therefore believed that their preferred universities were popular.

Que3b: How attractive do you consider the logo and other symbols of this university?

Ans: Interestingly, only three respondents indicated that they were familiar with the logos, jingles and colours of their preferred universities. Eleven respondents maintained that they had seen the logos of the universities concerned but had not taken time to closely study their contents. Eighteen respondents insisted that they were not interested in symbols of their institutions as that did not add anything to their academic fortunes. They indicated that they were not moved by such elements as logos, colours, brands of cars used, official uniforms,

corporate insignia and other such symbols that are known to be associated with university institutions. A popular opinion in support of this position was that such elements did not add to nor subtract from the university experience in any way.

A student of Central University expressed her opinion this way:

“Central changed its logo sometime last year but I have not even bothered to look at its contents. All I know is that it used to be purplish but now it’s red.”

A student of Methodist University stated:

I am not that interested in logos and colours and the like. They may be attractive but for me, the most important thing is the qualification to enable me to eventually find a good job when I graduate. Clearly, the logo has nothing to do in all that.”

The above responses indicate that respondents thought university identity elements and symbols were not important to them.

Que 3c: Visually, do you think this university is remarkably deferent from others in the country?

Ans: Seven respondents were of the view that their preferred universities were more visually appealing than any other in the country. They mainly cited physical infrastructure.

A student of Methodist University said the following about University of Ghana:

“Legon has a campus that is physically attractive. You look at it and it gives you an impression of a world class university. Ours is ok as compared to some private ones that don’t look anything like a university.”

A Central University student observed:

“Look at our campus at Miotso. I haven’t been to all the universities in Ghana but I as far as I know, no university in the country comes anywhere near that.”

Conversely, an overwhelming fifteen respondents indicated that the campuses of their most preferred universities were just as ordinary as that of any other. Twelve respondents maintained that their preference for universities was not based on superior visual identity but rather what the institutions can generally offer them as students.

Most respondents therefore felt that the physical surroundings of their preferred universities were not that conspicuously different from other institutions.

Que 3d: What is your opinion about fees charged by your most preferred university?

Ans: Twelve respondents maintained that their preferred university charged fees that were unreasonable. Some cited unfavourable economic circumstances in the country and believed as good as those universities were, they had not been considerate. Six respondents thought that fees charged were fair, while four indicated that they were not aware of the fees charged by their preferred universities.

A student of Methodist University who preferred Ashesi noted:

“Their fees are too high. I hear they charge in dollars which is not fair to some of us.”

Similarly, a student of Central University noted:

“As much as Central remains my first choice, I think they need to do something about the fees. It is too high. Not many of us can afford it that easily. Many people owe and it tends to affect their performance.”

It appears, based on the above, that most respondents were unhappy about the fee levels in their preferred universities.

Que 3e: What would you say about the quality of advertising done by your preferred university?

Ans: Respondents unanimously indicated that their preferred universities did not advertise apart from the seasonal campaigns during admissions. All the respondents indicated that they hardly see or hear about their preferred universities any time of the year apart from the admissions season.

A student of University of Ghana noted:

“You know most universities in Ghana don’t advertise. You only see them on the tele and newspapers when they open admissions, and when they do, all they talk about is their courses and nothing else.”

The foregoing suggests a neutral relationship between elements of university identity and students' preference for university institutions in Ghana. The widespread view held by respondents therefore did not support the hypothetical stance that elements of university identity are positively correlated with students' university preference.

6.2.5 University Institution Reputation

The line of questioning under this dimension was aimed at identifying any possible relationship between the nature of reputation that particular universities wield in the country and students' preference for universities.

Que 4a: In your opinion, how does the university handle promises made to students?

Ans: Most respondents believed that their preferred universities fulfilled their promises made to students. Three respondents conceded to not having had any direct encounter with the universities to determine their level of responsiveness in that regard, but were swift in adding that what they had heard from colleagues indicate that the institutions were trustworthy.

A student of University of Ghana noted:

“Legon can be trusted to fulfil its promises largely because it is governed by well rooted systems that cannot be compromised. It is very much unlike some of the private universities that are run on the whims and caprices of individual owners.”

A student from Central University intimated:

“Central cannot afford to break its promises because that can have some implication on the reputation of the founder who is so much respected.”

It is thus evident that respondents thought their preferred universities did not renege on their promises.

Que 4b: Please comment on the reputation of this university.

Ans: All the twenty two respondents believed their preferred university had good reputation. Respondents regularly indicated that the universities they preferred had reputation for honesty, credibility, reliability and superior quality, in addition to academic excellence. There was consensus among respondents that what others like parents, siblings and friends tell them about particular universities, as a result of such informants' past experiences with those universities, does have an effect on their university selection considerations.

A female student of University of Ghana noted:

“Some of my older siblings were here and they said a lot about this university and that is why I decided to come here.”

Respondents agreed that the reputation that is formed from their encounters with universities by way of the latter’s communication programmes, workshops and conferences also paint a certain perception, which influences their preference and choice. A dominant impression among respondents was that universities with reputation for efficiency, modern infrastructure, good quality facilities, quality tuition, graduate employability, etc. have the potential to attract students. A popular belief was that reputable universities tend to graduate reputable students whose attractive positions in industry become a source of motivation for potential students to get on board.

Six respondents thought that the reputation of graduates who are now in industry, also determine the reputation of university institutions. A student of Valley View University observed:

“When I look at some past students of this university who are reputable men and women in society, it serves as inspiration and motivation for me to also be part of this institution.”

Conversely, there were some respondents who decided to answer this question by looking at the poor reputation of some universities, for which they were not prepared to be part of those universities. Some traits of negative reputation mentioned included outmoded infrastructure, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, low quality tuition and poor students’ services. Respondents overwhelmingly believed that, quite apart from enjoying public admiration, positive university reputation positively impacts graduates’ job hunt fortunes. A student of Methodist University expressed his view as follows:

“When you graduate from a reputable university, employers see you to be someone who has received quality education and so are prepared to take you on.”

The foregoing indicates that respondents thought their preferred university had good reputation.

Que 4c: How would you compare the reputation of this university to that of other universities in the country?

Ans: There was consensus among respondents that their most preferred universities compared favourably to other reputable universities in the country.

A respondent from Central University observed:

“In terms of reputation, I think we are better than most universities in the country. We may not be the best, because there are the likes of Legon and Ashesi and KNUST around who are equally reputable but those ones are not better than us.”

Respondents therefore believed that their preferred university compares favourably with other universities in the country.

Que 4 d: In your opinion, how credible is your preferred university and how do they respond to students’ needs?

Ans: Respondents unanimously indicated that their preferred universities were credible. Five respondents linked this question to previous questions that bordered on reliability and promise keeping.

A student of University of Ghana noted:

“Remember I mentioned earlier that this university is trustworthy. They do what they say. And as I said, they cannot afford not to be credible because that can affect their hard-won reputation.”

Respondents also felt that their preferred universities were reliable when it came to students’ services, as reliability and credibility are largely intertwined.

A student of Methodist University commented:

“I know Ashesi to be reliable because they have an effective students’ services directorate that addresses all student concerns. They have good complaints procedures and even advise students on career path issues.”

A student of Central University noted:

“Our students’ services unit puts students first. Although they are not that proactive in identifying students’ needs, they are always prepared to help you once you approach them with a challenge.”

This part of the interview sought to establish any possible relationship between the image of universities in Ghana and students’ preference for universities.

It is evident from the discussion so far that the nature of reputation a university yields is positively linked to its student attraction prospects. This position is in tandem with views espoused in the literature about the linear relationship between corporate reputation and consumers' choice of products and services. It is also consistent with many research outcomes including that of Pinar et al. (2014) that University reputation is a strong component of university brand equity.

6.2.6 Perceived University Service Quality

This part of the interview sought to establish any possible relationship between perceived institutional service quality and students' preference for universities. The line of questioning under this dimension therefore afforded the interviewer the opportunity to determine the possible effect of students' perception of the quality of university brands on their choice of institutions.

Que 6a: What would you say about the quality of this university and how consistent is that?

Ans: Respondents believed that their preferred universities were of high quality. Sixteen of the respondents thought that the quality of their preferred universities surpassed any other in the country while six argued that their preferred universities were among the best in terms of quality. The following verbatim responses capture the two strands of view held by respondents:

A student of University of Ghana argued:

"In terms of quality, you and I know Legon is the best in the country and even one of the best globally. No matter how you look at it, we are the best; whether physical infrastructure, facilities, services or tuition....and that has always been the case."

A student of Central University who thought that the institution was as good as any good one put her view this way:

"The quality of Central is comparable to any of the best in the country any day. Even in terms of infrastructure, I would say we are the best; look at the computer facilities; and we have good lecturers too. You can rely on Central to provide good quality service as well."

Respondents also felt that those universities were consistent in delivering superior quality. Five respondents felt that the quality of university institutions has a rub-on effect on their students.

A student of University of Ghana had the following to say:

“People tend to respect you when they get to know that you are a student of Legon. You kind of feel big. Something I believe I would not feel if I was in another university.”

From the above, it is clear that respondents believed that their preferred university was of good quality.

Que 6b: Are there any benefits associated with being part of a university with high service quality?

Ans: This probing question about institutional service quality brought graduate employability to the fore, when many respondents drew a link between perception of institutional service quality and relevance of course content in the face of increasingly demanding contemporary industry environments. A popular opinion among respondents in that regard was that graduates from universities with higher perceived institutional quality have brighter prospects of securing good jobs. This is because, according to respondents, such universities are also perceived to offer quality programmes and courses of demonstrable relevance to the job market.

A respondent from University of Ghana offered an opinion in that direction as presented below:

“Legon offers programmes that are relevant to industry. It is a pity many of our graduates can’t find jobs in Ghana, but that has nothing to do with the quality of programmes here.”

Six respondents believed that the level of service quality provided tends to affect the self image of students.

A student of Valley View University noted:

“Where the quality of students’ services is high, then students are treated well and it helps to determine who they believe they are in society. It gives you that positive feeling.”

There were some in the minority who believed that good service quality does not only benefit students but goes a long way to benefit the universities themselves.

A student of Methodist University noted:

“Because of the good quality services they provide to students there, they tend to talk about it. Those of us who are not there hear about it and it helps to affect our perception of that university; and so in the long run, the Ashesi benefits.”

Respondents therefore believed that high quality students’ services tend to affect students and the institutions alike.

Que 6c: What do you think about the quality of tuition in this university?

Ans: Respondents were unanimous in their belief that their preferred university delivered good quality tuition. Eleven of them said that their main reason for preferring their institution was that they perceived the institutions' tuition to be of good quality. Some respondents cited the relevance of good course content as the bedrock of quality tuition, indicating that it is one of the surest means of fulfilling the dream of every university – to attract best quality students. The following statement by one respondent is typical of that belief:

“If you want to attract the best students, then you need to be seen to provide good quality tuition as well. Legon has attracted the best students every year because people think they deliver quality tuition.”

A student of University of Ghana noted:

“Legon has reputation for quality tuition. Our course contents are comparable to any good university anywhere in the world and our lecturers are world class as well.”

Similarly, a Methodist University student who expressed her preference for Ashesi University noted:

“Their courses are American standard and most of their lecturers are from outside as well; and so yes, as much as I think things are not that bad here, tuition quality is very high there”.

Respondents also made reference to positive interaction between students and faculty, which creates the all-important congenial university environment that promotes effective learning. This is how a tuition quality-driven respondent from Valley View University expressed his view on the subject:

“The lecturers are good and they also have very good teaching assistants who spend time with you after normal classes; you are also free to go to their office for help if necessary.”

Even among those who admitted openly that high fees were a deterrent, there was the admission that good quality comes at a cost. As observed by a student of Central University who preferred Ashesi University:

“Their fees are very high. But when you want good tuition, you don’t consider the cost. What you look at is the benefit you will derive from that level of quality.”

Respondents therefore thought that tuition quality in their preferred universities was high.

Que 6d: How well do you think this university is operated and how does that affect its performance?

Ans: Respondents believed that their preferred university had firm structures that ensured that they were properly run. Some students who preferred public universities argued that their preferred institutions were properly ran because they were not operated according to the personal interests of individual owners as it was in the private universities. Conversely, some who preferred private universities argued that decisions were made quicker in their preferred institutions because there was no bureaucracy as there is in the public sector universities.

A student of University of Ghana who preferred Ashesi commented:

“Things happen quicker there because decisions are not delayed, unlike here where everything has to go through a long process of discussion at government and ministerial levels. That is part of the reason they perform better.”

Another student of University of Ghana who preferred that institution however argued:

“I believe things are done better here because of the quality of deliberations that take place between the professors and the ministers. The private sector doesn’t have that opportunity and that affects the way they perform.”

In all, respondents believed that their preferred universities were properly administered.

From the responses, respondents thought highly of the quality of their most preferred universities, even where they had not directly experienced those institutions. These findings corroborate findings in the literature that an institution’s actual quality is often less important than its prestige, or reputation for quality, because it is the university’s perceived excellence which, in fact, guides the decisions of prospective students. The foregoing therefore points to

a positive relationship between perceived institutional service quality and students' preference for universities.

6.2.7 Graduate Employability

The interviewer also sought to investigate the effect of graduate employability on respondents' university preference.

Que 6a: Are qualifications from this university accepted in other countries?

Ans: All the respondents asserted that qualifications from their preferred universities were accepted in other countries and added that many graduates from those institutions had studied in other countries.

A student of University of Ghana observed:

“Many of our graduates proceed to further their studies in Europe, Canada, Australia and America. Our certificates are highly recognised.”

Twelve respondents indicated that graduates from their preferred universities had been able to acquire good jobs in other countries. One student of Central University noted:

“Even apart from gaining admissions to study abroad, many of our students work with foreign companies both here in Ghana and abroad.”

The foregoing indicates that respondents believed qualifications from their most preferred universities had international appeal.

Que 6b: In your opinion, what do employers think about this university?

Ans: Respondents believed that employers thought highly of their most preferred universities. Seven respondents said that the image of their preferred university was responsible for that high level of acceptance in industry. Eleven respondents cited good reputation as the reason why their preferred university was accepted by employers in the country while another four mentioned tuition quality and availability of facilities.

A student of Methodist University College noted:

“Employers think positively about University of Ghana because of the facilities there and also the good reputation. Most universities in Ghana have not been around for that long to operate at that level.”

In the same vein, a student of Central University maintained:

“Central is a fairly new university but because of the quality of education they offer here, most employers are happy to employ graduates from here.”

It is evident from the above that respondents believed their preferred universities were seen in a positive light by employers in the country.

Que 6c: As compared to other universities, how would you say qualifications from this university are accepted?

Ans: Respondents believed that qualifications from their preferred universities were highly accepted on the labour market. A student who preferred Ashesi University noted:

“Their qualifications are highly accepted. As for Ashesi they have a way of liaising with industry and so by the time you complete school, your job is ready. There is no university in Ghana that guarantees that. ”

Another student who preferred University of Ghana maintained:

“Until recently, Legon was the only university that employers knew. It was the university that provided most graduates for the labour market. And so that perception continues. Employers generally are happy to employ people with qualifications from there as compared to those from the other universities.”

Respondents therefore believed that qualifications from their preferred universities were preferred by employers.

Que 6d: Do graduates from this university obtain any better jobs?

Ans: A popular opinion among respondents was that in a developing country like Ghana where very few graduates are able to employ themselves, the likelihood of students securing attractive jobs with relative ease upon completing particular universities becomes a pivotal

consideration in their preference considerations (Knight and Yorke, 2004). A respondent from Valley View University puts it succinctly as follows:

... We all go to school with the hope of acquiring jobs upon graduating. Most of us don't have the required capital to start our own businesses and so by attending a university like Ashesi you will get that privilege."

Fourteen respondents explicitly asserted that graduating from a well-known tertiary institution was *sine qua non* for job acquisition, and so felt it was beneficial to attend an institution that would afford that privilege.

A student who appeared excited to be associated with Central University College brand remarked:

"As I mentioned earlier on, in Ghana, they say Central University is one of the most disciplined institutions where academic standards are very high, ... if it is in your CV that you attended Central University, it enhances your chances of getting a job, because almost every employer in Ghana knows about the standard of this university."

Eight respondents believed that graduates from their preferred universities got better jobs than their counterparts from other universities. The remaining fourteen respondents however thought that graduates from their preferred universities were simply able to acquire jobs that are not necessarily better. Most respondents maintained that what is important is the level of acceptance of qualifications in industry; and that individuals' performances on their jobs and their bargaining strengths would determine how better or well paying their jobs would be.

A student who preferred University of Ghana noted:

"I know it is easier for graduates from this university to acquire jobs than their counterparts from some other universities for a number of reasons. First, there are a lot of big people in industry who attended Legon who are prepared to help new graduates from that university. Also the Legon reputation is a factor. But the kind of position you get and the salary you earn has nothing to do with Legon. It's about how you market yourself and perform on the job."

There was also the agreement among respondents that coming from their preferred universities would not ensure that graduates are better able to hold on to their job in any way. The popular opinion expressed by most respondents in this regard was that graduating from their preferred university would not necessarily ensure that one gets a better job than their counterparts from other institutions. From the above analysis, it is evident that there is a positive relationship between graduate employability and students' preference for university institutions in Ghana.

6.3 Recommendations

Respondents were given the opportunity to recommend ways of improving university institutional value to students with a view to instigating preference among the latter.

Que 7a: In your opinion, what can universities in Ghana do to improve their value and their chances of attracting students?

Ans: Answers given by respondents had a lot in common with factors that underlie their preference as presented in section 6.2.2. Factors frequently mentioned included institutional quality, infrastructural facilities, teaching and learning facilities, faculty and teaching quality and fees. Others were employability, moral uprightness, university image, university reputation, popularity, credibility and affiliation to religious organisations. A good number of respondents also mentioned innovativeness, offering programmes that are abreast with contemporary business practices, and conducting credible examinations.

A student of University of Ghana noted:

“A number of things. As I mentioned earlier, they need to have good infrastructure, there should be adequate research, teaching and learning facilities; their student service systems should be up and doing.they also have to improve their reputation and do a lot of communication like advertising.”

Similarly, a Methodist University College student opined:

“These days, the reputations of organisations count a lot. They need to improve their image. They should be seen as reliable and trustworthy and also centre everything they do on students.”

There were some respondents in the minority who thought that the availability of sporting facilities and music could attract them. They believed that a good appreciation on the part of universities of the fact that people are endowed with different talents and on that basis provide relevant facilities that reflect that diversity could be beneficial. Respondents therefore believed that there is a lot that universities in Ghana can do to increase their value to students and thereby increase preference among them.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has presented findings and analysis of in-depth interviews that formed the qualitative part of this mixed-methods study aimed at ascertaining the nature of relationships between five student-based brand equity constructs and university preference among undergraduate students in Ghana. The respondents were students selected from four universities in the country. The interviews began by finding out if participants had preference for any particular university in the country. For those who were in institutions other than the ones they preferred, the interviews proceeded to find out the reasons behind that decision. The interviewer then continued to ask questions that related to specific SBBE constructs. The questions were adopted from extant brand equity literature, which were modified to suit the circumstances of this study.

The findings indicate that respondents preferred particular universities. It is also amply indicated that university image and university reputation have significant positive relationships with students' preference for university institutions in Ghana. Respondents, however, overwhelmingly believed that university identity did not affect their preference for universities. The analysis also portray a dominant impression among respondents that perceived institutional service quality and university graduate employability had favourable effects on their university preference. On the whole, the researcher argues, based on findings of this qualitative analysis, that the SBBE concept is applicable to the Ghanaian university context. This is because respondents overwhelmingly believed that all but one of the constructs (university institution identity) that were investigated through the in-depth interviews had favourable effects on their preference for university institutions. That is, positive relationships were obtained between most of the SBBE constructs studied and university preference among students in Ghana. SBBE and university preference are therefore related. The next chapter presents results and analysis of quantitative data collected through self-administered questionnaires.

REFERENCES

- Knight, P. & Yorke, M. (2004), *Learning, Curriculum and Employability in Higher Education*, Routledge Falmer, London.
- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt T. E. (2014). University brand equity: an empirical investigation of its dimensions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(6), 616 – 634.

CHAPTER SEVEN

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data analysed from questionnaires administered on the field. The chapter examines the relationships, if any, existing between the dimensions of brand equity and brand preference using a sample of 625 students of university institutions in Ghana. All questionnaire variables were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1-7), where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. Statistical analyses performed include confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modelling and correlation matrix. The following hypotheses are tested:

H1: There is a positive relationship between university image and the reputation of university institutions in Ghana.

H2: University identity impacts positively on the reputation of university institutions in Ghana.

H3: University institution identity has a positive effect on students' university preference.

H4: University institution image has a positive effect on students' university preference.

H5: There is a positive relationship between university institutional reputation and students' university preference.

H6: Perceived institutional service quality is positively correlated with students' preference for university institutions in Ghana.

H7: Graduate employability positively affects students' university preference in Ghana.

H8: Perceived institutional service quality is positively correlated with graduate employability.

7.2 Demographic and Background Information

This section presents an analysis of data on type of respondents' current university of attendance, their sex, age and income as summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Type of university		
Public	315	50.4
Private	310	49.6
Gender		
Male	307	49.1
Female	318	50.9
Age group		
18-20	65	10.4
21-24	313	50.1
25-29	144	23.1
30-34	37	5.9
35-39	34	5.4
40 years above	32	5.1
Monthly income		
> GHC5000	126	20.2
GHC 4000-GHC5000	147	23.5
GHC3000-GHC3999	74	11.8
GHC2000-GHC2999	79	12.6
GHC1000-GHC1999	123	19.7
< GHC 1000	76	12.2
Total	625	100.0

Source: Field data, 2016

In Table 7.1, the number of respondents was roughly equally split between students of public (50.4%) and private (49.6%) universities. More than half 50.9% of the respondents were females and the rest (49.1%) were males. Majority (50.1%) of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 24 years; this is followed by those who were between the ages of 25 and 29 years (23.1%), 18 and 20 years (10.4%), 30 and 34 years (5.9%), 35 and 39 years (5.4%) and 40 years and above (5.1%) respectively. One in five respondents (23.5%) claimed their families earned between GHC4000 and GHC5000 per month; this is followed by those who claimed their families earned above GHC5000 (20.2%), between GHC 1000 and GHC 1,999 (19.7%), between GHC 2000 and GHC 2,999 (12.6%), below GHC 1000 (12.2%), and between GHC 3000 and GHC 3,999 (11.8%) respectively.

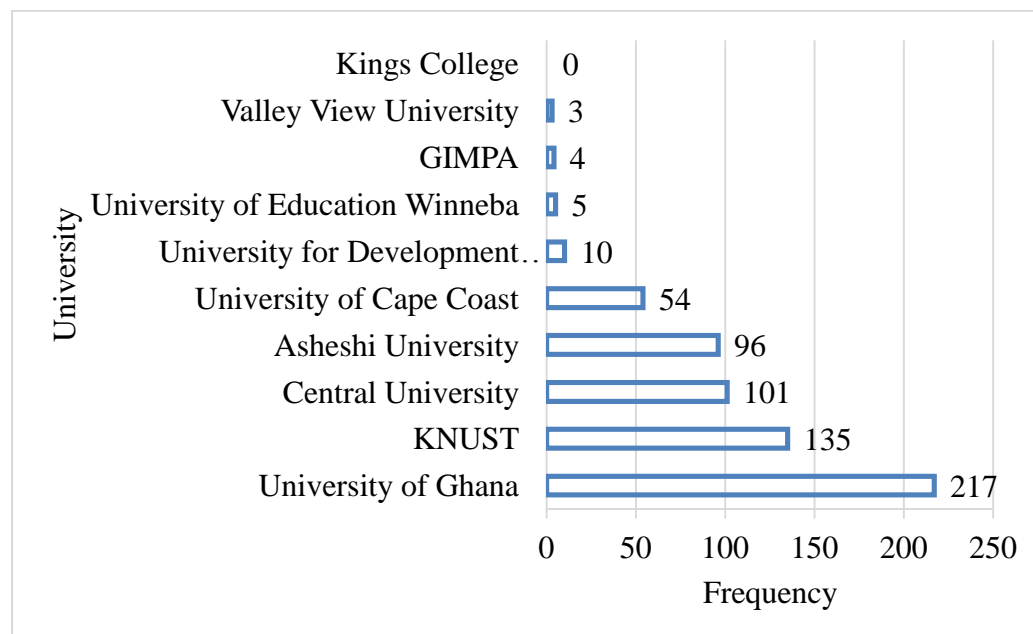
7.3 Most Preferred University

This section presents data in relation to respondents most preferred university.

7.3.1 First Choice University

The analysis also shows the number of respondents who listed the universities identified as strictly their first choice university as presented in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Respondents' First Choice University



Source: Field data, 2016

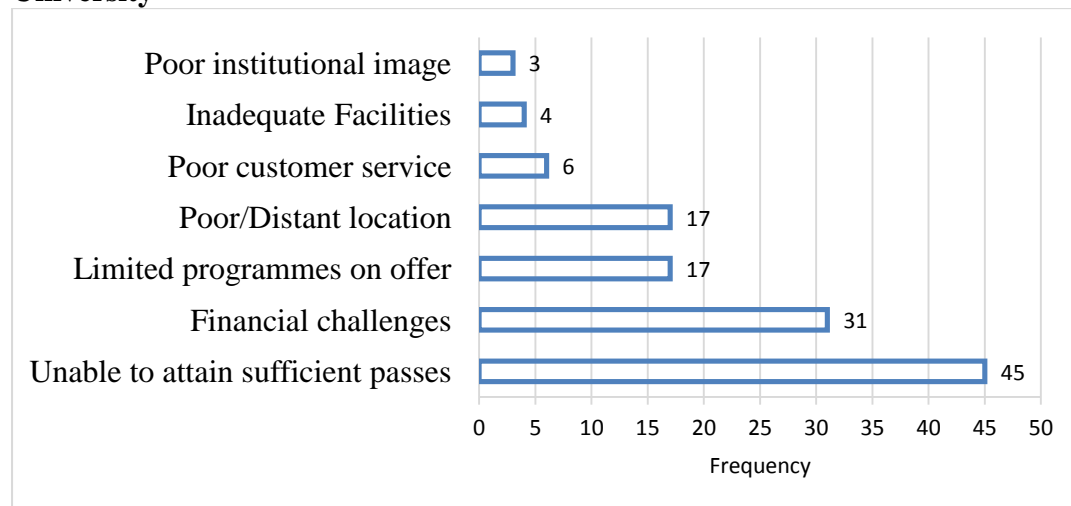
Out of the 625 respondents, 217 (34.7%) listed University of Ghana as their first choice university. This was followed by Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (135); Central University (101); Asheshi University (96); and University of Cape Coast (54) respectively. Others included University for Development Studies (10), University of Education (5); Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (4); and Valley View University (3).

7.3.2 Reasons why Respondents could not Enter their First Choice University

A few (123) of the respondents were not students of their most preferred university at the time of the study. Out of the 123 who were not students of their first choice universities, 45 (36.6%) claimed it was because they could not obtain sufficient passes. Other reasons

provided include financial challenges (31), limited programmes on offer (17), distant location (17), poor customer service (6), inadequate facilities (4) and poor institutional image (3), as presented in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2: Reasons why some Respondents could not Enter their Most Preferred University



Source: Field data, 2016

7.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

7.4.1 Testing for Suitability of Data for Analysis

Before conducting CFA, it is important to establish the suitability of data for the analysis to be conducted. Due to the relatively high response rate (87%) and the fact that the survey was completed under conditions of anonymity, test for non-response bias was not undertaken (Ledden et al., 2011). Furthermore, the number of responses obtained meet the PLS analysis recommendation proposed by Barclay et al. (1995).

Next, test for common method variance bias was undertaken since all of the data for this research was conducted using a single questionnaire. This study performed the Harman's (1967) one factor test based on the approach described by Andersson and Bateman (1997), and Schriesheim (1979). Exploratory factor analysis with extraction of only one factor showed that the factor accounted for about 37.02% of variance explained (which is less than

50% variance). Furthermore, measures were taken in the questionnaire design to minimize acquiescence bias (Mattila and Enz, 2002; Lings and Greenly, 2010).

7.4.2 Testing for the Suitability of Partial Least Squares (Pls) for Data Analysis

Analysis of the scales used in the study questionnaire indicated that eleven items had kurtosis $> \pm 1.0$; whereas thirteen items had skewness $> \pm 1.0$. More importantly, the Komogorov-Smirnov test of normality showed that $0.147 < \alpha < 0.274$; $p < 0.01$ for all items. Similarly, the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality showed that $0.771 < W < 0.932$; $p < 0.01$ for all items. These imply that the data is not normally distributed thus confirming the appropriateness of the usage of PLS statistics.

Table 7.2: Normality Test for Questionnaire Items

Variables	Mean	S.D	Skewness		Kurtosis		Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
bp1	5.51	1.21	-0.686	0.098	0.266	0.195	0.214	0	0.893	0
bp2	5.81	1.20	-1.266	0.098	2.02	0.195	0.245	0	0.833	0
bp3	5.69	1.19	-0.815	0.098	0.797	0.195	0.196	0	0.865	0
bp4	6.04	1.08	-1.094	0.098	0.958	0.195	0.252	0	0.811	0
bp5	5.95	1.26	-1.3	0.098	1.612	0.195	0.25	0	0.797	0
bp6	5.08	1.31	-0.385	0.098	-0.081	0.195	0.159	0	0.924	0
bp7	5.91	1.23	-1.536	0.098	2.953	0.195	0.245	0	0.795	0
bp8	5.83	1.16	-0.997	0.098	0.92	0.195	0.236	0	0.846	0
imag1	5.78	1.32	-1.143	0.098	1.131	0.195	0.233	0	0.829	0
imag2	5.11	1.36	-0.518	0.098	0.157	0.195	0.155	0	0.919	0
imag3	6.08	1.12	-1.376	0.098	2.244	0.195	0.268	0	0.781	0
imag4	5.23	1.43	-0.915	0.098	0.724	0.195	0.191	0	0.89	0
imag5	4.97	1.32	-0.471	0.098	0.317	0.195	0.15	0	0.916	0
imag6	5.63	1.27	-0.982	0.098	1.071	0.195	0.214	0	0.865	0
imag7	6.08	1.15	-1.435	0.098	2.218	0.195	0.274	0	0.771	0
imag8	5.90	1.27	-1.163	0.098	1.102	0.195	0.249	0	0.809	0
repu1	5.16	1.37	-0.712	0.098	0.632	0.195	0.183	0	0.904	0
repu2	5.94	1.17	-1.018	0.098	0.538	0.195	0.238	0	0.818	0
repu3	5.83	1.13	-0.781	0.098	0.022	0.195	0.213	0	0.858	0
repu4	5.97	1.15	-1.156	0.098	1.208	0.195	0.236	0	0.815	0
repu5	5.52	1.21	-0.63	0.098	0.005	0.195	0.192	0	0.896	0
repu6	5.12	1.32	-0.62	0.098	0.69	0.195	0.163	0	0.907	0
iden1	6.14	1.07	-1.387	0.098	1.899	0.195	0.272	0	0.773	0
iden2	5.12	1.51	-0.545	0.098	-0.386	0.195	0.159	0	0.911	0
iden3	5.39	1.27	-0.565	0.098	-0.013	0.195	0.174	0	0.906	0
iden4	4.90	1.59	-0.713	0.098	0.087	0.195	0.174	0	0.906	0
iden5	4.63	1.57	-0.426	0.098	-0.386	0.195	0.147	0	0.932	0
psq1	5.56	1.35	-1.099	0.098	1.17	0.195	0.245	0	0.856	0
psq2	4.96	1.40	-0.656	0.098	0.457	0.195	0.164	0	0.91	0
psq3	5.72	1.10	-0.736	0.098	0.584	0.195	0.194	0	0.874	0
psq4	5.33	1.36	-0.684	0.098	0.3	0.195	0.184	0	0.899	0
psq5	5.30	1.28	-0.794	0.098	0.784	0.195	0.188	0	0.9	0
psq6	5.32	1.25	-0.756	0.098	0.891	0.195	0.19	0	0.898	0
psq7	5.15	1.39	-0.561	0.098	-0.21	0.195	0.171	0	0.917	0
empl1	5.46	1.39	-1.045	0.098	0.994	0.195	0.218	0	0.869	0
empl2	5.33	1.25	-0.507	0.098	0.039	0.195	0.174	0	0.91	0
empl3	5.52	1.24	-0.692	0.098	0.255	0.195	0.213	0	0.889	0
empl4	5.71	1.24	-0.851	0.098	0.472	0.195	0.195	0	0.862	0
empl5	5.09	1.55	-0.701	0.098	-0.063	0.195	0.186	0	0.904	0

Source: Field data, 2016

7.4.3 Testing for the Psychometric Properties of Scales Used

Next, a test of the psychometric properties of scales used in the study was carried out. This process involves a test of convergence and discriminant validity. Tables 7.3 and 7.4 provide summaries of convergent and discriminant validity tests respectively. An examination of the initial results showed that some items had significant cross loadings.

7.4.3.1 Convergence Validity

i. Perceived Institutional Service Quality

Firstly, perceived service quality was measured using seven items. An examination of the initial loadings showed that the items PSQ2 and PSQ5 had significant cross loadings into other constructs. The offending items were sequentially deleted and the measurement model was re-run after each deletion until all the retained items' loadings were significant. The final retained items achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.836, a composite reliability of 0.884 and average variance extracted (AVE) estimate of 0.604, all meeting the minimum suggested by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), Hair et al. (1998) and Hensler et al. (2009). Furthermore, each of the remaining item loadings was statistically significant using bootstrap t-values (5000 sub-samples) (Efron and Gong, 1983; Tortosa et al., 2009).

ii. Graduate Employability

Graduate employability was measured using five items. An examination of the initial loadings showed that the items EMPL4 and EMPL5 had significant cross loadings into other constructs. The offending items were deleted and the measurement model was re-run to obtain significant loadings for the remaining items. The final retained items achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.729, a composite reliability of 0.846 and average variance extracted (AVE) estimate of 0.647, all meeting the minimum suggested by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), Hair et al. (1998) and Hensler et al. (2009). Furthermore, each of the remaining item loadings was statistically significant using bootstrap t-values (5000 sub-samples) (Efron and Gong, 1983; Tortosa et al., 2009).

Table 7.3: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Factor	Initial , final numb er of scale items	Item code	Loadi ng	t-value (Bootstr ap)	Cronbac h's Alpha	Compos ite Reliabili ty	AV E
Perceived Service Quality	7,5	PSQ1	0.764	35.414**	0.836	0.884	0.60 4
		PSQ3	0.755	31.170**			
		PSQ4	0.766	28.315**			
		PSQ6	0.778	36.955**			
		PSQ7	0.820	48.144**			
Graduate Employability	5,3	EMPL1	0.814	38.363**	0.729	0.846	0.64 7
		EMPL2	0.810	49.418**			
		EMPL3	0.789	31.843**			
Corporate Identity	5,3	IDEN1	0.813	50.411**	0.734	0.847	0.64 9
		IDEN2	0.781	30.487**			
		IDEN3	0.822	45.890**			
Institutional Reputation	6,4	REPU2	0.828	42.000**	0.832	0.888	0.66 5
		REPU3	0.856	77.887**			
		REPU4	0.774	32.366**			
		REPU5	0.801	41.851**			
Institutional Image	8,4	IMAG3	0.841	51.242**	0.816	0.879	0.64 5
		IMAG6	0.742	28.375**			
		IMAG7	0.853	57.335**			
		IMAG8	0.772	36.795**			
Brand Preference	8,6	BP1	0.709	26.086**	0.835	0.879	0.54 9
		BP2	0.783	39.116**			
		BP3	0.799	44.510**			
		BP4	0.764	38.071**			
		BP6	0.651	23.476**			
		PB7	0.731	23.114**			

Note: **t-value is significant at 0.01 level of significance

Source: Field data, 2016

iii. Corporate Identity

Corporate identity was measured using five items. An examination of the initial loadings showed that the items IDEN4 and IDEN5 had significant cross loadings into other constructs.

The offending items were sequentially deleted and the measurement model was re-run after each deletion until all the retained items' loadings were significant. The final retained items achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.734, a composite reliability of 0.847 and average variance extracted (AVE) estimate of 0.649, all meeting the minimum suggested by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), Hair et al. (1998) and Hensler et al. (2009). Furthermore, each of the remaining item loadings was statistically significant using bootstrap t-values (5000 sub-samples) (Efron and Gong, 1983; Tortosa et al., 2009).

iv. University Reputation

University reputation was measured using six items. An examination of the initial loadings showed that the items REPU1 and REPU6 had significant cross loadings into other constructs. The offending items were sequentially deleted and the measurement model was re-run after each deletion until all the retained items' loadings were significant. The final retained items achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.832, a composite reliability of 0.888 and average variance extracted (AVE) estimate of 0.665, all meeting the minimum suggested by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), Hair et al. (1998) and Hensler et al. (2009). Furthermore, each of the remaining item loadings was statistically significant using bootstrap t-values (5000 sub-samples) (Efron and Gong, 1983; Tortosa et al., 2009).

v. University Image

University image was measured using eight items. An examination of the initial loadings showed that the items IMAG1, IMAG2, IMAG4 and IMAG5 had significant cross loadings into other constructs. The offending items were sequentially deleted and the measurement model was re-run after each deletion until all the retained items' loadings were significant. The final retained items achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.816, a composite reliability of 0.879 and average variance extracted (AVE) estimate of 0.645, all meeting the minimum suggested by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), Hair et al. (1998) and Hensler et al. (2009). Furthermore, each of the remaining item loadings was statistically significant using bootstrap t-values (5000 sub-samples) (Efron and Gong, 1983; Tortosa et al., 2009).

vi. University Brand Preference

Lastly, brand preference was measured using eight items. An examination of the loadings showed that the items BP5 and BP8 had significant cross loadings into other constructs. The offending items were sequentially deleted and the measurement model was re-run after each

deletion until all the retained items' loadings were significant. The final retained items achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.835, a composite reliability of 0.879 and average variance extracted (AVE) estimate of 0.549, all meeting the minimum suggested by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), Hair et al. (1998) and Hensler et al. (2009). Furthermore, each of the remaining item loadings was statistically significant using bootstrap t-values (5000 sub-samples) (Efron and Gong, 1983; Tortosa et al., 2009).

7.4.3.2 Discriminant Validity

Next, discriminant validity is met by the fact that the six-construct model revealed low to moderate correlations between them (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). Furthermore, the square root of the average variance extracted estimates for each of the six constructs is greater than the inter-construct correlations between them (Fornell and Lacker, 1981; Barclay et al., 1995). This shows that each construct is distinct and differs from the other measurement constructs in the model as presented in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4: Discriminant Validity (Square root of AVEs in diagonal-bold)

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
Perceived Service Quality	0.777					
Graduate Employability	0.681	0.804				
Corporate Identity	0.547	0.455	0.806			
Institutional Reputation	0.604	0.488	0.629	0.815		
Institutional Image	0.577	0.459	0.573	0.667	0.803	
Brand Preference	0.694	0.565	0.531	0.712	0.634	0.741

Source: Field data, 2016

Furthermore, the remaining items presented in Table 7.5 had no significant cross loadings further supporting the fact that the six-construct model demonstrates discriminant validity.

Table 7.5: Item Cross Loadings

Items	psq	employ	iden	repute	image	prefer
PSQ1	0.7637	0.5748	0.4717	0.4912	0.4886	0.5322
PSQ3	0.755	0.5622	0.3933	0.5392	0.4333	0.5361
PSQ4	0.7664	0.4614	0.4185	0.4777	0.4449	0.525
PSQ6	0.7777	0.5264	0.3991	0.374	0.4425	0.5458
PSQ7	0.8204	0.511	0.4407	0.4618	0.4279	0.5556
EMPL1	0.5196	0.8138	0.3698	0.3953	0.3778	0.4541
EMPL2	0.6445	0.8102	0.3336	0.3648	0.3065	0.4789
EMPL3	0.455	0.7885	0.4035	0.4259	0.4425	0.4235
IDEN1	0.4501	0.419	0.813	0.5678	0.5889	0.5125
IDEN2	0.3808	0.3138	0.7813	0.4013	0.3262	0.3191
IDEN3	0.4793	0.3486	0.8216	0.5202	0.4232	0.4181
REPU2	0.4238	0.34	0.5034	0.8281	0.6065	0.5866
REPU3	0.4953	0.4387	0.6283	0.856	0.5879	0.5879
REPU4	0.4978	0.3874	0.403	0.7737	0.4884	0.5325
REPU5	0.5604	0.4257	0.497	0.8008	0.4838	0.6134
IMAG3	0.4662	0.3738	0.4538	0.5258	0.8411	0.526
IMAG6	0.5471	0.4373	0.3956	0.5571	0.7424	0.4974
IMAG7	0.4352	0.3396	0.5098	0.5812	0.853	0.5579
IMAG8	0.3993	0.3226	0.4831	0.4686	0.7717	0.4439
BP1	0.5046	0.3659	0.3724	0.5024	0.4921	0.7088
BP2	0.54	0.43	0.4429	0.5306	0.4635	0.7832
BP3	0.5259	0.4376	0.4411	0.5545	0.4483	0.7985
BP4	0.4791	0.4108	0.4746	0.6463	0.5639	0.7639
BP6	0.5444	0.4611	0.2893	0.3779	0.3302	0.6508
PB7	0.5042	0.4135	0.3215	0.5258	0.4966	0.7309

Source: Field data, 2016

7.5 Structural Equation Modelling

Having confirmed the psychometric properties of the scales used, the next stage is to examine the structural model in order to assess the model's explanatory power and the significance of the hypothesized paths (Lings and Greenly, 2010).

7.5.1 Model Efficiency

All the constructs showed strong explanatory power. Table 7.6 presents the result of the model's predictive accuracy and overall goodness-of-fit index. Corporate identity, institutional image, institutional reputation, perceived service quality and graduate employability jointly explained about 63.7% of the variance in brand preference. Also, both institutional image and corporate identity explained about 53.5% of the variance in

institutional reputation. Finally, perceived service quality explained about 46.3% of the variance in graduate employability. All of these results exceed the moderate level of 33% suggested by Chin (1998) showing good explanatory power. Furthermore the model yielded a goodness-of-fit (GoF) index of 0.548 indicating a very good model fit (Hoffmann and Brinbrich, 2012).

Table 7.6: Goodness-of-Fit Index

Constructs	R ²	AVE
Perceived Service Quality	–	0.604
Graduate Employability	0.463	0.647
Corporate Identity	–	0.649
Institutional Reputation	0.535	0.665
Institutional Image	–	0.645
Brand Preference	0.637	0.549
Average Scores	0.545	0.626
Average (AVE)* Average (R ²)	0.341	
$GOF = \sqrt{(AVE * R^2)}$	0.584	

Source: Field data, 2016

The results of predictive relevance (Q^2) test and effect sizes (f^2) are presented in Table 7.7 In addition to the R², this study also utilises cross-validated redundancy (Q^2), a blindfolding procedure as a criterion for predictive relevance (Chin, 2010). Q^2 – values of 0.292, 0.349 and 0.343 were obtained for graduate employability, institutional reputation and brand preference respectively. All of these are greater than 0 showing predictive relevance (Fornell and Cha, 1993; Chin, 2010).

Table 7.7: Predictive Relevance (Q^2) and Effect Sizes (f^2)

Constructs	Q ²	f ² (Preference)	f ² (Reputation)
Perceived Service Quality	–	0.11 (small)	–
Graduate Employability	0.292	0.02(small)	–
Corporate Identity	–	0 (None)	0.194(medium)
Institutional Reputation	0.349	0.163(medium)	–
Institutional Image	–	0.039(small)	0.297(medium)
Brand Preference	0.343	–	–

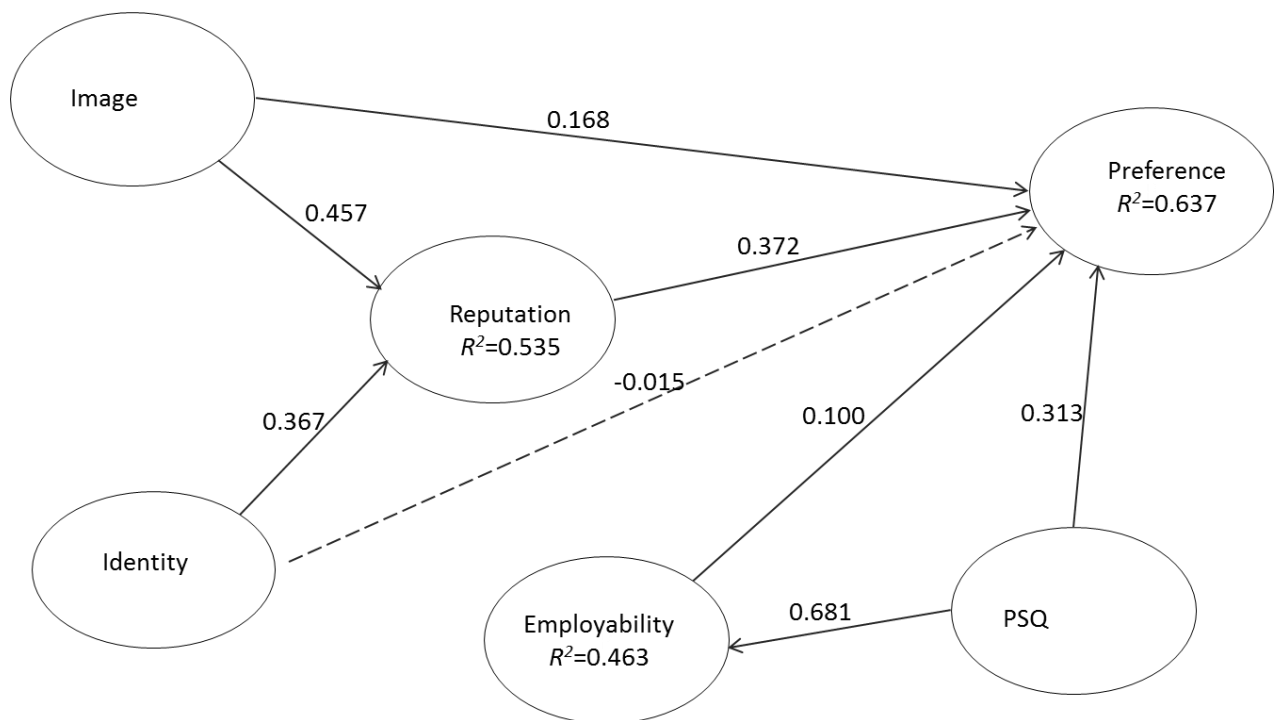
Source: Field data, 2016

Institutional reputation had medium effect size on brand preference whereas perceived service quality, graduate employability, and institutional image all had small effect sizes on brand preference. Also, both corporate identity and institutional image had medium effect sizes on institutional reputation.

7.5.2 Structural Estimates and Hypotheses Testing

This analysis examines the relationships if any existing between the five dimensions of student-based brand equity and brand preference. The proposed models were estimated using partial least squares (PLS). The result of the proposed measurement model tested (showing regression weights) is shown in Figure 7.3. Bootstrap t-values were used to estimate the statistical significance of each path coefficient as presented in Table 7.8. The results in Figure 7.3 show that all paths were statistically significant, with the exception of the effect of university institutional identity on university brand preference.

Figure 7.3: Path Diagram for the Dimensions of Brand Equity and Brand Preference- Showing Regression Weights



Note: Dotted line means path is not statistically significant.

Source: Field data, 2016

Based on structural results presented in Figure 7.3, the following hypotheses conclusions were made.

H1: There is a positive relationship between university image and the reputation of university institutions in Ghana.

A positive and significant association exists between institutional image and institutional reputation ($p < 0.01$). This means that the more positive an institution's image is, the higher the likelihood that the reputation of the institution will improve. Specifically, about 21% (that is, the square of the regression weight of 0.457 times 100%) of the variance in institutional reputation is explained by institutional image. Therefore, hypothesis 1 (**H1**) is supported in the present context.

H2: University identity impacts positively on the reputation of university institutions in Ghana.

A positive and significant association exists between corporate identity and institutional reputation ($p < 0.01$). This means that the more positive an institution's identity is, the better the reputation of the institution will be. Specifically, about 13.5% (that is, the square of the regression weight of 0.367 times 100%) of the variance in institutional reputation is explained by corporate identity. Therefore, hypothesis 2 (**H2**) is supported in the present context.

H3: University institution identity has a positive effect on students' university preference.

The relationship between corporate identity and students' choice of universities is not statistically significant ($p = \text{n.s.}$). This means that it is not necessarily true that institutional identity has a positive impact on students' choice of universities. Therefore, hypothesis 3 (**H3**) is not supported in the present context.

H4: University institution image has a positive effect on students' university preference.

A positive and significant association exists between institutional image and university preference ($p < 0.01$). This means that the more positive an institution's image is, the more likely students are to choose that institution. Specifically, about 2.8% (that is, the square of the regression weight of 0.168 times 100%) of the variance in brand preference is explained by institutional image. Therefore, hypothesis 4 (**H4**) is supported in the present context.

H5: There is a positive relationship between university institutional reputation and students' university preference.

A positive and significant association exists between institutional reputation and university preference ($p < 0.01$). This means that the more positive an institution's reputation is, the more likely students will choose that institution. Specifically, about 13.8% (that is, the square of the regression weight of 0.372 times 100%) of the variance in brand preference is explained by institutional reputation. Therefore, hypothesis 5 (**H5**) is supported in the present context.

H6: Perceived institutional service quality is positively correlated with students' preference for university institutions in Ghana.

A positive and significant association exists between perceived service quality and brand preference ($p < 0.01$). This means that the more positively an institution's service quality is perceived, the more students tend to show preference for the institution. Specifically, about 10% (that is, the square of the regression weight of 0.313 times 100%) of the variance in brand preference is explained by perceived institutional service quality. Therefore, hypothesis 6 (**H6**) is supported in the present context.

H7: Graduate employability positively affects students' university preference in Ghana.

A positive and significant association exists between graduate employability and university preference ($p < 0.05$). This means that the more employable an institution's graduates are, the more students tend to show preference for the institution. Specifically, about 1% (that is, the square of the regression weight of 0.10 times 100%) of the variance in brand preference is explained by graduate employability. Therefore, hypothesis 7 (**H7**) is supported in the present context.

H8: Perceived institutional service quality is positively correlated with graduate employability.

A positive and significant association exists between perceived institutional service quality and graduate employability ($p < 0.01$). This means that the more positively an institutional service quality is perceived, the more the graduates of that institution tend to gain employment. Specifically, about 46.4% (that is, the square of the regression weight of 0.681 times 100%) of the variance in graduate employability is determined by perceived institutional service quality. Therefore, hypothesis 8 (**H8**) is supported in the present context.

7.6 Summary of Hypotheses Tests

A summary of the hypotheses test conducted and conclusions made is shown in Table 7.8. See appendixes E and F for structural paths showing regression weights and bootstrap t-values respectively.

Table 7.8: Hypotheses Tests Summary

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Path coefficient t	t-value (Bootstrap)	Hypothesis results
H1	Institutional Image → Institutional Reputation	0.457	11.357**	Accepted
H2	Corporate Identity → Institutional Reputation	0.367	10.512**	Accepted
H3	Corporate Identity → Brand Preference	-0.015	n.s	Rejected
H4	Institutional Image → Brand Preference	0.168	4.487**	Accepted
H5	Institutional Reputation → Brand Preference	0.372	6.644**	Accepted
H6	Perceived Service Quality → Brand Preference	0.313	5.137**	Accepted
H7	Graduate Employability → Brand Preference	0.100	2.423*	Accepted
H8	Perceived Service Quality → Graduate Employability	0.681	32.219**	Accepted

Note: **t-value is significant at 0.01 level of significance; *t-value is significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Source: Field data, 2016

REFERENCES

- Andersson, L. M. & Bateman, T. S. (1997). Cynicism in the workplace: Some causes and effects. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 18 (5), 449-469.
- Barclay, D., Thompson, R. & Higgins, C. (1995). The Partial Least Squares (PLS) Approach to Causal Modeling: Personal Computer Adoption and Use an Illustration. *Technology Studies*, 2(2), 285-309.
- Chin, W. W. (1998). The partial least squares approach to structural equation modelling. *Modern Methods for Business Research*, 295(2), 295-336.
- Chin, W. W. (2010). How to write up and report PLS analyses. in Esposito Vinzi, V., Chin, W.W., Henseler, J. and Wang, H. (Eds), *Handbook of Partial Least Squares: Concepts, Methods and Application*, Springer, Berlin, 645-689.
- Efron, B. & Gong, G. (1983). A leisure look at the bootstrap, the jack knife, and cross validation. *The American Statistician*, 37(1), 36-48.
- Fornell, C. & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.
- Fornell, C. & Cha, J. (1993). *Partial Least Squares (PLS)*. Working paper, University of Michigan Business School, Ann Arbor.
- Gerbing, D. W. & Anderson, J. C. (1988). An updated paradigm for scale development incorporating unidimensionality and its assessment. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20(1), 63-70.
- Hair, J. F. J., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L. & Black, W. C. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis*, Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Harman, H. H. (1967). *Modern Factor Analysis*, (2nd ed). University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Hensler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2009). The use of partial least squares path modeling in international marketing. In R. R. Sinkovics & P. N. Ghauri (Eds.), *Advances in International Marketing*, 20, 277-319. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.
- Hoffmann, A. & Birnbrich, C. (2012). The impact of fraud prevention on bank-customer relationships: an empirical investigation in retail banking. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 30(5), 390-407.
- Ledden, L., Kalafatis, S. P. & Mathioudakis, M. (2011). The idiosyncratic behaviour of service quality, value, satisfaction, and intention to recommend in higher education: An empirical examination. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27, (11-12), 1232-1260.

- Lings, I. N. & Greenley, G. E. (2010). Internal market orientation and market oriented behaviours. *Journal of Service Management*, 21(3), 321-343
- Mattila, A. S. & Enz, C. A. (2002). The role of emotions in service encounters. *Journal of Service Research*, 4(4), 268-277.
- Schriesheim, C. A. (1979). The similarity of individual directed and group directed leader behavior descriptions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 22 (2), 345-355.
- Tortosa, V., Moliner, M. A. & Sanchez, J. (2009). Internal market orientation and its influence on organisational performance. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(11/12), 1435-1456.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings along the lines of the study's hypotheses with a view to address the objectives formulated in Chapter One. It also discusses consistency or otherwise of the study results (both qualitative and quantitative) with findings in the extant brand equity literature domain with a view to drawing conclusions about the effect of the SBBE constructs investigated on university preference of the undergraduate students' population in Ghana. The chapter is structured in two sections: section one presents a general discussion of students' university preference (SUP); while section two presents a discussion on the relationships between the respective SBBE constructs - perceived institutional service quality (PISQ), university graduate employability (UGE), university institution identity (UI), university institution reputation (UIR) and university institution image (UII) on one hand, and students' university brand preference (SUP), on the other. The section also discusses the relationships between university image and reputation, university identity and reputation and perceived institutional service quality and graduate employability.

8.2 Students' University Preference (SUP)

Preferred brands enjoy committed consumer patronage; they are considered by consumers as number one in their brand consideration set. Brand preference builds barriers between first choice brands and competing others (Wang, 2013), thereby creating an environment in which the latter are patronised only in the absence of the former. It gives meaning to consumers' consistent and committed patronage of specific brands in particular product categories that eventually culminates in brand loyalty. In proposing their inter-brand dimensional relationship model based on Aaker's model of brand equity, that also attempted to summarise the key benefits associated with the concept, Buil et al. (2013) established a relationship between brand equity assets and a number of benefits including brand preference and purchase intent. These two outcomes of brand equity were established in that study as being some of equity's influence on consumers' response to brands as corroborated by Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995), Tingchi et al. (2014), Schultz and Block (2014), Matthew et al. (2014) and Wang (2015).

In this study, respondents were asked to indicate their most preferred university from a list of ten well known universities where the first cited represented the most preferred, with the tenth, representing their least preferred institution. The rest of their answers to items in the survey instrument related not necessarily to their current university of attendance, but to the university cited by them as their most preferred.

Results of the qualitative study indicate that nine of the respondents indicated that they preferred University of Ghana (UG/Legon). This was followed by Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), which was mentioned by six respondents as their most preferred university. Four indicated their preference for Ashesi University while two preferred Central University. Only one preferred Cape Coast University. Seventeen (17) of the participants preferred other universities to the ones they were currently attending. Overall, the most cited (as most preferred) university in the quantitative study was also University of Ghana (UG), which was cited by 217 respondents; the second most cited was Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), by 135 respondents. It should be noted that both universities are public and the oldest in Ghana, whose dates of establishment follow the same order. The third most preferred institution was Central University College, which is the largest and arguably, the most popular private university in Ghana. It is the second oldest private university in Ghana, and also church affiliated. The second most preferred private university (the fourth in the preference rankings) was Ashesi University, which is a niche university with links in the USA. It was cited by 96 respondents. The least cited among the ten universities in the rankings was Kings University College, one of the many private universities which have proliferated since the industry was liberalised in 1993. No respondent cited that university as their most preferred.

When respondents were asked why they were not in the attendance of their most preferred universities, the most cited reasons were ‘inability to obtain sufficient passes’ and ‘financial challenges’. As indicated in Chapter Two, students struggle for university enrolments despite the continuous proliferation of university institutions in the country. Perhaps the most immediate explanation for this quandary is that students have a natural tendency to be attracted to universities that are perceived to be “good” (Whisman, 2009). Having been cited as the most preferred universities in the country as indicated earlier in this chapter, University of Ghana (UG) and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) attract the largest number of admission applications (NAB, 2015). This irony of ‘starving in

the midst of plenty' is equally prevalent on the institutions' front as universities continue to struggle for their quota of students in the midst of teeming student numbers. As indicated by Addae-Mensah (2000), universities in the country seek to attract the most qualified student groups and those with high levels of affordabilities. This observation is confirmed by results of this study which indicate that the most cited reasons for respondents' inability to attend their most preferred university were 'inability to attain sufficient passes' (36.6%) and 'financial challenges' (25%). These findings further suggest a positive relationship between university brand preference and eventual students' choice.

Interestingly, poor institutional image was the reason cited by the least number of respondents (2.4%) as being the reason for their not attending their most preferred university, as presented in Figure 7.2. This implies that there were very few students who did not attend their most preferred university because they thought those universities had poor image. In a developing sub-Saharan African country like Ghana, where income levels are low (Effah et al., 2009), it is not surprising that any direct comparison between functional university attributes like location, programmes on offer, teaching and learning facilities, customer service and tuition fees on the one hand, and image on the other (such as that featured in the research instrument), would see functional attributes weigh heavier against non-functional (credence) attributes in students' evaluation.

It should be noted that with the exception of university identity (UI), the bootstrap t-values showed that all paths were statistically significant (Table 7.8) indicating that each of the SBBE constructs investigated correlated positively with SUP. Therefore significant positive associations exist between the constructs and university preference. In order of magnitude, the biggest determinant of university preference was UIR (H5 - with a path coefficient of 0.372), followed by PISQ (H6 - with a path coefficient of 0.313), then UII (H4 - with a path coefficient of 0.168), and lastly, UGE (H7; with a path coefficient of 0.100). It can therefore be concluded that UIR, PISQ, UII and UGE are important SBBE variables that influence university preference in the context of this study. The remainder of this chapter discusses research findings in line with the five independent variables along which the research hypotheses were formulated with a view to addressing the thesis' objectives.

8.3 Discussion of Student-Based Brand Equity Constructs and University Preference

This section presents a discussion of the qualitative and quantitative findings of this mixed-methods study and is structured along the respective independent variables presented in the researcher's conceptual framework, which also formed the basis of the study's hypotheses. It discusses consistency of results of this study with findings in the extant literature domain of customer-based brand equity (CBBE), particularly student-based brand equity (SBBE) and students' university preference (SUP). The linkages between the study findings and its conceptual framework, hypotheses and objectives are also clearly established in this discussion.

8.3.1 Relationship between Perceived Institutional Service Quality (PISQ) and Students' University Preference (SUP)

Results from the qualitative analysis indicate that PISQ positively influences SUP. Respondents overwhelmingly believed that the quality perception that a university carries has a direct effect on their preference. This finding is also in tandem with findings from the quantitative strand of the study, which indicates a significant positive relationship between PISQ and SUP. This result corroborates findings of the studies by both Pinar et al. (2014) and Mourad et al. (2011) that indicate a positive relationship between perceived university service quality and SBBE. It is also in consonance with Kotler and Fox's (1995) observation that an institution's actual quality is often less important than its prestige, or reputation for quality, because it is the university's perceived excellence which, in fact, guides the decisions of prospective students. The results also support the popular opinion in extant branding literature that perceived quality has a positive influence on brand preference (Chomvilailuk and Butcher, 2010; Kondasani and Panda, 2015; Dedeoğlu and Demirer 2015; Vera, 2015); and in the higher education industry, there is a linear relationship between PISQ and students' preference for university institutions (Gronroos, 1984; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1992; Kotler and Fox, 1995; Moshe, 2013).

Zeithaml (1988) explains perceived service quality as consumers' judgement about the overall excellence or superiority of a service relative to competing alternatives. It emanates from consumers' subjective evaluation and judgment of product/service quality and not from managers' or experts' opinion (Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Wang, 2013). It is therefore impressionistic, devoid of objective reality and is measured in relation to other competing

brands. Perceived service quality is considered a “core/primary” element across customer-based brand equity frameworks (Farquhar, 1989; Aaker, 1996; Dyson et al., 1996; Mourad et al., 2011; Keller, 2013). Its benefits include increased profits due to premium pricing and in the long run, effective business growth, involving both market expansion, market share gains (Bartikowski et al., 2010), differentiation, channel member interest, brand extension and overall reason to buy (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Dedeoğlu and Demirer, 2015; Jorge, 2015). It has been established that there is a positive relationship between perceived quality and brand preference (Chiu et al., 2010; Chomvilailuk and Butcher, 2010; Kondasani and Panda, 2015) leading to brand loyalty (Nguyen et al., 2011).

For the purpose of this study, perceived institutional service quality implies students’ subjective assessment and judgement of levels of excellence and superiority of the overall university experience. Consistent with empirical literature, university service reliability, acceptable quality standards and quality tuition turned out to be major factors that underpin SUP in the quantitative part of the study. Similarly, in the qualitative study, most respondents thought that their most preferred universities were consistent in delivering superior quality, while many admitted that their preference for universities was as a result of perceived superior tuition quality.

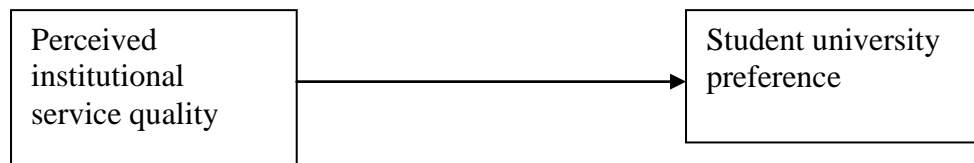
This result supports the claim by Mazzarol and Soutar (2008), Effah et al. (2009), Ho and Wang (2011), Mourad et al. (2011) and Pinar et al. (2014) that identify reliability of tuition quality as a major determinant of SBBE and university preference. Tuition quality’s high rating reflects its relevance in university evaluation and selection among students. This observation confirms Mazzarol and Soutar’s (2008) assertion that, if there could be any compromises in university education delivery, perhaps one of the last elements to be considered would be the quality of staff, particularly faculty as they are in charge of the core service of knowledge delivery (Brewer and Zhao, 2010). Then again, in ascertaining the impact of affiliate universities’ reputation on brand image of parent universities, Brewer and Zhao (2010) singled out teaching quality as the most important factor that enhances the reputation of university brands. Additionally, the Council of Ontario Universities (2003) identified teaching quality, among other variables, as key in students’ university evaluation and selection processes.

In response to the global call for increased literacy rates to power the wheels of socio-economic advancement (World Bank, 2010), Ghana has liberalised her university sector resulting in proliferation, particularly of private universities. As indicated in Chapter Two, the number of universities in the country increased from under ten in the late nineties to forty eight in 2010. As of the last quarter of 2014, the figure stood at seventy-two of which fifty-seven were of private ownership (NAB, 2015). There were also 49 unaccredited private tertiary (predominantly degree awarding) institutions operating in the country (Ibid). The ensuing competition in the tertiary education industry in general and the university environment in particular, has made students more selective in their choice of universities. This researcher argues that this result could be due to the prevalent laxity in the industry and the potential for students to crave to be part of a perceived reliable university that offers some assurance. This supposition is plausible in the *experience* and *credence* laden university service milieu where quality standards are only discernible after consumption (Krishnan and Hartline, 2001).

Respondents also rated overall university quality highly, which result reflects the generally low standards of service quality as well as the shambolic surroundings that are prevalent in many of the mushrooming universities that are being hurriedly brought into being, particularly in the private sector (NCTE, 2013). As indicated earlier, that sector does not benefit from any government subvention and so institutions are run solely on tuition fees. This researcher argues that, where enrolments figures positively correlate with overall university earnings and so become the main determinant of profitability (Adu, 2009), the result is that operators' main pre-occupation is to garner the highest enrolment numbers thereby pushing issues related to quality service delivery to the back burner. Students' craving for improved quality in such environments could therefore be responsible for their high rating of PISQ.

Hypothesis six (H6) that posits a positive relationship between PISQ and SUP was therefore supported. This position was affirmed by the qualitative findings indicating a positive relationship between PISQ and SUP. These findings partly address objective two (Chapter One), which seeks to ascertain the relationships between the respective SBBE constructs under study and university preference among students in Ghana. It also addresses the part of the researcher's conceptual framework (Figure 4.1) in Chapter Four that links perceived institutional service quality and university preference as indicated in Figure 8.1:

Figure 8.1: Perceived Institutional Service Quality and Student University Preference



Source: Field data, 2016

Moreover, these results contribute partly to answering objectives one and four, which ascertain whether student-based brand equity (SBBE) and university preference are related in Ghana; and whether the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) concept is applicable to the Ghanaian university context, respectively.

8.3.2 Relationship between Graduate Employability (UGE) and Students' University Preference (SUP)

From the qualitative findings of the study, it is indicated that the likelihood that students would secure jobs with relative ease upon graduating from particular universities is a factor that influences their preference for those universities. Respondents unanimously agreed that there was a strong connection between their preference for universities and employability among graduates from those universities. This finding is corroborated by the quantitative results, which indicate a positive relationship between UGE and SUP. This position is in tandem with findings in extant literature indicating the relevance of employment related considerations in the affairs of university institutions and their positive effect on students' attraction prospects (Gray et al., 2003; Tomlinson, 2008; Morrish and Lee, 2011; Blanca et al., 2013; Jackson, 2014; Shah et al., 2015). As Lauder et al. (2006) maintain, students are moving from a state of inquisitive learning to acquisitive learning, which equips them with attractive credentials as they demand their rights as customers in a labour market. Knight and Yorke (2004) maintain that, in response to the growing relevance of graduate employability, higher education institutions all over the world are redesigning their academic programmes and extra-curricular activities to enhance their graduates' employability skills. Jackson (2014) identifies technical expertise, generic skill mastery and graduate identity as instrumental in graduate employability considerations. Similarly, Bournier and Millican (2011) maintain that favourable employment outcomes are vital for higher education providers to attract potential

students who significantly fund their operations. The results, however, do not support Washer's (2007) position that multifarious employable skills initiatives implemented by higher education institutions do not necessarily guarantee skills transferability onto the job market, and so might not affect students' preference.

When graduates from particular universities are noted to possess a relevant set of diverse skills and likeable personal attributes that are believed to enhance their potential to secure and keep good jobs and be successful in employment, findings from this study indicate that students would be attracted to such universities. This finding is not surprising as jobs are not easy to come by in Ghana (Baah-Boateng, 2013). Providing employment for graduates has remained a chronic challenge for successive governments to the extent that there is now an Unemployed Graduates Association that has gained recognition and ample public support in recent times (Baah-Boateng et al., 2013). While Ghana's private sector is touted as the 'engine for growth', governments' rather debilitating policies and actions including excessive taxation, high interest rates and erratic electricity supply, have stifled the sector, hence its inability to absorb its quota of teeming job-seeking graduates (Sackey and Osei, 2006). Crippling IMF and World Bank conditionalities have also barred government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) from undertaking further recruitments (Anyawu, 2013). These public sector institutions have been the largest employers in the country (Anyanwu, 2013) and so barring them from recruiting any more graduates has, as would be expected, worsened the unemployment situation and so worsened the desperation among many young graduates in the country.

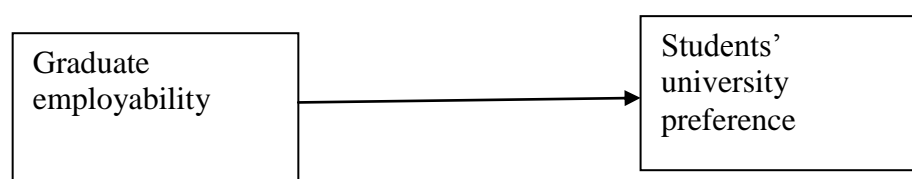
In an economy with insufficient employment avenues, results of the qualitative study indicate that respondents were not as keen on salary levels as they were on simply acquiring a job. To be highly remunerated, one needs to acquire a job in the first place. Brown and Hesketh (2004) maintain that possessing a degree remains a "threshold requirement" for securing jobs, with employers increasingly expecting applicants to possess a variety of likeable personal attributes and generic "soft" and "hard" skills. Tariq and Durrani (2012) reveal that employers attach a high level of importance to graduates' numeracy skills thereby pointing to the potential for poor numeracy skills to limit UGE potential. On the "soft" front, Hoyles et al. (2002) point to growing demands among employers for qualifying criteria like honesty, integrity, reliability and good work ethics as a complement to hard literacy.

Ghana's undergraduates are not unaware of this trend, and so expect to attend universities that run programmes that ensure the development of employable skills (Tomlinson, 2008). This researcher therefore wants to argue that students from universities like University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and Ashesi University that are considered reputable by employers in Ghana stand a higher chance of securing good jobs than their counterparts from less reputable universities. Findings of this study indicate that such high employment prospects positively influence students' evaluation of, and hence preference for, such universities.

Running such job-oriented courses as financial management, business communication skills, information and communications technology (ICT) and knowledge-based businesses has become the order of the day in Ghana as there have been lots of criticisms from industry watchers and analysts against tertiary institutions not aligning courses on offer to contemporary industry human resource requirements and demands (NAB, 2013). Following Ghana's discovery of oil in commercial quantities, many public and private institutions, tertiary and vocational alike, have mounted relevant up and down stream industry-relevant courses and are making frantic efforts to enrol and train graduates to fill job openings (GPRS II, 2006). The foregoing indicates that university institutions that offer high employment prospects to their graduates are likely to be preferred by students since anecdotally, skills acquisition and employability are two of the major reasons behind higher qualification attainments.

These findings partly address objective two (Chapter One) which seeks to ascertain the nature of relationships between the SBBE constructs in this study and university preference among students in Ghana. The findings also address hypothesis seven (H7), which proposes a positive relationship between graduate employability and student university preference. Similarly, the findings address the section of the researcher's conceptual model which indicates that UGE is positively correlated with SUP as presented in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2: Graduate Employability and Students' University Preference



Source: Field data, 2016

The results also partly answer objectives one and four, which ascertain whether there is a relationship between SBBE and university preference in Ghana; and whether generally, the concept of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) is applicable to the Ghanaian university context, respectively.

8.3.3 Relationship between University Institutional Identity (UI) and Students' University Preference (SUP)

Findings from the qualitative part of this study suggest that UI has no direct effect on students' preference for university institutions in Ghana. Predominantly, respondents were of the view that logos, colours and other such symbolic elements did not affect their preference for universities, as they were more focused on academic qualifications. This researcher argues that, without any state sponsorship, sub-Saharan African students are more physiological inclined and are thus concerned with more demonstrably tangible utility for their money, as the qualitative part of the study brought to the fore. Results from the quantitative analysis indicate no significant relationship between UI and SUP. Results of this study therefore do not support the hypothetical stance that there is a positive relationship between elements of UI and SUP. These findings are also at variance with the widespread view held in extant literature that corporate identity has a positive relationship with consumers' preference for, and choice of, products and services (Olins, 1995; Melewar and Akeel, 2005; McAlexander et al., 2006; Schmeltz, 2014; Xie et al., 2015); as well as university identity and preference (Scott, 2000; Smith and Ennew, 2000; Chen, 2008; da Silveira et al., 2013; Steiner et al., 2013; Garnett, 2014; Goia et al., 2014). The results however appear to be in line with research findings that attribute ineffectiveness of university branding to indiscriminate use of brand identity elements like logos, mottos, mascots, etc (Argenti, 2000;

Jevons, 2006; Bunzel, 2007); and this researcher wishes to argue that, perhaps, universities in Ghana have not communicated through their identity elements in a coordinated manner.

The negative relationship obtained between UI and SUP may also be due to the high level of competition among students for enrolments into specific universities in Ghana (UG and KNUST, etc.) as indicated in Chapter Two. This researcher argues that, in an environment where too many students are competing for few openings in these highly sought-after universities, it is understandable that considerations about such elements as colours, logos, jingles, uniforms, and other such peripheral elements that represent university identity are relegated to the background, even where attractive identity elements exist. This observation is supported by findings of the qualitative research of this study where respondents indicated that they were not moved by such elements as logos, colours, brands of cars used, official uniforms, corporate insignia and other such symbols because they thought such elements did not add to nor subtract from the university experience.

It would be within the realm of plausible reasoning to argue that these findings stem from the fact that not many university institutions in Ghana invest in any conscious identity building programmes. Even where appealing identity elements exist, it is arguable that they are more accidental than deliberate (Argenti, 2000; Jevons, 2006; Bunzel, 2007), and so fail to sufficiently appreciate the holistic nature of the brand in order to create the necessary connection between themselves and those elements in the minds of their target markets. Hypothesis three (H3) that proposes a positive relationship between UI and SUP was therefore not supported by findings of this study.

8.3.4 Relationship between University Institutional Reputation (UIR) and Students' University Preference (SUP)

Qualitative findings of this study suggest that the nature of reputation a university wields is positively linked to its student attraction prospects. This points to a positive relationship between UIR and SUP. Many respondents were of the view that university reputation is very important because people want to associate with universities that have reputation the whole public respects. The quantitative study equally points to a strong positive relationship between the two constructs. These findings are also in agreement with views espoused in the literature about a linear relationship between corporate reputation and consumers' preference for products and services (Aaker, 1991, 1995; Brewer and Zhao, 2010; Bartikowski and

Walsh, 2011; Suomi et al., 2014; Zavyalova et al., 2016). It is also consistent with research findings by Pinar et al. (2014) that institutional reputation is a strong component of university brand equity that can positively impact the competitive position of universities, including students' attraction (Wilbur, 1988; Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001; Blanton, 2007; Brewer and Zhao, 2010; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2012; Goia et al., 2014; Tofallis, 2012; Blanca et al., 2013; Williams and Omar, 2014; Stensaker, 2015).

Results under this construct indicate that respondents mostly agreed to the statement that their most preferred university had better reputation than other universities. When organisations repeatedly and consistently exhibit certain behaviours over a considerable period of time, those actions and inactions ultimately culminate in the kind of reputation that stakeholders hold in memory either for or against those organisations. Institutional reputation therefore represents an estimation of the consistency of an organisation's attributes over a considerable period (Milewicz and Herbig, 1994; Blanca et al., 2013; Stensaker, 2015) and is a representation of stakeholder, particularly customer perception of an organisation that is predicated on past transactional experiences (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012; Gokhan et al., 2016). In the context of this study, UIR represents a mirror of the institution's own history that communicates its overall quality and so goes to determine the global university experience relative to what is prevalent in competitor institutions. There is no doubt that respondents' most preferred universities were also considered to be reliable and credible institutions (see Table 7.3).

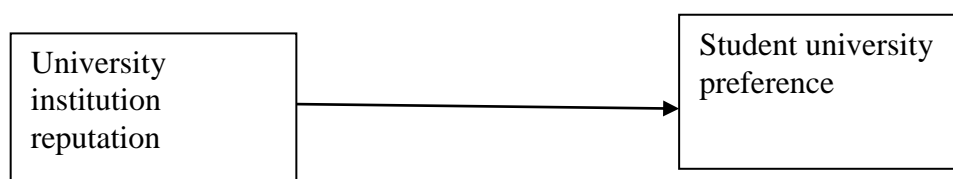
What is interesting in these findings relate to students whose most preferred institutions were not their current university of attendance. If university reputation is understood to emanate from the accumulation of students' evaluations and judgements of institutions' behaviour over time and so is formed from students' own past transactional experiences, then one is left to wonder how those student respondents came to hold those perceptions of institutions with which they have had no *direct* previous encounter. What is also true, however, is that much of what we think of organisations, as consumers, may be based on word-of-mouth as opposed to any first-hand experience with those organisations (Ertug et al., 2016). This researcher argues that such word-of-mouth communication, if positive, can engender credibility and trust thereby positively impacting students' evaluation and subsequently preference for those institutions. This viewpoint is corroborated by a position taken by Wartick (1992) and Ertug et al. (2016) that institutional reputation is not necessarily an estimation of the institution's

ability to fulfil a particular student group, as it can also imply an aggregation of a single stakeholder's perception of how well organizational actions and inactions are meeting the demands and expectations of many other stakeholder groups. This suggests that, even on the fringes, students who do not belong to a particular university are able to discern, and form a perception from that discernment, how habitually and repeatedly able the organization is in meeting the expectations of adjacent stakeholder groups.

The perceptual orientation of UIR suggests some proximity to perceived institutional service quality (PISQ) as the two concepts are both predicated on perception. Perhaps the most notable difference resides in the longitudinal nature of students' experiences with the institution in the former case relative to the latter; suggesting further that perhaps UIR somehow subsumes PISQ (Stensaker, 2015). This finding corroborates Wilbur's (1988) isolation of academic reputation as having the most enduring impact on students' perception of a university; and Blanton's (2007), that image and reputation of some universities have been argued to be even more important than actual teaching quality. The results affirm Gray et al.'s (2003) identification of institutional reputation among the main brand positioning dimensions for higher education institutions. It also affirms Mazzarol's (1998) integrated perspective of perceived quality of institutional reputation on the international front, in which he argues that the two concepts are among the factors that influence students' preference for foreign universities.

These findings partly answer objective two that identifies the relationship between the constructs studied and university preference. It also addresses hypothesis five (H5), which posits a positive relationship between UIR and SUP. The part of the researcher's conceptual model that relates UIR to SUP is also confirmed by these findings as indicated in Figure 8.3.

Figure 8.3: University Institution Reputation and Student University Preference



Source: Field data, 2016

Generally, these results partly address objective one, which ascertains whether student-based brand equity (SBBE) and university preference are related in Ghana, as well as objective four, which ascertains the applicability of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) concept in the Ghanaian university industry.

8.3.5 Relationship between University Institutional Image (UII) and Students' University Preference (SUP)

Findings of the qualitative study indicate that students are inclined to choose university institutions with strong institutional imagery. Respondents were of the view that their most preferred universities were sincere and reliable, with most of them agreeing that good university image can enhance students' self-image, help them secure jobs upon graduating and open doors internationally. These findings thus establish a positive relationship between UII and SUP. Similarly, the quantitative findings point to a significant positive relationship between UII and SUP among students in Ghana. This observation confirms the popular opinion expressed in the literature that corporate image correlates positively with consumer choice (Keller, 2003; Finch et al., 2013; Anselmsson et al., 2014; Johan et al., 2014; Jumiat and Norazah, 2015; Torres et al., 2015; Chinomona, 2016) and, specific to universities, that institutional image has a positive effect on students' preference for universities (Sevier, 2002; Kotler and Fox 1995; Parameswaran and Glowacka, 1995; Vorhies, 1997; Behrman et al., 1998; Ivy 2001; Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001; Paden and Stell, 2006; Mourad et al., 2011; Goia et al., 2014; Schofield et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014).

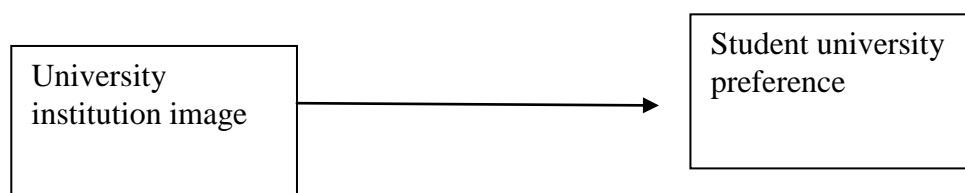
In this study, UII came up as a strong determinant of SUP, second only to UIR. Respondents mostly agreed to the statement that their most preferred university had a good image in the minds of students. This finding supports the opinions of Finch et al. (2013) and Torres et al. (2015) that the image of higher educational institutions affects the attitudes of their stakeholders by serving as a critical component in their evaluations of quality. It is also in tandem with the observations of Du preez (2015) and Chinomona (2016) that consumers respond favourably to brands that have strong brand images. Specific to the university sector, Goia et al. (2014) and Hosseini and Nahad (2012) have found that universities have realised the role of distinguished imagery in students' university selection and so are investing in it.

Williams (2012) describe image as a consistent set of associations, which forms an impression. This multifaceted synthesis of associations pull together to form impressions

among stakeholders that interact with it, and so go to determine how the public globally perceives that institution (Williams, 2012). In the light of the findings of this study, a closer look at the category of components that make up institutional image becomes necessary. Extant literature identifies functional and emotional components of institutional image with the functional component comprising tangible characteristics that can be easily measured, while the emotional component is associated with psychological dimensions that are manifested in feelings and attitudes towards an organization (Kennedy, 1977; Grönroos, 1984; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1992). Other empirical investigators (Ng and Forbes, 2009; Pinar et al., 2014) have also identified core and supporting brand equity dimensions. The emotional feelings are likely to be derived from students' experiences with the institution over time, which, according to Finch et al. (2013), affect the processing and evaluation of information relating to its core/functional and supporting indicators. In this study, respondents also believed that their most preferred universities were successful. This researcher contends that the impression of "success" is a largely emotional sub-dimension of image that gives students contentment and a sense of pride, which, in the opinion of Finch et al. (2013) and Torres et al. (2015), go to affect their evaluation of tangible, measurable, elements like physical environments and infrastructure, computer facilities, programmes on offer, teaching and learning facilities, teaching quality and overall quality of services delivered.

These findings partly answer objective two that identifies the relationship between the constructs studied and university preference. It also addresses hypothesis four (H4), which posits a positive relationship between UII and SUP. Moreover, the findings address the portion of the researchers' conceptual framework that links the two constructs as presented in Figure 8.4.

Figure 8.4: University Institution Image and Student University Preference



Source: Field data, 2016

The results also partly address objective one, which sought to find out whether student-based brand equity (SBBE) and university preference are related in Ghana. As well, the results partly answer objective four, which ascertains the applicability of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) concept to the Ghanaian university context.

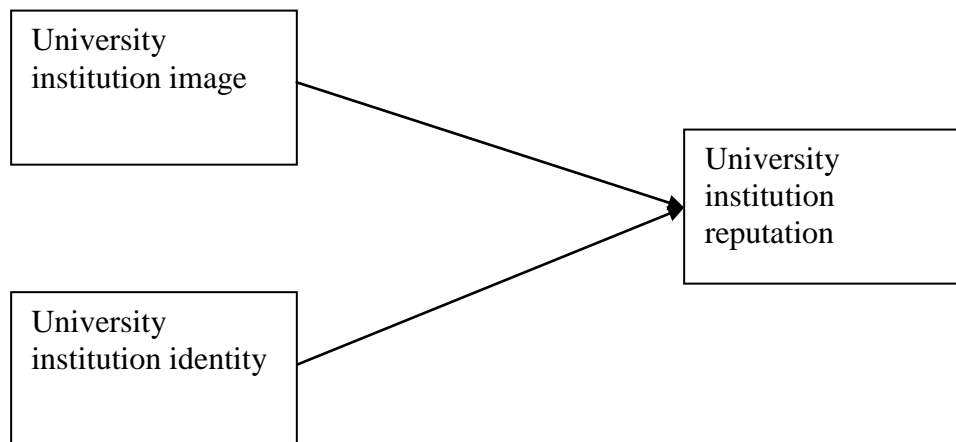
8.3.6 Relationships between Identity, Image and Reputation of University Institutions

This study indicates positive relationships between the three SBBE constructs of university identity, its image and reputation as argued in extant literature (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012; Keller, 2013; Steiner et al., 2013; Schmeltz, 2014; Sasmita and Suki, 2015). The results corroborate the popular opinion held in the literature that a university's identity and image both lead to its reputation. Gotsi and Wilson (2001), for example, argue that the concepts are different but intertwined in a dynamic "bilateral relationship" in which an organisation's everyday images and its reputation influence each other; while Abratt and Kleyn (2012) insist that the concepts are distinct and simply complement each other and should therefore not be used interchangeably. This study also corroborates the position taken by researchers like Margulies (1977), Olins (1989), Hatch and Schultz (2004), Cornelissen (2011) and Schmeltz (2014) that identity and image ultimately lead to organisational reputation.

These findings however run contrary to the view of Steiner et al. (2013) who treat reputation as a precursor of image by indicating that reputation is the subjective reflection of an institution's actions that create an external image. Similarly, the findings conflict with the view of Abratt and Kleyn (2012) who argue that an organisation's multiple reputations consolidate into its brand image with time. This researcher therefore argues that a university institution's reputation subsumes its image and identity and comprises its stakeholders' perceptions of and global impressions about the institution that is predominantly predicated on historical experiences. In this study, while UIR and UII both contributed significantly positively to SUP, UI obtained a negative relationship with SUP.

These findings address hypotheses one (H1) and two (H2) which posit positive relationships between university image and university identity on one hand, and university reputation on the other. The results also address objective three, which examines the associations among selected SBBE determinants in Ghana. Moreover, the parts of the researcher's conceptual model that associates university image and university identity with university reputation are addressed as presented in Figure 8.5.

Figure 8.5: University Institution Image, University Institution Identity and University Institution Reputation



Source: Field data, 2016

8.3.7 Relationship between Perceived Institutional Service Quality and Graduate Employability

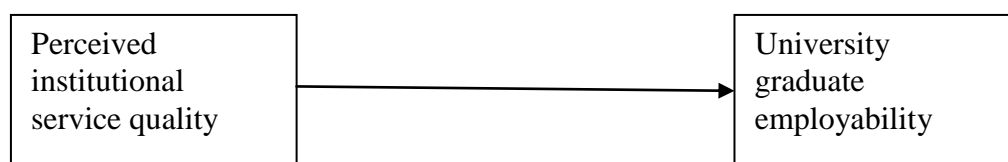
According to the findings of this study, perceived university service quality correlates positively with university graduate employability. This is supported by findings in extant literature that indicate that universities that are perceived to have good quality tend to enjoy higher employability on the job market. Blanca et al. (2013) argue that degrees obtained from highly ranked (highly perceived) institutions are more valuable in the job market, thereby aiding students in acquiring jobs after graduation (Morrish and Lee, 2011). Tolbert (2014) observes that educational institutions engage in active communication to the end of evoking specific perceptions in the minds of their stakeholders, enhancing their intellectual capital and attracting good employees (Brown and Whysall, 2010).

Li and Miller (2013) note that employment outcomes are greatly affected by positive perception of institutional reputation, although they maintain that this is a poor indicator of educational quality as employers are unlikely to have an objective account of the educational quality of institutions from which they employ (Smith et al., 2000; Brown and Hesketh, 2004). Blanca et al. (2013) conclude that higher education institutions with high perception of quality teaching and research have good reputation among students, as qualifications from

highly ranked universities are considered to be more valuable on the job market (Morrish and Lee, 2011; Shah et al., 2015).

This finding addresses hypothesis eight (H8), which posits a positive relationship between perceived university service quality and graduate employability. It also partly addresses objective three, which assesses the nature of associations among the selected SBBE constructs. Moreover, it answers the part of the researcher's conceptual model that links PISQ and UGE as presented below:

Figure 8.6: Perceived Institutional Service Quality and University Graduate Employability



Source: Field data, 2016

8.4 Confirmation of Conceptual Model

The thesis' conceptual framework proposed in Figure 4.1 in Chapter Four comprised four independent variables, namely: university institution image; university institution reputation; university graduate employability; and perceived institutional service quality. These were adopted from extant literature, particularly Mourad et al. (2011) and Pinar et al. (2014) as antecedents of SBBE. It also presented a fifth construct, university institution identity, due to its ubiquity in the CBBE literature as well as its neutral relationship with SUP in the qualitative part of this study.

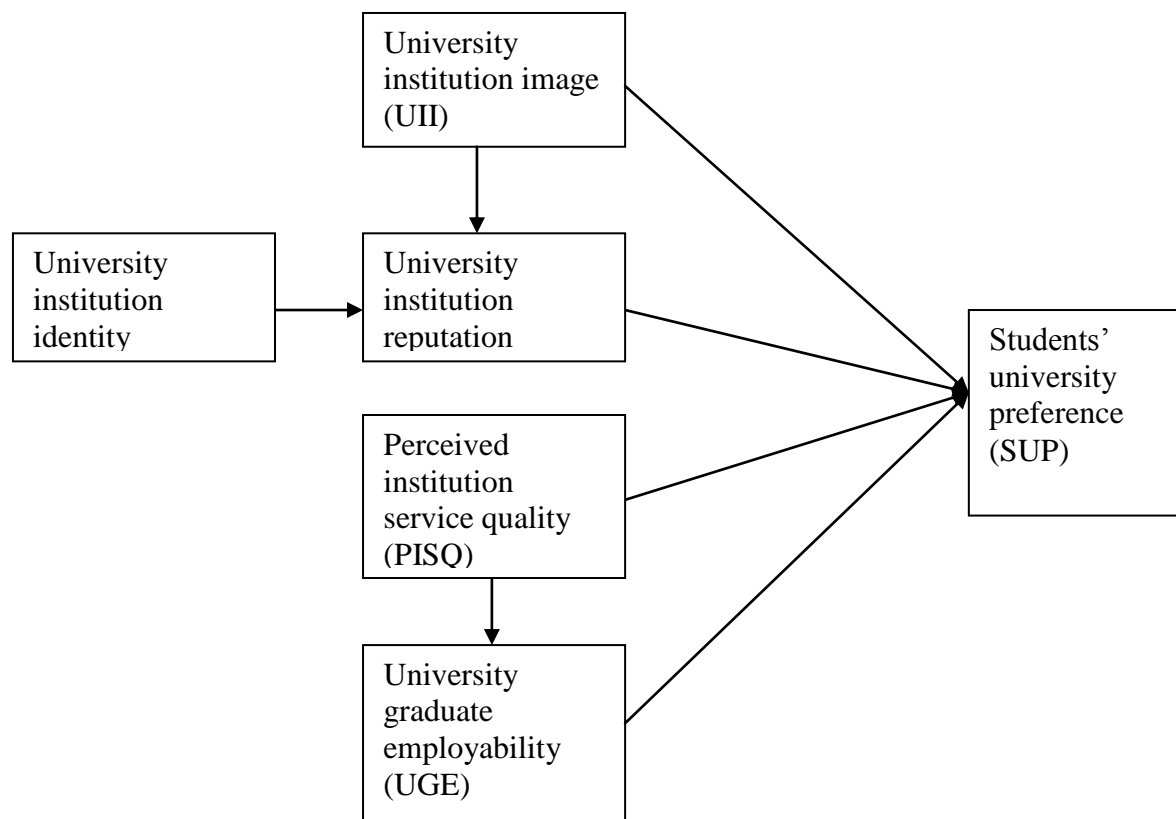
Student's university preference represented the dependent variable. The study proposed positive relationships between the aforementioned constructs and students' university preference. In addition, the model proposed positive relationships between university image and reputation; university identity and reputation; and perceived institutional service quality and graduate employability. Both qualitative and quantitative findings of this study indicate that, with the exception of university identity, all the independent constructs correlate positively with university preference. Both university identity and university image correlate

positively with university reputation. A positive relationship has also been obtained between perceived institutional service quality and graduate employability as presented in the empirical model for this study in Figure 8.7.

Figure 8.7: Empirical Model - SBBE Constructs Applicability to the Ghanaian University Industry

Independent variables – student-based brand equity constructs

Dependent variable



Source: Field data, 2016

8.5 Summary

This chapter has presented a discussion of both qualitative and quantitative findings of the study. It has related results of this study to existing literature as well as addressed the study objectives and hypothesis formulated in Chapters One and Two respectively. The chapter began by discussing brand preference under which the issue of ‘most preferred university’, and respondents’ reasons for not attending their most preferred university were discussed. The chapter has offered discussion in line with the five SBBE constructs under study and sought to ascertain the nature of relationships between them and university preference.

Findings from both qualitative and quantitative parts of the study have indicated that the SBBE variables investigated, particularly university image (UII), university reputation (UIR), university graduate employability (UGE) and perceived institutional service quality (PISQ) positively affect students' preference for university institutions in Ghana. University institution identity (UI) however recorded a negative relationship with students' university preference. This indicates that, apart from university institution identity, all the variables studied positively affect university preference among undergraduate students in Ghana. The chapter has also discussed the relationships between university image and identity on one hand, and university reputation on the other; where it has been found that both image and identity correlate positively with university reputation. This indicates that, whereas a university's image contributes both to its reputation and preference, a university's identity leads to its reputation but does not directly lead to preference among students.

The next chapter presents a summary of research findings, as well as conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. It also presents managerial implications, the thesis' contribution to knowledge, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A. (1995). *Building Strong Brands*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A. (1996). Measuring brand equity: across products and markets. *California Management Review*, 38(3), 102-20.
- Abratt, R., & Kleyn, N. (2012). Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate reputations: Reconciliation and integration. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46(7/8), 1048–1063.
- Addae-Mensah, I. (2000). *Education in Ghana: A tool for social mobility or social stratification?* The J.B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, April, 2000.
- Adu, K. H. (2009). *Private higher education on the rise*. Available at www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story. Date accessed 02/03/12.
- Anselmsson, J., Bondesson, N. V., & Johansson, U. (2014). Brand image and customers' willingness to pay a price premium for food brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 23(2), 90-102.
- Anyanwu, J. C. (2013). Characteristics and macroeconomic determinants of youth employment in Africa. *African Development Review*, 25(2), 107–29.
- Argenti, P. (2000). Branding B-schools: reputation management for MBA programs. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 3(2), 171-178.
- Baah-Boateng, W. (2013). Determinants of Unemployment in Ghana. *African Development Review*, 2013, 25(4), 385–399.
- Baah-Boateng, W., Adjei, P. and Oduro, A. D. (2013). Determinants of Moonlighting in Ghana: An Empirical Investigation. *African Review of Economics and Finance*, 4(2), 176–202.

- Bartikowski, B., Kamei, K. & Chandon, J.L. (2010). A verbal rating scale to measure Japanese consumers' perceptions of product quality. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 22(2), 179-95.
- Bartikowski, B., & Walsh, G. (2011). Investigating mediators between corporate reputation and customer citizenship behaviours. *Journal of Business Research*, 64(1), 39–44.
- Behrman, J., Kletzer, L., McPherson, M. & Schapiro, M.O. (1998). Microeconomics of college choice, careers, and wages. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 559, 12-23.
- Blanca L, D.-M., Yaroslava, B. & Luisa, D.-M. (2013). Being highly internationalised strengthens your reputation: an empirical investigation of top higher education institutions. *High Education* (2013) 66, 619–633.
- Blanton, J. (2007). Engagement as a brand position in the higher education marketplace. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 7(2), 143-54.
- Bourner, T., & Millican, J. (2011). Student-community engagement and graduate employability. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 13(2), 68–85.
- Brewer A. & Zhao, J. (2010). The impact of a pathway college on reputation and brand awareness for its affiliated university in Sydney. *International Journal of Education Management*, 24(1), 34-47.
- Brown, P. & Hesketh, A. (2004). *The Mismanagement of Talent: Employability and Jobs in the Knowledge Economy*. King's Lynn: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, M., & Whysall, P. (2010). Performance, reputation, and social responsibility in the UK's financial services: A post-‘credit crunch’ interpretation. *The Service Industries Journal*, 30(12), 1991–2006.
- Buil, I., Martínez, E. & de Chernatony, L. (2013). The influence of brand equity on consumer responses. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(1), 62-74.

- Bunzel, D. (2007). Universities sell their brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 16(2), 152-3.
- Chen, L.-H. (2008). Internationalization or international marketing? Two frameworks for understanding international students' choice of Canadian universities. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 18(1), 1-33.
- Chinomona, R. (2016). Brand communication, brand image and brand trust as antecedents of brand loyalty in Gauteng Province of South Africa. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 7(1), 124 – 139.
- Chiu, K. K.-S., Lin, R.-J., Maxwell, K. H. & Huang, L.-H. (2010). Power of branding on internet service providers. *The Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 50(3), 112-120.
- Chomvilailuk, R. & Butcher, K. (2010). Enhancing brand preference through corporate social responsibility initiatives in the Thai banking sector. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 22(3), 397-418.
- Cobb-Walgren, C. J., Ruble, C. A. & Donthu, N. (1995). Brand equity, brand preference and purchase intent. *Journal of Advertising*, 24(3), 25-41.
- Cornelissen, J. (2011). *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice*. (3rd ed.), London, UK: Sage.
- Council of Ontario Universities, (2003). *2002 University Applicant Survey*: COU Toronto.
- da Silveira, C., Lages, C., & Simoes, C. (2013). Reconceptualizing brand identity in a dynamic environment. *Journal of Business Research*, 66, 28 –36.
- Dedeoğlu, B. B. & Demirer, H. (2015). Differences in service quality perceptions of stakeholders in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(1), 130–146.

- Du preez, R. (2015). Towards a 21st century university: teachings from consumer behaviour applicable to higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 29(5), 140–155.
- Dyson, P., Farr, A., & Hollis, N. S. (1996). Measuring and using brand equity. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36, 9–21.
- Effah P., Newman E & Pillay P. (2009). *Tertiary Education Financing in Ghana. Partnership for Higher Education in Africa*. New York.
- Ertug, G., Yogev, T., Lee, Y.G. & Hedstrom, P. (2016). The Art of Representation: How Audience-specific Reputations Affect Success in the Contemporary Art Field. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(1), 113-134.
- Farquhar, P. H. (1989). Managing brand equity. *Marketing Research*, 1, 24 –33.
- Finch, D., McDonald, S. & Staple, J. (2013). Reputational interdependence: An examination of category reputation in higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* 23(1), 34–61.
- Garnett, J. (2014). Musician and teacher: employability and identity. *Music Education Research*, 16(2), 127–143.
- Goia, T. M., Goib, L.C. & Wong, D. (2014). Constructing a brand identity scale for higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2014, 24(1), 59 –74.
- Gokhan, E., Tamar, Y., Yonghoon, G. L. & Peter, H. (2016). The Art of Representation: How audience-specific reputations affect success in the contemporary art field. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(1), 113-134.
- Gotsi, M. & Wilson, A. (2001). Corporate reputation: seeking a definition. *Corporate Communications*, 6(1), 24-30.
- Gray, B. J., Fan, K. S. & Llanes, V. A. (2003). Branding universities in Asian markets. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 12(2/3), 108-122.

- Gronroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18(4), 36-44.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2004). Scaling the Tower of Babel: Relational differences between identity, image and culture in organizations. In M. J. Hatch, M. Schultz, & H. Larsen (Eds.), *Organizational identity—a reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ho, H. & Wang, F. (2011). Prestige, Parallel or Predatory –Pricing strategies among Taiwanese universities. *International Journal of Marketing studies*, 3(3) August 2011.
- Hosseini, M. H. & Nahad, F. R. (2012). Investigating antecedents and consequences of open university brand image. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 4(4), 68-77.
- Hoyles, C., Wolf, A., Molyneux-Hodgson, S. & Kent, P. (2002). *Mathematical skills in the workplace*. Final Report to the Science, Technology and Mathematics Council, Institute of Education, University of London, London. Available at:
<http://www.tfhe.net/report/downloads/report/whole.pdf>. Date accessed: 3rd April 2012.
- Ivy, J. (2001). Higher education institution image: a correspondence analysis approach. *International Journal of Education Management*, 15(6/7), 276-82.
- Jackson, D. (2014). Factors influencing job attainment in recent Bachelor graduates: evidence from Australia. *High Education*, 68, 135–153.
- Jevons, C., (2006). Beyond product's brand management, Universities: a prime example of branding going wrong. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 15, 466–467.
- Johan, A., Niklas, V. B. & Ulf J. (2014). Brand image and customers' willingness to pay a price premium for food brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 23(2), 90 – 102.
- Jorge, V. (2015). Perceived brand quality as a way to superior customer perceived value crossing by moderating effects. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 147 – 156.

- Jumiati, S., Norazah, S. (2015). Young consumers' insights on brand equity: Effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 43(3), 276 – 292.
- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Keller, K. L (2003). Brand synthesis: the multidimensionality of brand knowledge. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(4), 595-600.
- Kennedy, S. H. (1977). Nurturing institutional image. *European Journal of Marketing*, 11(3), 120-64
- Knight, P. & Yorke, M. (2004), *Learning, Curriculum and Employability in Higher Education*, Routledge Falmer, London.
- Kondasani, R. K. R. & Panda, R.K. (2015). Customer perceived service quality, satisfaction and loyalty in Indian private healthcare. *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 28(5), 452 – 467.
- Kotler, P. & Fox, K.F.A. (1995). *Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions*. (2nd ed.), Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Krishnan, B. C. & Hartline, M. D. (2001). Brand equity: is it more important in services? *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(5), 328-42
- Lauder, H., Brown, P., Dillabough, J., & Halsey, A. (2006). Introduction: The prospects for education: Individualization, globalization, and social change. In H. Lauder, P. Brown, J.-A. Dillabough, & A.H. Halsey (Eds.), *Education, globalization and social change* (pp. 1–70). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lehtinen, U. & Lehtinen, J. R. (1992). *Service quality: a study of quality dimensions*. Working paper, Service Management Institute, Helsinki.

- Li, I., & Miller, P. (2013). The absorption of recent graduates into the Australian labour market: Variations by university attended and field of study. *Australian Economic Review*, 46(1), 14–30.
- Margulies, W. (1977). Make the most of your corporate identity. *Harvard Business Review*, 55(4), 66–77.
- Matthew, T. L., Ipkın, A. W., Chu, R., Ting-Hsiang, T. (2014). Do perceived CSR initiatives enhance customer preference and loyalty in casinos? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 26(7), 1024-1045.
- Mazzarol, T. (1998). Critical success factors for international education marketing. *International Journal of Education Management*, 12(4), 163-175.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G. (2008). *The Global Market for Higher Education: Sustainable Competitive Strategies for the New Millennium*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G. N. (2012). Revisiting the global market for higher education. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 24(5), 717-737.
- McAlexander, J. H., Koenig, H.F. & Schouten, J.W. (2006). Building relationships of brand community in higher education: a strategic framework for university advancement. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 6(2), 107-18.
- Melewar, T. C. & Akel, S. (2005). The role of corporate identity in the higher education sector: a case study. *Corporate Communications*, 10(1), 41-57.
- Milewicz, J. & Herbig, P. (1994). Evaluating the brand decision using a model of reputation building. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 3(1), 39-47.
- Morrish, S. C., & Lee, C. (2011). Country of origin as a source of sustainable competitive advantage: The case for international higher education institutions in New Zealand. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19(6), 517–52.

- Moshe, S. (2013). Managing and improving service quality in higher education. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 5(3), 309 – 320.
- Mourad, M., Ennew, C. & Kortam, W. (2011). Brand equity in higher education. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(4), 403-420.
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2013). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Last date accessed 21/03/14).
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2015). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Last date accessed 15/04/15).
- National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE). (2013). *Summary statistics for accredited tertiary education institutions*. 2011/2012 academic year.
- Ng, I. & Forbes, J. (2009). Education as service: the understanding of university experience through the service logic. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19(1), 38-64.
- Nguyen, N. & Leblanc, G. (2001). Corporate image and corporate reputation in customers' retention decisions in services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 8(4), 227-36.
- Nguyen, T.D., Barrett, N.J. & Miller, K.E. (2011). Brand loyalty in emerging markets. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(3), 222-32.
- Olins, W. (1995). *International corporate identity*. Laurence King, London.
- Olins, W. (1989). *Corporate identity: Making strategy visible through design*. Thames & Hudson, London.
- Paden, N. & Stell, R. (2006). Branding options for distance learning programs: managing the effect on university image. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 3(8), 45-54.
- Parameswaran, R., & Glowacka, A. E. (1995). University image: An information processing perspective. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 6(2), 41–56.

- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt T. E. (2014). University brand equity: an empirical investigation of its dimensions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(6), 616 – 634.
- Sackey, H. A. & Osei, B. (2006). Human Resource Underutilisation in an Era of Poverty Reduction: An Analysis of Unemployment and Underemployment in Ghana. *African Development Review*, 18(2), 21–47.
- Sasmita, J. & Suki, N.M. (2015). Young consumers' insights on brand equity: Effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 43(3), 276 – 292.
- Schmeltz L. (2014). Identical or Just Compatible? The Utility of Corporate Identity Values in Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 51(3), 234–258.
- Schofield, C., Cotton, D., Gresty, K., Kneale, P. & Winter, J. (2013). Higher education provision in a crowded marketplace. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35(2), 193–205.
- Schultz, D. E. & Block, M. P. (2014). Sales promotion influence on consumer brand preferences/purchases. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 31(3), 212 – 217.
- Scott, D. (2000). One day and a lifetime of brand lessons. *Brandweek*, 41(34), 30-2.
- Sevier, R. (2002). *Building a brand that matters*. Hiawatha, IA: Strategy Publishing.
- Shah, M., Grebennikov, L. & Nair, C. S. (2015). A decade of study on employer feedback on the quality of university graduates. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 23(3), 262 – 278.
- Smith, R. & Ennew, C. (2000). *Service quality and its impact on word of mouth communication in higher education*. Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing Annual Conference, University of Derby, Derby, 5-7 July.

- Stensaker, B. (2015). Organizational identity as a concept for understanding university dynamics. *High Education*, 69, 103–115.
- Steiner L., Agneta, C., Sundstrom, K. & Sammalisto, K. (2013). An analytical model for university identity and reputation strategy work. *Higher Education*, 65, 401–415.
- Suomi, K., Kuoppakangas, P., Ulla Hytti, U., Hampden-Turner, C. & Kangaslahti, J. (2014). Focusing on dilemmas challenging reputation management in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(4), 461 – 478.
- Tariq, V. N. & Durrani, N. (2012). Factors influencing undergraduates' self-evaluation of numerical competence. *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology*, 43(3), 337-56.
- Tingchi L., Ipkın A. W., Chu R. and Ting-Hsiang T. (2014). Do perceived CSR initiatives enhance customer preference and loyalty in casinos? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* (26)7, 1024-1045.
- Tofallis, C. (2012). A different approach to university rankings. *Higher Education*, 63(1), 1–18.
- Tolbert, D. (2014). An Exploration of the Use of Branding to Shape Institutional Image in the Marketing Activities of Faith-Based Higher Education Institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, 13(4), 233–249.
- Tomlinson, M. (2008). The degree is not enough: students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29(1), 49-61.

- Torres, P. M., Augusto, M. G., & Lisboa. J. V. (2015). Determining the causal relationships that affect consumer-based brand equity: The mediating effect of brand loyalty. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 33(6), 944–956.
- Vera, J. (2015). Perceived brand quality as a way to superior customer perceived value crossing by moderating effects. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 147–156.
- Vorhies, D. W. (1997). Building strong brands. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(3), 260-1.
- Wang, E. S. T. (2013). The influence of visual packaging design on perceived food product quality, value, and brand preference. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 41(10), 805–816.
- Wang., E. S. T. (2015). Effect of food service-brand equity on consumer-perceived food value, physical risk, and brand preference. *British Food Journal*, 117(2), 553-564.
- Wartick, S. L. (1992). The relationship between intense media exposure and change in institutional reputation. *Business and Society*, 31, 33-49.
- Washer, P. (2007). Revisiting key skills: a practical framework for higher education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 13(1), 57-67.
- Whisman, R. (2009). Internal branding: a university's most valuable intangible asset. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(5) 367-370.
- Wilbur, S. (1988). *Assessing a university's image for short-term and long-term enrolment planning*. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Phoenix, AZ.
- Williams, R. L. Jr. (2012). *Branding through renaming for strategic alignment in service organizations*. Doctoral thesis. Napier University, Edinburgh.

- Williams, R., & Omar, M. (2014). How branding process activities impact brand equity within higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 1 –10.
- World Bank (2010). *Financing Higher Education in Africa*. A study by International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Washington, DC, World Bank.
- Xie, C., Richard P., Bagozzi K. & Meland, V. (2015). The impact of reputation and identity congruence on employer brand attractiveness. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 33(2), 124-146.
- Yoo, B. & Donthu, N. (2001). Developing and validating a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 52, 1-14.
- Zavyalova, A., Pfarrer, M. D., Reger, R. K. and Hubbard, T. D. (2016). Reputation as a benefit and a burden? How stakeholders' organizational identification affects the role of reputation following a negative event. *Academy of Management*, 59(1), 253-276.
- Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer Perceptions of Price, Quality and Value: a Means End Model and Synthesis of Evidence. *Journal of Marketing*, 52(7), 2-22.

CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter begins by presenting a summary of the respective chapters contained in this thesis. It presents the main thrust of the study, a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. Also presented are research contribution, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research. In addressing the objectives of the study, the survey approach was adopted in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected from undergraduate students of universities in Ghana, the empirical setting of this study. For qualitative data, in-depth interviews were held with the aid of an interview guide, with 25 undergraduate students selected purposively from four universities. Quantitative data, on the other hand, were collected by the use of a 39-item scale developed through a combination of items from tested instruments in extant literature on CBBE and SBBE, as well as findings from the qualitative part of the study. The thematic analysis method was employed in analysing qualitative data while structural equation modelling was employed for the quantitative data analysis. Presented below are a summary of the various chapters, highlights of the main thrust of the study and a summary of the major research findings.

9.2 Summary of Chapters

This thesis is structured in nine chapters as follows:

Chapter One presents an introduction to the study, which contains background information on the Ghanaian university sector that seeks to highlight its growing and competitive nature and indicates the need for sustainable differentiation. The chapter also presents the purpose and objectives of the study, reasons behind the choice of Ghana as the empirical setting for the study, relevance of the study and lastly, structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents background information of higher education in Ghana. It begins with a review of major trends and happenings in Ghana's higher education industry with a view to situating the study within the context of the higher education industry in general and the university sector in particular. It presents enrolment trends in Ghana's higher education sector in general and the university industry in particular with emphasis on increasing enrolment numbers, as well as the growing number of universities and the ensuing heightening competition that calls for differentiation. The chapter ends by looking at private sector

participation in the industry where issues relating to proliferation and competition, ownership, programmes, fees and financing, among others, are highlighted.

Chapter Three reviews relevant literature with a view to situating the study within the right theoretical context. Specifically, the chapter presents a review of literature on the concept of branding and brand equity in addition to the key brand equity assets that underpin the study. It also reviews literature on customer-based brand equity (CBBE) from which the concept of student-based brand equity (SBBE) emanates. Literature on service sector branding has been presented in that chapter as well as university branding where the concept of university brand equity is discussed.

Chapter Four presents the thesis conceptualisation, where the issue of students' preference has been discussed to identify attributes within the university environment that contribute to brand equity and students' preference for institutions in that industry. The chapter presents literature review of the SBBE constructs selected for the study, research hypotheses and the researcher's conceptual framework.

Chapter five presents research methodology which discusses research philosophies underpinning the study as well as methods, strategies and procedures adopted. The chapter begins with an overview of key philosophical assumptions that underpin social research and continues with choice of research paradigms. Also discussed is research design under which data types and sources, population, sample frame, sample size and sampling methods adopted for the study are presented. Data collection instruments, methods and administration as well as methods of data analysis, are presented in that chapter. The chapter ends with ethical guidelines that governed the conduct of the research.

In Chapter Six, results and analysis of qualitative data collected from the in-depth interviews are presented. It presents analysis and discussion of the key SBBE dimensions investigated in this study with a view to determining the relationships between the key variables and students' preference for universities in Ghana.

Chapter Seven presents results and an analysis of quantitative data to address the research hypotheses and objectives. It presents relationships between the SBBE constructs investigated and the dependant variable, students' university preference (SUP) by the use of

structural equation modelling.

Chapter Eight presents a discussion on major findings of the study and indicates whether findings confirm or dispute extant literature. It also establishes linkages between the results of the study, hypotheses, conceptual framework and objectives of the study. The chapter finally presents the study's empirical framework. Finally, Chapter Nine summarises the nine chapters contained in this thesis. It presents the main thrusts of the study, a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations as well as theoretical, managerial and methodological contributions of the study. Also presented are limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

9.3 Main Thrusts of the Study

Extant branding literature is replete with studies on customer-based brand equity following the pioneering conceptualisations of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993). Both product and service sectors continue to witness scholarly works that seek to conceptualise antecedents, dimensions and components of customer-based brand equity as it applies to different industries (Faircloth et al., 2001; Pike et al., 2010; Mourad et al., 2011; Kim and Hyun, 2011; Buil et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014; Tolbert, 2014; Williams and Omar, 2014; Ramírez, 2016). In the university sector, the concept of student-based brand equity continues to attract scholarly interest (Gatfield et al., 1999; Gray et al., 2003; Bunzel, 2007; El Mahdy and Mourad, 2008; Kurz et al., 2008; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2008; Mourad, 2010; Mourad et al., 2011; Pinar et al., 2014; Suomi et al., 2014; Shahijan et al., 2015; Dean et al., 2016). This growth is the result of universities' quest to sustainably differentiate in the face of increasing competition, due to the realisation that strong brands are attractive to students and tend to increase retention rates (Cobb, 2001; Morphew, 2001; Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001; Sevier, 2002; Toma et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2013).

Despite the growing realisation among educational institutions of the relevance of branding in achieving and maintaining sustainable differentiation (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006, Chapleo, 2007; Lowrie, 2007; Edmiston, 2008; Mourad et al., 2011; Pinar et al., 2014) and the fact that the concept is extensively researched in other service industries, (Helm and Oezergin, 2013; Williams et al., 2013; Peters and Kemp, 2014; Ugolini et al., 2014; Sujchaphong et al., 2015; Penny, 2016), research and literature relating to branding in educational institutions is still limited, and existing theoretical models have not been

unanimous in conceptualising its antecedents, dimensions and components (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006; Coleman et al., 2011; Williams, 2012; da Silveira et al., 2013; Goia et al., 2014). This study is therefore a timely piece that adds to the ongoing debate on identifying reliable dimensions of student-based brand equity. Also, most of the existing scholarly works on university branding has focused on identifying brand equity dimensions (Mourad et al., 2011; Hu et al., 2012; Pinar et al., 2014; Sharma et al., 2013; Wang, 2015). This study takes the debate a step further by linking a selection of those antecedents to students' preference in Ghana's largely unexplored domain.

Moreover, most of existing empirical research on brand equity in the university sector has been done in the developed countries (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). There are fundamental differences in the respective circumstances of developed and developing economies, and so it is fair to argue in favour of Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006) and Mourad et al. (2011) that there are gaps in both theory and practice, as findings derived from one context may not be applicable to others. With competition intensifying in the sub-Saharan African university sector (Atuahene, 2014), this study is relevant as it become increasingly imperative that the concept of brand equity is given its due attention in the battle for sustainable differentiation in that region. As a novelty in sub-Saharan Africa, this study contributes to the understanding of student-based brand equity (SBBE) within the unique university environments of that region.

Beside the theoretical and implementation difficulties in applying western oriented university branding to the contexts of institutions in developing countries, the concept of student-based brand equity is conspicuously absent in Ghana's higher education literature. This researcher believes that the time has come to fill that void. It will thus make a significant empirical contribution by adding to the scanty and rudimentary store of documented knowledge on the relationship between student-based brand equity and university preference in Ghana in particular, and sub-Saharan Africa in general. This belief is further predicated on the fact that not only is competition intensifying among domestic universities in the region, but Ghana is also witnessing the entry of more reputable foreign-rooted institutions (National Accreditation Board, 2013) whose rivalry requires more than ad-hoc application of the element of conventional marketing (Maringe, 2006; Kumar and Dash, 2011; Sharma et al., 2013).

9.4 Summary of Findings

This study sought to ascertain the applicability of some university brand equity constructs to Ghana's university sector. Specifically, it sought to ascertain the relationships between five student-based brand equity constructs and university preference among undergraduate students in Ghana. The five constructs in question are university institution identity (UI), university institution image (UII), university institution reputation (UIR), perceived institutional service quality (PISQ) and university graduate employability (UGE). Results from both qualitative and quantitative strands of this study indicate that all but one of the SBBE constructs studied (university institution identity) have significant positive relationships with university preference among undergraduate students in Ghana. In order of magnitude, the strongest relationship with university preference was obtained for UIR (H5), followed by PISQ (H6), then UII (H4), and lastly, UGE (H7). These results are amply corroborated by findings in extant literature, which indicate a linear relationship between the respective constructs and university preference. In addition, significant positive relationships were obtained between university identity, image and reputation, and between perceived institutional service quality and graduate employability.

Students' university preference (SUP) represents the dependent variable whose relationship with the five independent variables this study sought to investigate. Overall, the two most cited universities within respondents' consideration set were University of Ghana (UG) and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST); both public universities and the oldest in the country. The most preferred private university, which also came up as the third most cited in the overall rankings, was Central University College while Ashesi University, a USA linked institution that narrowly targets high echelons of Ghana's higher education market came up as the fourth most preferred university. Kings University College, a private institution, was the least preferred.

For respondents who were not in the attendance of their most preferred universities, reasons regularly cited were "inability to obtain sufficient passes" and "financial challenges". This result indicates that, but for challenges relating to insufficient passes and sponsorship, respondents would choose universities cited as their "most preferred". Very few students indicated that their inability to attend their most preferred university was due to poor institutional image, indicating, perhaps, that in a not-so-rich sub-Saharan African economy,

consumers would tend to prefer tangible, physiological fulfilment to any credence benefits. The remainder of this section presents results in respect of the five SBBE constructs investigated in this mixed-methods study.

Findings of the qualitative study indicated that students' perception of university service quality affects their evaluation of and preference for universities. Many respondents were prepared to pay higher fees to access institutions with high PISQ, while some indicated that public universities are perceived to be of higher quality due to the presence of more qualified faculty in those institutions. The quantitative analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between PISQ and SUP. This result corroborates findings of the studies by both Pinar et al. (2014) and Mourad et al. (2011) that indicate a positive relationship between perceived university quality and SBBE. Consistent with empirical literature, university service reliability, including tuition turned out to be a major factor that underpins SUP in this study. This confirms Mazzarol and Soutar (2008) and Brewer and Zhao's (2010) assertion about the importance of tuition quality in the affairs of university institutions. Hypothesis six (H6) that posits a positive relationship between PISQ and SUP was therefore supported by findings of this study.

Both qualitative and quantitative findings of this study suggest a positive relationship between UGE and SUP. Results from the qualitative analysis indicate that students are prepared to attend universities whose names would enable them to secure jobs with relative ease. The quantitative results equally indicate a significant positive relationship between UGE and SUP. This position is supported by findings in extant literature, which indicate the relevance of employment related considerations in the affairs of university institutions and their positive effect on students' attraction prospects (Gray et al., 2003; Tomlinson, 2008; Morrish and Lee, 2011; Blanca et al., 2013; Jackson, 2014; Shah et al., 2015). With Ghana's private sector stagnated at a time when IMF and World Bank conditionalities prohibit public sector employment (Anyawu, 2013), it is not surprising that students crave to be part of universities that offer some promise of employment upon graduating. Hypothesis seven (H7), which proposes a positive relationship between graduate employability and student university preference, was thus supported by findings of this study.

Findings of the in-depth interviews indicate that respondents saw no direct demonstrable

utility of university identity elements in their university experience. Most respondents therefore thought that identity elements did not affect their university preference. Similarly, results of the quantitative analysis indicate a negative relationship between the two variables. In the researcher's opinion, this state of affairs may be due to the fact that too many students are competing for too few openings in the most preferred universities, and so are not keen on elements like colours, logos, jingles, uniforms and other such tangential elements that represent university identity. These findings do not support the widespread view held in extant literature that corporate identity has a positive relationship with consumers' preference for, and choice of, products and services (Olins, 1995; Melewar and Ake, 2005; McAlexander et al., 2006; Schmeltz, 2014; Xie et al., 2015); as well as students' preference (Scott, 2000; Smith and Ennew, 2000; Chen, 2008; da Silveira et al., 2013; Steiner et al., 2013; Garnett, 2014; Goia et al., 2014). Hypothesis three (H3) that proposes a positive relationship between UI and SUP was therefore not supported by findings of this study.

Quantitative analysis under the university institution reputation (UIR) construct indicates that most respondents agreed that their most preferred university had good reputation. In fact, UIR obtained the strongest relationship with SUP. Likewise, the in-depth interviews indicate that university reputation positively affects respondents' preference for university institutions. There was a dominant impression among respondents that universities with reputation for efficiency, modern infrastructure, good quality facilities, quality tuition, graduate employability, etc. have the potential to attract students. Many believed that reputable universities tend to graduate reputable students whose attractive positions in industry become a source of motivation for potential students to get on board; with some prepared to pay higher fees to attend reputable universities.

This finding supports the popular opinion held in the literature about the relevance of reputation in the affairs of university institutions (Tofallis, 2012; Suomi et al., 2014). Mazzarol and Soutar (2012), for example, identified strong education institution reputation as key in competing in the global education industry, while Blanca et al. (2013) cited university reputation as a critical determinant in forming students' attitudes towards institutions and their programmes, particularly during their early days in universities where they have insufficient experience based on which they can make any objective assessment. Wilbur (1988) isolated academic reputation as having the most enduring impact on students'

university brand perception, with Blanton (2007) arguing that image and reputation of some universities have been argued to be even more important than actual teaching quality.

In their opinion, Delgado-Marquez et al. (2012) have stressed that university reputation kicks in a virtuous cycle in which positive evaluations among students lead to credibility and trust, which further lead to positive evaluations of their experiences. The results support findings by Standifird (2005), Chapleo (2007, 2010), Mourad et al. (2011), Pinar et al. (2014) and Stensaker (2015) that students' impressions of the reputation of a university is important in attracting and retaining them. Hypothesis five (H5), which posits a positive relationship between university reputation and its preference was therefore supported by findings of this study.

Findings from the in-depth interviews indicate a positive relationship between UII and SUP suggesting that investment in university image leads to improved university preference among students. A common view expressed pointed to the fact that the high credibility that accompanies institutions with good imagery affects students' perception of many other deliverables of the university institution including faculty and tuition, staff commitment and research, teaching and learning facilities. Many indicated that they would be prepared to pay higher fees for institutions with good imagery. Benefits of UII in the qualitative analysis included graduate employability, students' self-image, improved social status and international recognition. Similarly, results of the quantitative analysis indicate a significant positive relationship between university image and university preference. These findings are in line with the popular position in extant literature that university image has a positive effect on SBBE and university preference (Mourad et al., 2011; Goia et al., 2014; Schofield et al., 2013; Pinar et al., 2014). Therefore, hypothesis four (H4) was supported by finding of this study.

Generally, findings of this study indicate that student-based brand equity does have a positive effect on university preference among students in Ghana; indicating that the stronger the value of the university endowed by its brand elements, the more likely students are to choose that institution. The SBBE constructs studied are therefore largely applicable to Ghana's university context.

In tandem with widespread opinions held in the literature, significant positive relationships were obtained between university image and its reputation; university identity and its reputation; as well as perceived institutional service quality and graduate employability. These results support hypothesis one (H1), hypothesis two (H2) and hypothesis eight (H8) respectively. The next section presents contribution of the research.

9.5 Research Contribution

Findings of this study make significant theoretical, managerial, and methodological contributions that relate to the SBBE concept and its constructs' applicability to the Ghanaian context as presented below:

9.5.1 Theoretical Contribution

Theoretically, this study makes a significant contribution to extant academic literature on the applicability of SBBE and its constructs to Ghana's university industry. Contextually, this study is a novelty on the sub-Saharan African university landscape, particularly in Ghana where the concept of SBBE is conspicuously unmentioned in the higher education literature. The university education literature is dominated by issues relating to access, financing, quality and other elements that are at the core of functional tertiary education delivery; with no significant work done on branding. This study is a novelty in the sub-Saharan African region that contributes to the understanding of the student-based brand equity (SBBE) concept within the unique university environments of that region. It comes as a significant contribution from Ghana to the growing worldwide debate on branding in tertiary education in general and university branding in particular. The study also isolates a unique blend of empirically proven attributes of the university brand that run through the education branding literature and applies them in the uncharted territory of sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, as far as university branding in sub-Saharan Africa is concerned, this study comes as an unprecedented piece that sits right at the genesis of an imminent evolutionary continuum, as university education in that sub-region gears up to grapple with even fiercer competition.

Much of existing academic work in the area of higher education branding has concentrated on its antecedents and consequences that are largely borrowed from product sector branding and other service industries, at best. This study is a departure from constructs identification; it focuses on the relationships between university brand equity constructs and university preference that is also targeted at students. It therefore comes as a timely piece that would

help further the understanding of service brand equity in general and university brand equity in particular, not forgetting its student perspective.

9.5.2 Managerial Contribution

Results of this study have implications for higher education policy formulation in general and university administration in particular. Generally, the study has established the relevance of SBBE management in university administration in Ghana. First, having emerged in this study as the most influential SBBE variable, university reputation management should be at the forefront of university administrators' branding considerations. A lot of branding efforts should be geared towards building and improving university reputation. The results indicate that university identity and image feed into its reputation. Management should therefore institute measures to ensure that every one of the numerous encounters with students, current and potential, goes to leave a favourable memorable imprint in their minds, which will culminate in the institution's long term favourable reputation. Seeing to students' interests should go hand in hand with the wellbeing of other university publics, as the literature indicates that university reputation among students can be affected by how other adjacent stakeholder groups' interests are appreciated and addressed (Wartick, 1992; Ertug et al., 2016; Steven et al., 2016).

Second, the university brand is a complex synthesis of all of its attributes and values (Pinar et al., 2014). Results of the study revealed a significant structural path coefficient between university reputation, university image, graduate employability and perceived institutional service quality on one hand, and university preference on the other. This indicates that, apart from university identity, the dimensions investigated are all important in varying degrees in influencing SUP. UI's negative relationship with SUP is tampered by the fact that it obtained a significant positive relationship with university reputation. There is, therefore, the need for management to pay attention to both functional and non-functional, as well as core and supporting attributes in order to build a strong university brand. This researcher argues that any branding endeavour that fails to appreciate this multiplicity is likely to over-concentrate on one category of attributes, most likely functional/tangible attributes, at the expense of equally important non-functional/intangible others, and so fail to capture the entire university experience.

Third, while appreciating the relative effects of the SBBE constructs in managing the

university brand, it is important that management pay attention to some of the individual items that form the constructs. Such competitive evaluation will help management identify specific areas of the university experience that need to be prioritised to enhance the overall university experience and cause students' brand preference. This should guide management in being selective in applying scarce resources to critical areas in their brand building endeavours.

Fourth, despite the significant contribution of organisational identity to reputation, which is abundantly supported in the literature, that variable recorded a negative relationship with university preference. This researcher believes that it is not farfetched to argue that, perhaps, it may not be competitively prudent for universities in Ghana in particular and sub-Saharan Africa in general to over-invest in elements of identity, when other more effective university brand equity elements are competing for scarce resources. Another inference that may be drawn from this finding, is that Ghana's universities have not been effective in communicating in a manner that gives meaning to their identity elements; effectively highlighting those elements, as well as establishing the all-important link between themselves and their elements of identity. What is plausible then is that these universities may reap intended benefits from their institutional identity investments if management made conscious efforts to communicate in a more coordinated manner.

Fifth, findings of this study indicate that students see a positive connection between being a graduate of a particular university and the likelihood of gaining employment after graduation. There have been numerous calls from industry to university administrators to align programmes and courses with industry's human resource needs to ensure that students are readily employable upon graduating. Where too many young graduates are seeking to occupy very limited job openings, universities that heed this industry call stand a good chance of improving students' perception, which would result in brand preference, as the findings indicate a positive relationship between PISQ and graduate employability.

Therefore, a major implication of the results of this study for university management is the need to place the student customer at the centre of all university branding endeavours. The provision of palatial infrastructure, attractive student services and modern teaching and learning facilities is necessary in creating congenial and supportive university environments that promote effective learning. What is equally important is the attraction and retention of

students who will make use of those facilities in progressively competitive and marketised university environments. According to the findings of this study, effective SBBE management that promises fulfilling and memorable university experience for students would provide sustainable university differentiation and preference among them.

9.5.3 Methodological Contribution

Finally, the study offers significant contribution to university branding methodology by way of the methods used in its data analysis. While most of existing studies have adopted low level statistical methods like correlation and regression analysis, this study used structural equation modelling (PLS) in analysing quantitative data. Moreover, upon an extensive review of the literature and qualitative interactions with respondents that resulted in the unique blend of dimensions employed, this study takes the brand equity theory and methodology a step further by presenting an SBBE scale that appreciates the intricate synthesis of attributes and interactions that underpin the university experience. The scale comprises a blend of SBBE dimensions that create a favourable university environment that, according to findings of this study and corroborated by extant literature, results in preferential evaluations among students. It therefore comes as a reliable instrument in determining factors that are relevant in developing strong university brands and possibly, brand equity and preference for other higher education institutions.

9.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The practice of branding has significant implications for institutions' survival and growth in an era of heightening competition among universities on both national and international fronts (Veloutsou et al., 2004; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). As abundantly stressed in the literature, service selection decision making involves higher perceived risks due to the difficulty, if not impossibility, associated with evaluation before purchase (Krishnan and Hartline, 2001). This researcher subscribes to the large body of opinion in the literature that indicates that the inherent intangibility that is associated with service provision makes it difficult to provide a clear and concrete image, which situation breeds consumer uncertainty. Service branding plays a critical role in reducing consumers' perceived monetary, social, emotional and safety risks (Berry, 2000) due to its potential to elevate services above the commodity level as many services are seen as commodities by consumers (Keller, 2013). Extant literature therefore suggests that branding is critical for service providers (Onkvisit

and Shaw, 1989; O’Cass and Grace, 2003; Berry, 2000) as it provides grounds for effective service quality evaluation. In this regard, firms in various service industries, including universities, are increasingly adopting branding as a sustainable strategy to improve their fortunes (Tolbert, 2014). In the university sector, marketing is noted to be relatively challenging due to the dominance of experience and credence qualities; and so, as indicated in the literature, the preponderance of favourable attributes encapsulated in brands helps institutions to reduce the risks associated with students’ evaluation and selection of universities.

The higher education industry, and for that matter the university sector, is an important part of every economy in terms of its contribution to knowledge creation and dissemination, graduate employability, international research and general socio-economic growth and development (Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003). The industry has seen a lot of competition in contemporary times as the need for well-trained executives worldwide grows exponentially (Gary, 2006); for which reason there has been growing emphasis on university branding as an avenue for cutting through the competitive clutter (Tolbert, 2014). Consistent with the literature, findings of this study suggest that SBBE is beneficial to universities due to its demonstrable potential to influence students’ preference. Ghana’s universities, however, have a long way to go in appreciating the student as a customer (Sharma et al., 2013), which understanding is a prerequisite for embracing and implementing the brand concept.

Developing and sustaining a university brand is a complex task that involves a deliberate synthesis of multifarious elements that span across the entire stretch of the *hard* and *soft* continuum. The significant positive relationship obtained between all but one of the constructs studied in this thesis and university preference point to the fact that any compromises relating to any of the constructs would negatively affect SBBE and hence university preference among students in Ghana. It is in the light of this observation that the university branding approach should be tackled in a holistic, well coordinated manner that appreciates the collective contributions of the variables investigated. As complex and costly as university brand building and maintenance may seem, this researcher wishes to argue that it makes marketing sense to commit scarce resources to it since the cost of not doing so can be threatening to the very survival of the university institution, especially as all indications point to the fact that a tougher competitive battle in the industry is imminent.

It is the researcher's opinion that brand oriented institutions are those that make conscious efforts to rise above the rest in prestige, status, fame and uniqueness. Such institutions do so by adopting management practices that highlight their uniqueness, portray their consistency and present them as credible, reliable, responsive, and trustworthy in the eyes of their numerous stakeholders including students (Paramewaran and Glowacka, 1995). This researcher argues that, like their counterparts in the tangible products industry, university institutions that succeed in managing their brands also succeed in improving their competitive potential. In the light of the findings of this study, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations:

Ghana's universities should institute deliberate and sustained SBBE management to reap the functional and collateral benefits that come with it. There is the need for a clear brand vision that informs an equally clear internal policy that seeks to sing the university and its diversity in unison, externally, consistently. As more universities join in the competitive battle for students' attention and patronage, a planned departure from the ad-hoc use of the traditional elements of marketing to SBBE management would ensure that universities enjoy sustainable differentiation that is insulated against premature diffusion of strategies. This researcher believes that, while the relevance of such traditional elements as location, fees, programmes and communication remains unquestionable, it is their ad-hoc, splintered and uncoordinated implementation that remains worrisome. SBBE management would ensure that all fragmented associations and attributes are judiciously woven into a coherent, unique university brand that is reputable and preferred by students and other stakeholders on whom the growth and survival of the university institution depend. As suggested by Bulotaite (2003), university brands are managed to ensure that a mention of their names immediately evokes positive impressions, associations, emotions, images and faces that favourably affect their reputations and hence influence their preference.

Second, while making deliberate efforts to develop and blend positive attributes and values that synthesise into the university brand, management should also commit resources to brand communication that would highlight the attractive *whole* that is so built in order to create the needed awareness among students. This is in the light of the realisation that possessing attractive attributes does not necessarily impact students' evaluation, especially where there is no communication that sufficiently links those attributes to the institution. Results of this study suggest that UI has a negative relationship with SUP. This situation could be attributed

to lack of awareness among students of the elements that make up university identity. This could also be as a result of students' inability to link identity elements, however appealing, to particular universities, due, perhaps, to inadequate communication. More aggressive brand communication would go a long way to link university identity elements to their brands and so strengthen SBBE. It is important then that university administrators appreciate the holistic nature of the brand and communicate in a manner that highlights the preponderance of attributes that make it up.

Third, management should employ a branding orientation that judiciously blends both provider and credence attributes as the results of this study indicate that both functional and non-functional SBBE attributes influence students' university preference. This is consistent with the literature, which indicates that a strong brand is made up of a synthesis of rational and emotional elements (Le Pla and Parker, 2002; Balmer and Greyser, 2006); core and supporting attributes (Pinar et al., 2014); and in the apt words of Hart and Murphy (1998, p. 61), "a synthesis of all the elements, physical, aesthetic, rational and emotional".

Fourth, service intangibility due to the prevalence of *experience* and *credence* attributes in university service provision requires brand management efforts that focus on tangibilising the entire university experience. This involves couching an imagery that is palpable and meaningful; possessing associations that confer appealing physical evidence on the brand to the extent that the university experience is elevated above the commodity level. As the industry promises to make room for more entrants in the foreseeable future, such meaningful imagery would give students reason to crave to be seen to be associated with particular university brands. For example, personifying the university brand through deliberate efforts to confer such appealing person traits as successful, reliable, credible, upper class and trustworthy on the brand, would offer sufficient justification for students' craving to be associated with the university brand.

Fifth, the journey to developing and maintaining a strong university brand must necessarily begin with a perception of 'the student as a customer'. A good starting point should include deliberate student research to identify and even anticipate constantly changing tastes and preferences in order to formulate and implement SBBE policies that are in tandem with such changes. The National Student Survey of student satisfaction in the UK, for example, helps

strengthen customer orientation and enables students to evaluate the value of their learning experience (Durkin et al., 2012). Students of today indeed perceive their universities of attendance as service providers from whom they are making a purchase (Bok, 2003) and so must be made to derive value from their fees. This is even more important in an environment where, due to the absence of government subventions, most ironically survive, exclusively, on fees (NAB, 2011).

Sixth, beyond considering the student as a customer of the university, a branding perspective that treats students as customers of the total university experience would go to fuel the understanding that all actions and inactions on the part of every individual employee of the university has a role to play in adding to or subtracting from the equity of the brand. Such an approach on the part of management would be in respect of the fact that, in a service milieu like the university, individual employees, no matter their position, are not separable from the overall university experience that is delivered to the customer – the student. In his contribution to expositions on the concept of brand promise, Black (2008), for example, considered all faculty, staff, and administrators of the university as ‘institutional trust agents’ whose actions and inactions impact the delivery of the university brand promise. Universities must begin to see and treat their employees as valuable tangible asset (Whisman, 2009) in the branding journey. The university experience needs to be perceived as a complex, emergent, unstructured and volatile one that is co-created by many actors (Ng and Forbes, 2009 in Pinar et al., 2014) in order to make it relevant to divergent student interests. It is believed that holding such a perception as well as training and empowering personnel involved would enable management to fulfil the promise of delivering an appealing and memorable university experience.

9.7 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

It is important to exercise some caution in attempting to generalise findings of this study as data were collected only in Ghana. A more elaborate study that involves universities from other sub-Saharan African countries would improve reliability of the SBBE scale, as well as external validity and generalisability of its findings across that region and beyond.

Second, out of the over seventy accredited universities in Ghana, the survey was administered to students from twelve universities. Including more universities would increase reliability of

the SBBE scale, as well as findings arrived at. More so, in analysing data collected, responses from students of public and private universities were not differentiated. This is due to the fact that, as a maiden study in sub-Saharan Africa, this research sought to ascertain the relative effects of the respective SBBE constructs on the general undergraduate populations' preference for universities in Ghana. Undertaking a comparative study that involves the two categories of students would bring out possible differences in responses relative to the two respective university settings.

Another limitation relates to the exclusive selection of current students in the study's sample. Recruiting respondents from the two distinct categories of current and prospective students would ensure variability in data collected, that would enable a test of the applicability of the conceptual framework across a broader spectrum of students' circumstances. This would enrich the study through a blend of data gathered from respondents with first-hand experience of the university environment and those who are yet to experience it. This mix would also cure the limitation in respect of current students' possible prejudices against their institution of attendance, due, perhaps, to first-hand experience of service dissonance that has the potential to make them show 'blind preference' for other universities they have not directly experienced, but perceive to be better. A comparative analysis of data in that regard would also determine prospective students' perspective on the issue under investigation.

Additionally, determining the relative contributions of the respective constructs studied to SBBE in the Ghanaian context has not been the focus of this study and so remains open to conjecture; further studies may be done to determine that. Moreover, since levels of exposure are different between home and international students, applying the scale in a study that separates the two categories of students would be worthwhile. Further studies may include more university stakeholders such as management, faculty, staff, alumni and students in post-university institutions to augment responses from current undergraduate students in ascertaining overall university brand equity's influence on multiple stakeholders' preference for universities. Lastly, this study made use of five SBBE constructs. A future study that adopts more constructs, both core and supporting, in ascertaining the effects of a broader spectrum of university brand equity dimensions on students' preference should be interesting.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Anyanwu, J. C. (2013). Characteristics and macroeconomic determinants of youth employment in Africa. *African Development Review*, 25(2), 107–29.
- Atuahene, F. (2014). Charting Higher Education Development in Ghana: Growth, Transformations, and Challenges, in Alexander W. Wiseman, Charl C. Wolhuter (ed.) *The Development of Higher Education in Africa: Prospects and Challenges. International Perspectives on Education and Society*, 21, 215 – 263.
- Balmer, J. M. T. & Greyser, S. A. (2006). Corporate marketing: integrating corporate identity, corporate branding, corporate communications, corporate image and corporate reputation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(7/8), 730-41.
- Berry, L. (2000). Cultivating service brand equity. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(1), 128-37.
- Binsardi, A. & Ekwulugo, F. (2003). International marketing of British education: research on the students' perception and the UK market penetration. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 21(5), 318-27.
- Black, J. (2008). *The branding of higher education*. available at: www.semworks.net/papers/wp-The-Branding-of-Higher-Education.html. Date accessed: June, 2012.
- Blanca L, D.-M., Yaroslava, B. & Luisa, D.-M. (2013). Being highly internationalised strengthens your reputation: an empirical investigation of top higher education institutions. *High Education*, 66, 619–633.
- Blanton, J. (2007). Engagement as a brand position in the higher education marketplace. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 7(2), 143-54.

- Bok, D. (2003). Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education: Exploring how intangibility affects perceived risk. *Journal of Service Research*, 6 (4), 373-89.
- Bulotaite, N. (2003). University heritage: an institutional tool for branding and marketing. *Higher Education in Europe*, 48(4), 449-54.
- Brewer A. & Zhao, J, (2010). The impact of a pathway college on reputation and brand awareness for its affiliated university in Sydney. *International Journal of Education Management*, 24(1), 34-47.
- Buil, I., Martínez, E. & de Chernatony, L. (2013). The influence of brand equity on consumer responses. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(1), 62-74.
- Bunzel, D. (2007). Universities sell their brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 16(2), 152-3.
- Chapleo, C. (2007). Barriers to brand building in UK universities? *International Journal of Non profit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 12(1), 23 –32.
- Chapleo, C. (2010). What defines “successful” university brands? *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 23(2), 169-183.
- Chen, L.-H. (2008). Internationalization or international marketing? Two frameworks for understanding international students’ choice of Canadian universities. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 18(1), 1-33.
- Cobb, C. (2001). *The concept of brand identity in relation to students’ intent-to-persist*. Doctoral thesis. University of Oklahoma, UMI.
- Coleman, D., de Chernatony, L., & Christodoulides, G. (2011). B2B service brand identity: Scale development and validation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40, 1063 – 1071.
- da Silveira, C., Lages, C., & Simoes, C. (2013). Reconceptualizing brand identity in a dynamic environment. *Journal of Business Research*, 66, 28 –36.

- Dean, D., Arroyo-Gamez, R.E., Punjaisri, K. & Pich, C. (2016). Internal brand co-creation: The experiential brand meaning cycle in higher education. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(8), 3041–3048.
- Delgado-Ma´rquez, B, Yaroslava, B. & Luisa D.M. (2012). Higher education in a global context: Drivers of top-universities’ reputation. *Problems of education in the 21st century*. 40, 2012.
- Durkin, M., McKenna, S. & Cummins, D. (2012). Emotional connections in higher education marketing. *International journal of Education Management*, 26(2), 153-161.
- Edmiston, D. (2008). An examination of integrated marketing communication in US public institutions of higher education. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 8(3), 152 – 175.
- El Mahdy, M. & Mourad, M. (2008). *Higher Education in Egypt. Higher Education in Africa: Internationalization Dimensions*. Co-published by the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Centre for International Higher Education (CIHE), Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College.
- Ertug, G., Yogev, T., Lee, Y. G., Hedstrom, P. (2016). The Art of Representation: How Audience-specific Reputations Affect Success in the Contemporary Art Field. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(1), 113-134.
- Faircloth, J. B., Capella, L. M., & Alford, B. L. (2001). The effect of brand attitude and brand image on brand equity. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Summer, 61-75.
- Garnett, J. (2014). Musician and teacher: employability and identity. *Music Education Research*, 16(2), 127–143.
- Gray, B. J., Fan, K. S. & Llanes, V. A. (2003). Branding universities in Asian markets. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 12(2/3), 108-122.

- Gatfield, T., Braker, B. & Graham, P. (1999). Measuring communication impact of university advertising materials. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 4 (2), 73-9.
- Goia, T. M., Goib, L.C. & Wong, D. (2014). Constructing a brand identity scale for higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2014, 24(1), 59 –74.
- Gray, B. J., Fan, K. S. & Llanes, V. A. (2003). Branding universities in Asian markets. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 12(2/3), 108-122.
- Hart, S. & Murphy, J. (1998). *Brands – The New wealth Creators*. Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Helm, S., & Oezergin, B. (2013). *Service inside: the impact of ingredient service branding on quality perceptions and behavioural intentions*. AMA Winter Educators' Conference Proceedings, 24, 216-217.
- Hemsley-Brown, J. & Oplatka, I. (2006). Universities in a competitive global marketplace: A systematic review of the literature on higher education marketing. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 19(4), 316–338.
- Hemsley-Brown, J. & Goonawardana, S. (2007). Brand harmonization in the international higher education market. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 942-8.
- Hu, J., Liu, X., Wang, S. & Yang, Z. (2012). The role of brand image congruity in Chinese consumers' brand preference. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(1), 26 – 34.
- Jackson, D. (2014). Factors influencing job attainment in recent Bachelor graduates: evidence from Australia. *High Education*, 68, 135–153.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 1-2.

- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, (4th ed.), Pearson, Boston, MA.
- Kim, J.-H. & Hyun, Y. J. (2011). A model to investigate the influence of marketing-mix efforts and corporate image on brand equity in the IT software sector. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40, 424-38.
- Krishnan, B.C. & Hartline, M. D. (2001). Brand equity: is it more important in services? *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(5), 328-42.
- Kumar, S., & Dash, M. K. (2011). Management education in India: Trends, issues and implications. *Research Journal of International Studies*, 18, 15 – 25. Retrieved from http://www.eurojournals.com/RJIS_18_02.pdf. Date accessed: April, 2012.
- Kurz, K., Scannell, J., & Veeder, S. (2008). Willingness to pay: Making the best case for institutional value and return on investment. *University Business*, 11(5), 31 – 32.
- LePla, F. J. & Parker, L. M. (2002). *Integrated branding: Becoming brand-driven through company-wide action*. London: Kogan Page.
- Lowrie, A. (2007). Branding higher education: equivalence and difference in developing identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 990-999.
- Maringe, F. (2006). University and course choice: Implications for positioning, recruitment and marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 20(6), 466–479.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G. (2008). *The Global Market for Higher Education: Sustainable Competitive Strategies for the New Millennium*. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G. N. (2012). Revisiting the global market for higher education. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 24(5), 717-737.
- McAlexander, J. H., Koenig, H. F. & Schouten, J. W. (2006). Building relationships of brand community in higher education: a strategic framework for university advancement. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 6(2), 107-18.

- Melewar, T. C. & Akel, S. (2005). The role of corporate identity in the higher education sector: a case study. *Corporate Communications*, 10(1), 41-57.
- Morphew, C. (2001). A rose by any other name? Which colleges become universities. *The Review of Higher Education*, 25(2), 1-26.
- Morrish, S. C., & Lee, C. (2011). Country of origin as a source of sustainable competitive advantage: The case for international higher education institutions in New Zealand. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19(6), 517-52.
- Mourad, M. (2010). Internationalisation: a new positioning strategy in the higher education market. *International Journal of Management in Education*, 4(2), 185-200.
- Mourad, M., Ennew, C. & Kortam, W. (2011). Brand equity in higher education. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(4), 403-420.
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2013). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Last date accessed 21/03/14).
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2011). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Last date accessed 11/09/12).
- Ng, I. & Forbes, J. (2009). Education as service: the understanding of university experience through the service logic. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19(1), 38-64.
- Nguyen, N. and Leblanc, G. (2001). Corporate image and corporate reputation in customers' retention decisions in services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 8(4), 227-36.
- O'Cass, A. & Grace, D. (2003). An exploratory perspective of service brand associations. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 17(55), 452-75.
- Onkvisit, S. & Shaw, J. J. (1989). Service marketing: image, branding, and competition. *Business Horizons*, 32, 13-18.
- Olins, W. (1995). *International corporate identity*. Laurence King, London.

- Parameswaran, R., & Glowacka, A. E. (1995). University image: An information processing perspective. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 6(2), 41–56.
- Penny, E. (2016) What I talk about when I talk about branding. *Design Week* (Online Edition), 2/4/2016, 1-1.
- Peters, A. & Kemp, J. (2014). Ask Us Anything: Communicating the Value of Reference Services through Branding. *Public Services Quarterly*, Jan-Mar.10(1), 48-53.
- Pike, S., Bianchi, C., Kerr, G. & Patti, C. (2010). Consumer-based brand equity for Australia as a long- haul tourism destination in an emerging market. *International Marketing Review*, 27(4), 434-49.
- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt T. E. (2014). University brand equity: an empirical investigation of its dimensions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(6), 616 – 634.
- Ramírez, G. B. (2016). Many choices, one destination: multimodal university brand construction in an urban public transportation system. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 29, 186-204.
- Schmeltz, L. (2014). Identical or Just Compatible? The Utility of Corporate Identity Values in Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 51(3) 234–258.
- Schofield, C., Cotton, D., Gresty, K., Kneale, P. & Winter, J. (2013). Higher education provision in a crowded marketplace. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35(2), 193–205.
- Scott, D. (2000). One day and a lifetime of brand lessons. *Brandweek*, 41(34), 30-2.
- Sevier, R. (2002). *Building a brand that matters*. Hiawatha, IA: Strategy Publishing.
- Shah, M., Grebennikov, L. & Nair, C. S. (2015). A decade of study on employer feedback on the quality of university graduates. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 23(3), 262 – 278.

- Shahijan, M. K., Rezaei, S. & Amin, M. (2015). International students' course satisfaction and continuance behavioural intention in higher education setting: an empirical assessment in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 17(1), 45-70. Available at: http://fac.ksu.edu.sa/sites/default/files/shahijan_rezaei_amin_2015.course_satisfaction.pdf. Date accessed: April, 2016.
- Sharma, A. A., Raob, V. R. & Poplic, S. (2013). Measuring consumer-based brand equity for Indian business schools. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2013, 23(2), 175–203.
- Smith, R. & Ennew, C. (2000). *Service quality and its impact on word of mouth communication in higher education*. Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing Annual Conference, University of Derby, Derby, 5-7 July.
- Standifird, S. S. (2005). Reputation among peer academic institutions: An investigation of the US News and World Report's rankings. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 8(3), 233–244.
- Steiner L., Agneta, C., Sundstrom, K. & Sammalisto, K. (2013). An analytical model for university identity and reputation strategy work. *Higher Education*, 65, 401–415.
- Stensaker, B. (2015). Organizational identity as a concept for understanding university dynamics. *High Education* (2015) 69, 103–115.
- Steven, B. Scott, D. G. & Richard, J. G. (2016). Understanding the direction, magnitude, and joint effects of reputation when multiple actors' reputations collide. *Academy Management Journal*. 59(1), 188-206.
- Sujchaphong, N. Nguyen, B. & Melewar, T. C. (2015) Internal branding in universities and the lessons learnt from the past: the significance of employee brand support and transformational leadership. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 25(2), 204-237.

- Suomi, K., Kuoppakangas, P., Ulla Hytti, U., Hampden-Turner, C. & Kangaslahti, J. (2014). Focusing on dilemmas challenging reputation management in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(4), 461 – 478.
- Tofallis, C. (2012). A different approach to university rankings. *Higher Education*, 63(1), 1–18.
- Tolbert, D. (2014). An exploration of the use of branding to shape institutional image in the marketing activities of faith-based higher education institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, 13(4), 233–249.
- Toma, J., Dubrow, G., & Hartley, M. (2005). The uses of institutional culture: Strengthening and building brand equity in higher education. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 31(2), 1–105.
- Tomlinson, M. (2008). The degree is not enough: students’ perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29(1), 49-61.
- Ugolini, M. M., Cassia, F. & Vigolo, V. (2014). Services branding: is it a matter of gender? *TQM Journal*. 2014, 26(1), 75-87.
- Veloutsou, C., Lewis, J.W. & Paton, R. A. (2004). University selection: information requirements and importance. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 18(3), 160-71.
- Wang., E. S. T. (2015). Effect of food service-brand equity on consumer-perceived food value, physical risk, and brand preference. *British Food Journal*, 117(2), 553-564.
- Wartick, S. L. (1992). The relationship between intense media exposure and change in institutional reputation. *Business and Society*, 31, 33-49.
- Whisman, R. (2009). Internal branding: a university's most valuable intangible asset. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(5) 367-370.

- Wilbur, S. (1988). *Assessing a university's image for short-term and long-term enrolment planning*. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Phoenix, AZ.
- Williams Jr. R. (2012). *Branding through renaming for strategic alignment in service organizations* Doctoral thesis. Napier University, Edinburgh.
- Williams Jr., R., & Omar, M. (2014). How branding process activities impact brand equity within higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 1 –10.
- Williams Jr, R., Osei, C., & Omar, M. (2012). Higher education institution branding as a component of country branding in Ghana: Renaming Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 22(1), 71–81.
- Williams Jr., Robert L.; Omar, M. (2013) *Applying brand management to higher education through the use of the brand flux model: The case of Arcadia University*. AMA Winter Educators' Conference Proceedings. 2013, 24, 248-258.
- Xie, C., Richard P., Bagozzi K. and Meland, V. (2015). The impact of reputation and identity congruence on employer brand attractiveness. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 33(2), 124 - 146.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A. (1995). *Building Strong Brands*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A. (1996). Measuring brand equity: across products and markets. *California Management Review*, 38(3), 102-20.
- Aaker, D.A. & Jacobson, R. (1994). The financial information content of perceived quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 58, 191-201
- Abratt, R. (1989). A new approach to the corporate image management process. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 5(1), 53-76.
- Abratt, R., & Kleyn, N. (2012). Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate reputations: Reconciliation and integration. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46(7/8), 1048–1063.
- Acedo, F. J., & Jones, M. V. (2007). Speed of internationalization and entrepreneurial cognition: Insights and a comparison between international new ventures, exporters and domestic firms. *Journal of World Business*, 42, 236-252.
- Addae-Mensah, I. (2000). *Education in Ghana: A tool for social mobility or social stratification?* The J.B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, April, 2000.
- Adu, K. H. (2009). *Private higher education on the rise*. Available at www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story. Date accessed 02/03/12.
- Ahrens, T. & Chapman, C. S. (2006). Doing qualitative research in management accounting: Positioning data to contribute to theory. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 31(8), 819-841.

- Ainuddin, R. A., Beamish, P. W., Hulland, J. S., & Rouse, M. J. (2007). Resource attributes and firm performance in international joint ventures. *Journal of World Business*, 42, 47–60.
- Alasadi, R. & Al Sabbagh, H. (2013). Quality care perceptions in private Syrian hospitals. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 6(2), 76 – 86.
- Alamro, A. & Rowley, J. (2011). Brand strategies of Jordanian telecommunications service providers. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18(4), 329-48.
- Albert, S., & Whetten, D. A. (1985). Organizational Identity. In L. L. Cummings & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behaviour*, 7, 263–295. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Alessandri, S. W., Yang, S.-U. & Kinsey, D. F. (2007). An integrative approach to university visual identity and reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 9(4), 258-70.
- Ali, F., Zhou, Y., Hussain, K., Nair, P. K. & Ragavan, N. A., (2016). Does higher education service quality effect student satisfaction, image and loyalty?. *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 24 (1), 70-94.
- Allameh, S. M., Pool, J. K., Jaberi, A., Salehzadeh, R. & Asadi, H. (2015). Factors influencing sport tourists' revisit intentions: The role and effect of destination image, perceived quality, perceived value and satisfaction. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 27(2), 191-207.
- Al-Shirawi, A. M. (2012). *Measuring the Level of Market Orientation among Financial Services providers in a Resource-based Economy: Organisational and Customer Perspectives*. PhD Thesis, Brunel University, London. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 2, 43-49.

- Ambler, T. & Styles, C. (1996). Brand development versus new product development: towards a process model of extension. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 14(7), 10-19.
- Andersson, L. M. & Bateman, T. S. (1997). Cynicism in the workplace: Some causes and effects. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 18 (5), 449-469.
- Andres, C., Pilar, L. & Maria, J. Y. (2012). Private label brands: measuring equity across consumer segments. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(6), 428-438.
- Anselmsson, J., Bondesson, N. V., & Johansson, U. (2014). Brand image and customers' willingness to pay a price premium for food brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 23(2), 90-102.
- Antaki, C., Young, N. & Finlay, W. M. L. (2002). Shaping clients' answers: Departures from neutrality in care-staff interviews with people with a learning disability. Disability & approach in the beverage industry in Turkey. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 23(3), 237-48.
- Anyanwu, J. C. (2013). Characteristics and macroeconomic determinants of youth employment in Africa. *African Development Review*, 25(2), 107–29.
- Arambewela, R., & Hall, J. (2009). An empirical model of international student satisfaction. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 21(4), 555–569.
- Argenti, P. (2000). Branding B-schools: reputation management for MBA programs. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 3(2), 171-178.
- Arksey, H. & Knight, P. (1999). *Interviewing for social scientists*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Aron, D. (2014). Globalization, culture, and branding: how to leverage cultural equity for building iconic brands in the era of globalization. *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*, 51(11), 2032-2032.

- Arpan, L., Raney, A., & Zivnuska, S. (2003). A cognitive approach to understanding university image. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 8(2), 97–113.
- Asamoah, E. S. (2014). Customer based brand equity (CBBE) and the competitive performance of SMEs in Ghana. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 21(1), 117-131.
- Atilgan, E., Aksoy, S. & Akinci, S. (2005). Determinants of the brand equity: a verification approach in the beverage industry in Turkey. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 23(3), 237-248.
- Atuahene, F. (2006). *A policy Analysis of the Financing of Tertiary Education Institutions in Ghana: An Assessment of the Objectives and the Impact of the Ghana Education Trust Fund*. Doctorial Thesis. The College of Education of Ohio University.
- Atuahene, F. (2014). Charting Higher Education Development in Ghana: Growth, Transformations, and Challenges, in Alexander W. Wiseman, Charl C. Wolhuter (ed.) *The Development of Higher Education in Africa: Prospects and Challenges. International Perspectives on Education and Society*, 21, 215 – 263.
- Australian Bureau Statistics. (2010). *Education and training experience 2009*, Cat. 6278.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Baah-Boateng, W. (2013). Determinants of Unemployment in Ghana. *African Development Review*, 2013, 25(4), 385–399.
- Baah-Boateng, W., Adjei, P. and Oduro, A. D. (2013). Determinants of Moonlighting in Ghana: An Empirical Investigation. *African Review of Economics and Finance*, 4(2), 176–202.
- Bahari, F. S. (2010). Qualitative versus Quantitative Research Strategies: Contrasting Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions. *Journal of Technology* 52, 17-28.

- Baker, C., Nancarrow, C., & Tinson, J. (2005). The mind versus market share guide to brand equity. *International Journal of Market Research*, 47(5), 523-540.
- Baldauf, A., Cravens, K.S. & Binder, G. (2003). Performance consequences of brand equity management: evidence from organizations in the value chain. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 12(4), 220-36.
- Balmer, J.M. T., & Greyser, S. (2002). Managing the multiple identities of the corporation. *California Management Review*, 44(3), 72-86.
- Balmer, J. M. T. & Greyser, S. A. (2006). Corporate marketing: integrating corporate identity, corporate branding, corporate communications, corporate image and corporate reputation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(7/8), 730-41.
- Balmer, J. M. T. & Liao, M. (2007). Student corporate brand identification: an exploratory case study. *International Journal of Corporate Communications*, 12(4), 356-375.
- Barclay, D., Thompson, R. & Higgins, C. (1995). The Partial Least Squares (PLS) Approach to Causal Modeling: Personal Computer Adoption and Use an Illustration. *Technology Studies*, 2(2), 285-309.
- Barich, H. & Kotler, P. (1991). A framework for marketing image management. *Sloan Management Review*, 32(2), 94-104.
- Barnett, M. L., Jermier, J. M., & Lafferty, B. A. (2006). Corporate reputation: The definitional landscape. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 9, 26–38.
- Bartikowski, B., & Walsh, G. (2011). Investigating mediators between corporate reputation and customer citizenship behaviours. *Journal of Business Research*, 64(1), 39–44.
- Bartikowski, B., Kamei, K. & Chandon, J. L. (2010). A verbal rating scale to measure Japanese consumers' perceptions of product quality. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 22(2), 179-95.

- Barwise, P. (1993). Brand equity: Snark or boojum? *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 10(1), 93-104.
- Bazeley, P. (2009). *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Behrman, J., Kletzer, L., McPherson, M. & Schapiro, M. O. (1998). Microeconomics of college choice, careers, and wages. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 559, 12-23
- Bekir, B. D. & Halil, D. (2015). Differences in service quality perceptions of stakeholders in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(1), 130 – 146.
- Belanger, C., Mount, J. & Wilson, M. (2002). Institutional image and retention. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 8(3), 217.
- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project*. (4th ed.). Maidenhead,: Open University Press.
- Bennett, R. & Ali-Choudhury, R. (2007). Components of the university brand: an empirical study, in Melewar, T. C. (Ed.), *Intangible Economies: Brand, Corporate Image, Identity and Reputation in the 21st Century*. Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Colloquium of the Academy of Marketing's Brand, Corporate Identity and Reputation. SIG, Brunel University, 12-13 September 2007.
- Bennett, R. & Ali-Choudhury, R. (2009). Prospective students' perceptions of university brands: an empirical study. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19, 85-107.
- Berg, P.-O., & Kreiner, K. (1990). Corporate architecture: Turning physical settings into symbolic resources. In P. Gagliardi (Ed.), *Symbols and artefacts: Views of the corporate landscape*, 41–67. New York: de Gruyter.
- Berger, K. A. & Wallingford, H. P. (1996). Developing advertising and promotion strategies for higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 7(4), 61-72.

- Berry, L. (2000). Cultivating service brand equity. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(1), 128-37.
- Biel, A. L. (1992). How brand image drives brand equity. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 12, 6-12.
- Binner, P. M., Dean, R. S. & Millinger, A. F. (1994). Factors underlying distance learner satisfaction. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 4, 232-8.
- Binsardi, A. & Ekwulugo, F. (2003). International marketing of British education: research on the students' perception and the UK market penetration. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 21(5), 318-27.
- Bitner, M. J. (1990). Evaluating service encounters: the effects of physical surroundings and employee responses. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(2), 69-82.
- Black, J. (2008). *The branding of higher education*. available at:
www.semworks.net/papers/wp-The-Branding-of-Higher-Education.html. Date accessed: June, 2012.
- Blackmore, J. (2009). Academic pedagogies, quality logics and performative universities: Evaluating Teaching and What Students Want. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(8), 857-872.
- Blaike, N. (1993). *Approaches to social enquiry*. (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Blaike, N. (2000). *Designing social research*. (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Blanca L, D.-M., Yaroslava, B. & Luisa, D.-M. (2013). Being highly internationalised strengthens your reputation: an empirical investigation of top higher education institutions. *High Education* (2013) 66, 619–633.
- Blanton, J. (2007). Engagement as a brand position in the higher education marketplace. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 7(2), 143-54.

- Bloom, D., Canning, D., & Chan, K. (February, 2006). *Higher education and economic development in Africa*. Available at http://www.worldbank.org/afr/teia/pdfs/Higher_Education_Econ_Dev.pdf, Accessed 14/03/12.
- Boivie, S., Graffin, S. D., Richard J. & Gentry, R. J. (2016). Understanding the Direction, Magnitude, and Joint Effects of Reputation When Multiple Actors' Reputations Collide. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(1), 188-206.
- Bok, D. (2003). Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education: Exploring how intangibility affects perceived risk. *Journal of Service Research*, 6 (4), 373-89.
- Booth, J. (1999). *Choosing a place of higher education: some preliminary analysis of student response to marketing efforts*. Academy of Marketing Annual Conference Proceedings, University of Stirling, Scotland, UK, 7-9 July.
- Bosch, J., Venter, E., Han, Y., & Boshoff, C. (2006). The impact of brand identity on the perceived brand image of a merged higher education institution. *Management Dynamics*, 15(2), 10–30.
- Boulding, W., Kalra, A., Staelin, R. & Zeithaml, V. (1993). A dynamic process model of service quality: from expectations to behavioural intentions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 30, 7-27.
- Bourner, T., & Millican, J. (2011). Student-community engagement and graduate employability. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 13(2), 68–85.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Braun, V. & Clark, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, (13)2, 77-101.

- Brewer A. & Zhao, J, (2010). The impact of a pathway college on reputation and brand awareness for its affiliated university in Sydney. *International Journal of Education Management*, 24(1), 34-47.
- Brodie, R. J., Whittome, J. R. M. & Brush, G. J. (2009). Investigating the service brand: a customer value perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 345-55.
- Bromley, D. B (2000) Psychological aspects of corporate identity, image and reputation. *Corporate reputation review*, 3, 240-252.
- Brookes, M. (2003). Higher education: marketing in a quasi-commercial service industry. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 8(2), 134-42.
- Brown, M., & Whysall, P. (2010). Performance, reputation, and social responsibility in the UK's financial services: A post- 'credit crunch' interpretation. *The Service Industries Journal*, 30(12), 1991–2006.
- Brown, P. & Hesketh, A. (2004). *The Mismanagement of Talent: Employability and Jobs in the Knowledge Economy*. King's Lynn: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, R. & Carasso, H. (2013). *Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK Higher Education*. Routledge, UK: London.
- Brown, T. J., Dacin, P. A., Pratt, M. G., & Whetten, D. A. (2006). Identity, intended image, construed image, and reputation: An interdisciplinary framework and suggested terminology. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34, 99–106.
- Broyles, S. A., Leingpibul, T., Ross, R. H. & Foster, B.M. (2010). Brand equity's antecedent/consequence relationships in cross-cultural settings. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 19(3), 159-69.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2007). *Business research methods*. (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Bryman, A. (2006). Paradigm Peace and the Implications for Quality. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 9(2), 111–126.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. (4th ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. (4th ed). Oxford University Press.
- Buil, I., Martínez, E. & de Chernatony, L. (2013). The influence of brand equity on consumer responses. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(1), 62-74.
- Bulotaite, N. (2003). University heritage: an institutional tool for branding and marketing. *Higher Education in Europe*, 48(4), 449-54.
- Bunzel, D. (2007). Universities sell their brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 16(2), 152-3.
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis*. Burlington, Ashgate.
- Byron, S. (1995). Brand equity and market-based assets of professional service firms. *Journal of Professional Services Marketing*, 13(1), 3-7.
- Caruana, A., & Ewing, M. T. (2010). How corporate reputation, quality, and value influence online loyalty. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9/10), 1103–1110.
- Casidy, R. (2013). The role of brand orientation in the higher education sector: a student-perceived paradigm. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 25(5), 803-820.
- Cavaye, A. L. M. (1996). Case study research: a multi-faceted research approach for Information Systems. *Information Systems Journal*, 6, 227-242.
- Chambers, M.I. (2008). *The African Youth and Employment*: ECOWAS Commission Accra. Ghana 5 September, 2008.
- Chapleo, C. (2007). Barriers to brand building in UK universities? *International Journal of Non profit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 12(1), 23 –32.

- Chapleo, C. (2010). What defines “successful” university brands? *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 23(2), 169-183.
- Chaudhuri, A. (1995). Brand equity or double jeopardy? *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 4(1), 26-32.
- Chaudhuri, A. & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty. *Journal of Marketing*, 65 (April), 81-93.
- Chen, C. H. (1996). *The measurement and construction of customer-based brand equity*. PhD dissertation. National Chengchi University, Taiwan, Republic of China.
- Chen, C. H. & Chen, S. K. (2000). Brand dilution effects of extension failure – a Taiwan study. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 9(4), 243-53.
- Chen, L. H. (2008). Internationalization or international marketing? Two frameworks for understanding international students’ choice of Canadian universities. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 18(1), 1-33.
- Chia, R. (2002). The production of management knowledge: Philosophical underpinnings. In: Partington, D. (ed) *Essential skills for management research*. (1st ed.). Sege, London
- Chin, W. W. & Newsted, P. R. (1999). Structural Equation Modelling Analysis with Small Samples Using Partial Least Squares, in *Statistical Strategies for Small Sample Research*, Rick Hoyle (ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999, 307-341.
- Chin, W. W. (1998). The partial least squares approach to structural equation modelling. *Modern Methods for Business Research*, 295(2), 295-336.
- Chin, W. W. (2010). How to write up and report PLS analyses, in Esposito Vinzi, V., Chin, W.W., Henseler, J. and Wang, H. (Eds), *Handbook of Partial Least Squares: Concepts, Methods and Application*, Springer, Berlin, 645-689.

- Chinomona, R. (2016). Brand communication, brand image and brand trust as antecedents of brand loyalty in Gauteng Province of South Africa. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 7(1), 124 – 139.
- Chisnall, P. (1992). *Marketing Research*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.
- Chiu, K. K.-S., Lin, R.-J., Maxwell, K. H. & Huang, L.-H. (2010). Power of branding on internet service providers. *The Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 50(3), 112-120.
- Chomvilailuk, R. & Butcher, K. (2010). Enhancing brand preference through corporate social responsibility initiatives in the Thai banking sector. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 22(3), 397-418.
- Christensen, L. T., & Askegaard, S. (2001). Corporate identity and corporate image revisited. A semiotic perspective. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35, 292–315.
- Christodoulides, G. & de Chernatony, L. (2010). Consumer-based brand equity conceptualisation and measurement. *International Journal of Market Research*, 52(1), 43-66.
- Churchill, G. A. J. (1991). *Marketing Research; Methodological Foundation*. (5th ed.). London: Dryden Press International Edition.
- Cleopatra, V. (2015). Brand evaluation, satisfaction and trust as predictors of brand loyalty: the mediator-moderator effect of brand relationships. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 32(6), 405 -421.
- Cobb, C. (2001). *The concept of brand identity in relation to students' intent-to-persist*. Doctoral thesis. University of Oklahoma, UMI.
- Cobb-Walgren, C. J., Ruble, C. A. & Donthu, N. (1995). Brand equity, brand preference and purchase intent. *Journal of Advertising*, 24(3), 25-41.

- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioural sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. (5th ed), London: Routledge Palmer.
- Coleman, D., de Chernatony, L., & Christodoulides, G. (2011). B2B service brand identity: Scale development and validation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40, 1063 – 1071.
- Comrey, A. L. & Lee, H.B. (1992). *A first course in factor analysis*. (2nd ed.), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Hillsdale.
- Conway, T. M., Dalton, C., Loo, J. & Benakoun, L. (2008). Developing ecological footprint scenarios on university campuses: a case study of the University of Toronto at Mississauga. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 9(1), 4-20.
- Cornelissen, J. (2011). *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice*. (3rd ed.), London, UK: Sage.
- Corte, V.D., Piras, A. & Zamparelli, G. (2010). Brand and image: the strategic factors in destination marketing. *International Journal of Leisure and Tourism Marketing*, 1(4), 358-377.
- Council of Ontario Universities, (2003). *2002 University Applicant Survey*: COU Toronto.
- Cramer, D. & Howitt, D. (2008). *Introduction to research methods in psychology*. 2nd Edition. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Creswell, J. W., (2003). *Research Design Qualitative and Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*. Thousand Oaks CA. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). Editorial: mapping the field of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 3(2), 95-108.

- Creswell, J., W. (2012). *Educational research. Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (4th ed). Edward Brothers Inc.
- Cristina, C.-P., Jean-Pierre, L.-M. & Isabel N.-C. (2013). Perceived quality in higher education: an empirical study. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 31(6), 601-619.
- Cronbach, L.J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297-334.
- Crosby, L. A., Evans, K. R. & Cowles, D. (1990). Relationship quality in services selling: an interpersonal influence perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, 54, 68-81.
- Cubillo-Pinilla, J. M., Zuniga, T., Losantos, I. S. & Sanchez, J. (2009). Factors influencing international students' evaluations of higher Education Programs. *The Journal of American Academy of Business*, 15(1), 270-8.
- Cuneo, A., Lopez, P. & Yague, M. J. (2012). Private label brands: measuring equity across consumer segments. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(6), 428-438.
- Curtis, T., Abratt, R. & Minor, W. (2009). Corporate brand management in higher education: the case of ERAU. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 18(6), 404-413.
- Czaja, R. & Blair, J. (2005). *Designing surveys. A guide to decisions and procedures*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- da Silveira, C., Lages, C. & Simoes, C. (2013). Reconceptualizing brand identity in a dynamic environment. *Journal of Business Research*, 66, 28 –36.
- Dabholkar, P. A., Thorpe, D. I., & Rentz, J. O. (1996). A Measure of Service Quality for Retail Stores: Scale Development and Validation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 24(1), 316.
- Darby, M.R. & Karni, E. (1973). Free competition and the optimal amount of fraud. *Journal of Law and Economics*, 16, 67-88.

- Davcik, N. S., da Silva, R. V. & Hair, J. F. (2015). Towards a unified theory of brand equity: conceptualizations, taxonomy and avenues for future research. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*. 24(1), 3-17.
- Davies, G., Chun, R., Da Silva, R. V., & Roper, S. (2002). *Corporate reputation and competitiveness*. Routledge, UK: London.
- Davis, D. L. & Davis, D. F. (1990). The effect of training techniques and personal characteristics on training end users of information systems. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 7(1), 93-110.
- Dawn, T. (2014). An Exploration of the use of branding to shape institutional image in the marketing activities of faith-based higher education institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, 13(4), 233–249, 2014.
- de Chernatony, L. (2006). *From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation*. Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
- de Chernatony, L., Drury, S., & Segal-Horn, S. (2004). Identifying and sustaining services brands' values. *Journal of Marketing Communication*, 10(2), 73– 93.
- de Chernatony, L., & Cottam, S. (2006). Internal brand factors during successful financial services brands. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(5/6), 611–633.
- de Chernatony, L. & Dall'Olmo R. F. (1998). Modelling the components of the brand. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32(11/12), 1074-90.
- de Chernatony, L. & Harris, F. J. (2000). Developing corporate brands through considering internal and external stakeholders. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 3(3), 268-74.
- de Chernatony, L. & McDonald, M. (1998). *Creating Powerful Brands in Consumer, Service and Industrial Markets*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- de Chernatony, L. & McWilliam, G. (1989). The strategic implications of clarifying how marketers interpret brands. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 5(2), 153-71.

- Dean, D., Arroyo-Gamez, R.E., Punjaisri, K. & Pich, C. (2016). Internal brand co-creation: The experiential brand meaning cycle in higher education. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(8), 3041–3048.
- Dedeoğlu, B. B. & Demirer, H. (2015). Differences in service quality perceptions of stakeholders in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(1), 130–146.
- De Mooij, M. (1993). *Brand Equity*. Education Directorate of the International Advertising Association, Amsterdam, September, 1993.
- Delaney, A. M. (1998). *Parental income and students' college choice process. Research findings to guide recruitment strategies*. Paper presented at Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Minneapolis, MN.
- Delgado-Ma´rquez, B, Yaroslava, B. & Luisa D.M. (2012). Higher education in a global context: Drivers of top-universities' reputation. *Problems of education in the 21th century*. 40, 2012.
- Denise, J. (2014) Factors influencing job attainment in recent Bachelor graduates: evidence from Australia. *High Education*, 68, 135–153.
- Denise, M. J., Melinda, M. V. & Stephen, T.T. T. (2015). The association between learning styles and perception of teaching quality. *Education and Training*, 57(5), 575 – 587.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2003). The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In: Denzin, N. and Lincoln Y. (ed). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (ed) (2003) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.
- deVaus D. (2002). *Surveys in Social Research*. (5th ed.). Routledge, London.
- Diamantopoulos, A. & Schlegelmilch, B. (1997). *Taking the Fear Out of Data Analysis: A Step-by-Step*. London: The Dryden Press.

- Dillman, D. A., Sinclair, M. D. & Clark, J. R. (1993). Effects of questionnaire length, respondent-friendly design, and a difficult question on response rates for occupant-addressed 23 census mail surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 157, 289-304.
- Downer, L. (2016). It's the equity stupid! protecting the value of the partisan brand. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*. Jan-Mar2016, 28(1), 22-39.
- Du preez, R. (5015). Towards a 21st century university: teachings from consumer behaviour applicable to higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 29(5), 140–155.
- Durkin, M., McKenna, S. & Cummins, D. (2012). Emotional connections in higher education marketing. *International Journal of Education Management*, 26(2), 153-161.
- Dyson, P., Farr, A., & Hollis, N. S. (1996). Measuring and using brand equity. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36, 9–21.
- Eagle, L. & Brennan, R. (2007). Are students customers? TQM and marketing perspectives. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 15(1), 44-60.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Lowe, A. (2004). *Management research, an introduction*. (2nd Ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Edmiston, D. (2008). An examination of integrated marketing communication in US public institutions of higher education. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 8(3), 152 – 175.
- Effah P. (2011). A Ghanaian response to the study of widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania: Developing an equity scorecard. *Research in Comparative & International Education*, 6, 374-382.
- Effah P., Newman E & Pillay P. (2009). *Tertiary Education Financing in Ghana. Partnership for Higher Education in Africa*. New York.

- Efron, B. & Gong, G. (1983). A leisure look at the bootstrap, the jackknife, and cross validation. *The American Statistician*, 37(1), 36-48.
- El Mahdy, M. & Mourad, M. (2008). *Higher Education in Egypt. Higher Education in Africa: Internationalization Dimensions*. Co-published by the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Centre for International Higher Education (CIHE), Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College.
- Elsbach, K. D. (2006). *Organizational perception management*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Emery, C. R., Kramer, T. R. & Tian, R. G. (2003). Return to academic standards: a critique of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 11(1), 37-46.
- Emmanuel, S. A. (2014). Customer based brand equity (CBBE) and the competitive performance of SMEs in Ghana. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*. 21(1), 117 – 131.
- Erdem, T., Swait, J. & Valenzuela, A. (2006). Brands as signals: a cross-country validation study. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(1), 34-49.
- Eriksson, P. & Kovalainen, A. (2008). Qualitative methods in business research. (1st ed.). European Journal of Marketing, 29(4), 57-66.
- Ertug, G., Yogev, T., Lee, Y. G., Hedstrom, P. (2016). The Art of Representation: How Audience-specific Reputations Affect Success in the Contemporary Art Field. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(1), 113-134.
- Esmaeilpour, F. (2015). The role of functional and symbolic brand associations on brand loyalty: A study on luxury brands. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 19(4), 467-484.

- Faircloth, J. B., Capella, L. M., & Alford, B. L. (2001). The effect of brand attitude and brand image on brand equity. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Summer, 61-75.
- Fariba, E. (2015). The role of functional and symbolic brand associations on brand loyalty: A study on luxury brands. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 19(4), 467-484.
- Farquhar, P. H. (1989). Managing brand equity. *Marketing Research*, 1, 24 –33.
- Field, P. A. & Morse, J. A. (1985). *Nursing Research: The Application of Qualitative Research*. London: Croom Helm.
- Finch, D., McDonald, S. and J. Staple. (2013). Reputational interdependence: An examination of category reputation in higher education. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* 23(1), 34–61.
- Fombrun, C. J. & VanRiel, C. B. M. (2003). *Fame and Fortune: How Successful Companies Build Winning Reputations*. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Reputation. Realizing value from the corporate image*. Harvard Business School. MA: Boston.
- Fornell, C. & Cha, J. (1993). *Partial Least Squares (PLS)*. Working paper, University of Michigan Business School, Ann Arbor.
- Fornell, C. & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.
- Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Gabbott, M. & Hogg, G. (1998). *Consumers and Services*. Chicester: Wiley.
- Garnett, J. (2014). Musician and teacher: employability and identity. *Music Education Research*, 16(2), 127–143.

- Gary, L. (2006). B-Schools Adapt to Meet Global Market Demands. *Harvard review*, 84(7/8), 134.
- Gatfield, T., Braker, B. and Graham, P. (1999). Measuring communication impact of university advertising materials. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 4 (2), 73-9.
- Gerbing, D. W. & Anderson, J. C. (1988). An updated paradigm for scale development incorporating unidimensionality and its assessment. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20(1), 63-70.
- Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (2006). *Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II). National Development Planning Commission, Republic of Ghana, 2006.*
- Gilbert, N. (2011). *Researching Social Life*, (3rd ed), Sage Publications Ltd, London.
- Gill, J. & Johnson, P. (2010). *Research methods for managers*. (4th ed). London: Sage Publications.
- Gioia, D., Schultz, M., & Corley, K. (2000). Organizational identity, image and adaptive instability. *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 63–81.
- Girdwood A. (1999). *Tertiary Education policy in Ghana, 1988-1998*, report for the World Bank.
- Gladden, J. & Funk, D. (2002). Developing an understanding of brand associations in team sport: empirical evidence from consumers of professional sport. *Journal of Sport Management*, 16(1), 54-81.
- Goia, T.M., Goib, L.C. & Wong, D. (2014). Constructing a brand identity scale for higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2014, 24(1), 59 – 74.

- Gokhan, E., Tamar, Y., Yonghoon, G. L. & Peter, H. (2016). The Art of Representation: How Audience-specific Reputations Affect Success in the Contemporary Art Field. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(1), 113-134.
- Gorden, R. L. (1980). *Interviewing: Strategy, techniques and tactics*. Homewood: Dorsey.
- Gotsi, M. & Wilson, A. (2001). Corporate reputation: seeking a definition. *Corporate Communications*. 6(1), 24-30.
- Government of Ghana (GoG) (2010). Education Sector Performance Report, 2010.
- Government of Ghana (GoG) (2012). White paper on the report of the Education Reforms Committee, Ministry of Education Youth and Sports.
- Gray, B. J., Fan, K. S. & Llanes, V. A. (2003). Branding universities in Asian markets. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 12(2/3), 108-122.
- Gray, J. G. (1986). *Managing the corporate image: The key to public trust*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Greene, J. C. (2007). *Mixed methods in social inquiry*. San Francisco: John Wiley.
- Griskevicius, V. & Kenrick, D. T. (2013). Fundamental motives: how evolutionary needs influence consumer behaviour. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 23(3), 372-386.
- Gronroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18(4), 36-44.
- Gronroos, C. (2001). The perceived service quality concept – a mistake? *Managing Service Quality*, 11(3), 150-2.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In: Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (ed) (2003) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Guion, L. A., Deilh, D. C. & McDonald, D. (2006). *Conducting an In-depth Interview*. University of Florida (IFAS Extension) Family Youth and Community Science

Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agriculture
Science, University of Florida. FCS6012

- Gummesson, E. (2005). Qualitative research in marketing: Road-map for a wilderness of complexity and unpredictability. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39(3/4), 309-327.
- Guolla, M. (1999). Assessing the teaching quality to student satisfaction relationship: applied customer satisfaction research in the classroom. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 7(3), 87-97.
- Hair, J. F. J., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L. & Black, W. C. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis*, Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Hair, J. F.J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2011). PLS-SEM: Indeed a silver bullet. *The Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 19(2), 139-152.
- Hakala, U., Svensson, J. & Vincze, Z. (2012). Consumer-based brand equity and top-of-mind awareness: a cross- country analysis. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(6), 439-451.
- Hankinson, G. (2004). Relational network brands: towards a conceptual model of place brands. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(2), 109-21.
- Harman, H. H. (1967). *Modern Factor Analysis*, (2nd ed). University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Harris, F., & de Chernatony, L. (2001). Corporate branding and corporate brand performance. *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(3/4), 441 –446.
- Hart, S. & Murphy, J. (1998). *Brands – The New wealth Creators*. Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Hatch, M. J. & Cunliffe, A. L. (2006). *Organisation theory*. (2nd ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Hatch, M. J. & Schultz, M. (2013). The dynamics of corporate brand charisma: routinization and activation at Carlsberg IT. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 29(2), 147-162.

- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2003). Bringing the corporation into corporate branding. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(7/8), 1041 – 1064.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2004). Scaling the Tower of Babel: Relational differences between identity, image and culture in organizations. In M. J. Hatch, M. Schultz, & H. Larsen (Eds.), *Organizational identity—a reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hayes, T. (2007). Delphi study of the future of marketing of higher education. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 927–931.
- Healey, M. J. & Rawlinson, M. B. (1994). Interviewing techniques in business and management research. In: Wass, V.J. and Wells, P.E. (ed), *Principles and practice in business and management research*. Dartmouth, Aldershot. 123-146.
- Heaney, J. G. & Heaney, M.F. (2008). *Services branding strategies: using corporate branding to market educational institutions*. Paper presented at the Academy of World Business, Marketing and Management Development, Rio de Janeiro.
- Heap, J. L. & Roth, P. A. (1973). On phenomenological sociology. *American Sociological Review*, 38, 354-367.
- Heding, T., Knudtzen, C. F., & Bjerre, M. (2009). *Brand management: Research, theory and practice*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Helferty, A. & Clarke, A. (2009). Student-led campus climate change initiatives in Canada. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 10(3), 287-300.
- Hellier, P. K., Geursen, G. M., Carr, R.A. & Rickard, J. A. (2003). Customer repurchase intention: a general structural equation model. *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 37(11), 1762-1800
- Helm, S., & Oezergin, B. (2013). *Service inside: the impact of ingredient service branding on quality perceptions and behavioural intentions*. AMA Winter Educators' Conference Proceedings, 24, 216-217.

- Hemsley-Brown, J. & Goonawarra, S. (2007). Brand harmonization in the international higher education market. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 942-8.
- Hemsley-Brown, J., & Oplatka, I. (2006). Universities in a competitive global marketplace: A systematic review of the literature on higher education marketing. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 19(4), 316 – 338.
- Henkel, M. (2005). Academic identity and autonomy in a changing policy environment. *Higher Education*, 49(1/2), 155–176.
- Hensler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2009). The use of partial least squares path modeling in international marketing. In R. R. Sinkovics & P. N. Ghauri (Eds.), *Advances in International Marketing*, 20, 277-319. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.
- Highhouse, S., Broadfoot, A., Yugo, J. E., & Devendorf, S. A. (2009). Examining corporate reputation judgments with generalizability theory. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(3), 782–789.
- Hinds, P. S. (1989). Method triangulation to index change in clinical phenomena. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 11(4), 440-447
- Hinson, R. & Sorensen, O. (2006). E-business and small Ghanaian exporters: Preliminary micro firm explorations in the light of a digital divide. *Online Information Review*, 30 (2), 116-138.
- Ho, H. & Wang, F. (2011). Prestige, Parallel or Predatory –Pricing strategies among Taiwanese universities. *International Journal of Marketing studies*, 3(3), August 2011.
- Hoffmann, A. & Birnbrich, C. (2012). The impact of fraud prevention on bank-customer relationships: an empirical investigation in retail banking. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 30(5), 390-407.

- Holloway, I. & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative Research*, 3(3), 345-357.
- Holmes, L. (2013). Competing perspectives on graduate employability: Possession, position or process? *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(4), 538–554.
- Honore, S. (2003). Learning to lead with e-learning. *Training Journal*, January, 16-22.
- Hosseini, M. H. & Nahad, F. R. (2012). Investigating antecedents and consequences of open university brand image. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 4(4), 68-77.
- Howard, D. & Kerin, R. (2013). A surname brand effect explanation for consumer brand preference and advocacy. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(5/6), 362–370.
- Howe, K. R. 1988. Against the quantitative-qualitative incompatibility thesis or dogmas die hard. *Educational Researcher*, 17, 10-16.
- Hoyles, C., Wolf, A., Molyneux-Hodgson, S. & Kent, P. (2002). *Mathematical skills in the workplace*. Final Report to the Science, Technology and Mathematics Council, Institute of Education, University of London, London. Available at: <http://www.tfhe.net/report/downloads/report/whole.pdf>. Date accessed: 3rd April 2012.
- Hu, J., Liu, X., Wang, S. & Yang, Z. (2012). The role of brand image congruity in Chinese consumers' brand preference. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(1), 26 – 34.
- Hussein, A. (2009). The use of triangulation in social sciences research: Can qualitative and quantitative methods be combined? *Journal of Comparative Social Work*, 1, 1-12.
- Ibrahim, M. A., 2012. *Thematic Analysis: A critical Review of its Process and Evaluation* WEII International European Academic Conference Proceedings. Zagreb, Croatia.

- Idris, M., & Whitfield, A. (2014). Swayed by the logo and name: Does university branding work? *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 41–58.
- Institute of Directors (IoD) (2007). *Graduates' employability skills*. Institute of Directors Skills Briefing. IoD, London.
- International Labour Organization (ILO) 2012. *An Analytical Study of the Labour Market for Global Employment Trends for the Youth*. Accra, Ghana.
- Isberg, S. & Pitta, D. (2013). Using financial analysis to assess brand equity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(1), 65–78.
- Ivankova, N. V., Creswell, J. W. & Stick, S. (2006). Using mixed methods sequential explanatory design: From theory to practice. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 3-20.
- Ivy, J. (2001). Higher education institution image: a correspondence analysis approach. *International Journal of Education Management*, 15(6/7), 276-82.
- Ivy, J. 2002. University image: *The role of marketing in MBA student recruitment in state subsidized universities in the Republic of South Africa*. MBA thesis, University of Leicester, Leicester.
- Ivy, J. (2008). A new higher education marketing mix: the 7Ps for MBA marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22(4), 288-299.
- Jackson, D. (2014). Factors influencing job attainment in recent Bachelor graduates: evidence from Australia. *High Education*, 68, 135–153.
- Jacobsen, B. P. (2012). Place brand equity: a model for establishing the effectiveness of place brands. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 5(3), 253–271.
- Jamal, A. & Good, M. (2001). Consumers and brands: a study of the impact of self-image congruence on brand preference and satisfaction. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 19(7), 482-92.

- Jeanes, E. L. (2013). The construction and controlling effect of a moral brand. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 29(2), 163-172.
- Jepsen, D. M., Varhegyi, M. M., & Teo, S. T. T. (2015). The association between learning styles and perception of teaching quality. *Education and Training*, 57(5), 575–587.
- Jevons, C., (2006). Beyond product's brand management, Universities: a prime example of branding going wrong. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 15, 466–467.
- Jillapalli, R., & Jillapalli, R. (2014). Do professors have customer-based brand equity? *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 22–40.
- Jin, S. & Xiao, T. (2015). Brand personality and brand equity: evidence from the sportswear industry. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 124–133.
- Johan, A., Niklas, V. B. & Ulf J. (2014). Brand image and customers' willingness to pay a price premium for food brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 23(2), 90 – 102.
- Johnson, M. D., Gustafsson, A., Andreassen, T. W., Lervik, L., & Cha, J. (2001). The evolution and future of national customer satisfaction index models. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 22, 217–245.
- Johnson, R. & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Jorge, V. (2015). Perceived brand quality as a way to superior customer perceived value crossing by moderating effects. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 147 – 156.
- Joseph, M., Mullen, E.W. & Spake, D. (2012). University branding: understanding students' choice of an educational institution. *Journal of Brand Management*, 20(1), 1-12.

- Jumiati, S. & Norazah, M. S. (2015). Young consumers' insights on brand equity: Effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 43(3), 276–292.
- Kang, G. D. & James, J. (2004). Service quality dimensions: An examination of Grönroos's service quality model. *Managing Service Quality*, 14(4), 266–277.
- Kapferer, J.N. (2004). *The new strategic brand management*. London: Kogan Page.
- Kapferer, J.N. (2008). *The New Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*, 4th ed. Kogan, London.
- Kapferer, J. N. (1998). *Strategic brand management – Creating and sustaining brand equity long term*. Kogan Page.
- Kargbo, J. A. (2002). African universities and the challenge of knowledge creation and application in the information age. *Library Review*, 51(8), 411 – 416.
- Kartono, B., & Rao, V. R. (2008). *Brand equity measurement: A comparative review and a normative guide* (Johnson School Research Paper Series, 24-09). Retrieved from Social Science Research Network Electronic paper collection <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1401149>
- Kati, S., Päivikki, K., Ulla, H., Charles, H.-T. & Jukka, K. (2014). Focusing on dilemmas challenging reputation management in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(4), 461-478.
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 1-2.
- Keller, K. L. (2001). Building customer-based brand equity: Creating brand resonance requires carefully sequenced brand-building efforts. *Marketing Management*, 10(2), 14–19.

- Keller, K. L. (2003). Brand synthesis: the multidimensionality of brand knowledge. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(4), 595-600.
- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, (4th ed.), Pearson, Boston, MA.
- Keller, K. L. & Lehmann, D. R. (2006). Brands and branding: research findings and future priorities. *Marketing Science*, 25(6), 740-59.
- Kennedy, S. H. (1977). Nurturing institutional image. *European Journal of Marketing*, 11(3), 120-64.
- Kent, W. E., Lian, K., Khan, M. & Anene, J. (1993). Colleges' hospitality programs: perceived quality. *Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 34(6), 90-7.
- Kenyon, G. & Sen, K. (2012). A model for assessing consumer perceptions of quality. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 4(2), 175–188.
- Khaled, H., Said, M. & Kortam, W. (2001). Modernization of education and scientific research in Egypt, *Cairo University Vision*, Part II, December, pp. 179-204.
- Kim, H., Kim, W., & An, A. (2003). The effect of consumer based brand equity on firms' financial performance. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 20(4), 335–351. Retrieved from http://www.iseg.utl.pt/aula/cad1849/effect_cbbe_firms_fin_perform.pdf. Date accessed: March, 2014.
- Kim, J.-H. & Hyun, Y. J. (2011). A model to investigate the influence of marketing-mix efforts and corporate image on brand equity in the IT software sector. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40, 424-38.
- Kim, W. G. & Kim, H.-B. (2004). Measuring customer-based restaurant brand equity: investigating the relationship between brand equity and firms' performance. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 45(2), 115-31.

- Kirmani, A. & Rao, A. R. (2000). No pain, no gain: a critical review of the literature on signalling unobservable product quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 64(2), 66-79.
- Kirmani, A. (1990) The effect of perceived advertising costs on brand perceptions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17 (2), 160-71.
- Knight, P. & Yorke, M. (2004), *Learning, Curriculum and Employability in Higher Education*, Routledge Falmer, London.
- Kondasani, R. K. R. & Panda, R.K. (2015). Customer perceived service quality, satisfaction and loyalty in Indian private healthcare. *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 28(5), 452 – 467.
- Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2012). *Principles of Marketing* (13th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kotler, P. & Fox, K.F.A. (1995). *Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions*. (2nd ed.), Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kotler, P. & Keller, K. L. (2006). *Marketing Management*, (12th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Krishnan, B.C. & Hartline, M. D. (2001). Brand equity: is it more important in services? *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(5), 328-42.
- Kumar, S., & Dash, M. K. (2011). Management education in India: Trends, issues and implications. *Research Journal of International Studies*, 18, 15 – 25. Retrieved from http://www.eurojournals.com/RJIS_18_02.pdf. Date accessed: September, 2012.
- Kurz, K., Scannell, J., & Veeder, S. (2008). Willingness to pay: Making the best case for institutional value and return on investment. *University Business*, 11(5), 31–32.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews – An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Laing, A., Lewis, B., Foxall, G. & Hogg, G. (2002). Predicting a diverse future: directions and issues in the marketing of services. *European Journal of Marketing*, 36(4), 478-97.
- Lam, S. Y., Shankar, V., Erramilli, M. K., & Murthy, B. (2004). Customer value, satisfaction, loyalty, and switching costs: An illustration from a business-to-business service context. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 32(3), 293–311.
- LaRoche, N. (2001). *Private Education in Ghana: A Market and Regulatory Survey Prepared for the World Bank*, 2001.
- Lassar, W., Mittal B. & Sharma A. (1995). Measuring Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 12(4), 11-19.
- Lauder, H., Brown, P., Dillabough, J., & Halsey, A. (2006). Introduction: The prospects for education: Individualization, globalization, and social change. In H. Lauder, P. Brown, J.-A. Dillabough, & A.H. Halsey (Eds.), *Education, globalization and social change* (pp. 1–70). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lavidge, R. J. & Steiner, G. A. (1961). A model for predictive measurements of advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Marketing*, 25(6), 59-62.
- Lawlor, J. (1998). Brand identity. *Currents*, 24(9), 16–23.
- Ledden, L., Kalafatis, S. P. & Mathioudakis, M. (2011). The idiosyncratic behaviour of service quality, value, satisfaction, and intention to recommend in higher education: An empirical examination. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27, (11–12), 1232–1260.
- Lee, G. C. & Chieng, F. Y. L. (2011). Dimensions of customer-based brand equity: A study of Malaysian brands. *Journal of Marketing Research and Case Studies*, 2011(2011) ID.821981. Date accessed: April 2015.

- Lee, J. S. & Back, K. J. (2010). Re-examination of attendee-based brand equity. *Tourism Management*, 31, 395-401.
- Lee, M. R. & Chen, T. T. (2012). Revealing research themes and trends in knowledge management: from 1995 to 2010. *Knowledge-Based Systems*, 28(1), 47-58.
- Lehtinen, U. & Lehtinen, J. R. (1992). *Service quality: a study of quality dimensions*. Working paper, Service Management Institute, Helsinki.
- Leone, R. P., Rao, V. R., Keller, K. L., Luo, A. M., McAlister, L. & Srivastava, R. (2006). Linking brand equity to customer equity. *Journal of Service Research*, 9(2), 125-38.
- LePla, F. J. & Parker, L. M. (2002). *Integrated branding: Becoming brand-driven through company-wide action*. London: Kogan Page.
- Lerman, D., & Garbarino, E. (2002). Recall and recognition of brand names: A comparison of word and nonword name types. *Psychology & Marketing*, 19(7/8), 621–639.
- Leuthesser, L., Kohli, C. & Harich, K. (1995). Brand equity: the halo effect measure. *European Journal of Marketing*, 29(4), 57-66.
- Levitt, T. (1981). Making intangible products and product intangibles. *Harvard Business Review*, 59, 94-102.
- Li, I., & Miller, P. (2013). The absorption of recent graduates into the Australian labour market: Variations by university attended and field of study. *Australian Economic Review*, 46(1), 14–30.
- Lieven, T., Grohmann, B., Herrmann, A., Landwehr, J.R. & Tilburg, M. (2015). The effect of brand design on brand gender perceptions and brand preference. *European Journal of Marketing*, 49(1/2), 146–169.
- Lievens, F., Van Hoye, G. and Anseel, F. (2007). Organizational identity and employer image: towards a unifying framework. *British Journal of Management*, 18(1), 45-59.

- Lin, Y., Lee, Y., Lin, S. C. H. & Zheng, Y. (2013). The effect of impulsiveness and promotional types on purchase intentions in Taiwan: a study. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 12(1), 7-24.
- Lindquist, J. D. & Sirgy, J. M. (2003). *Shopper, buyer and consumer behaviour: Theory and Marketing Applications*, (2nd ed.). Biztantra, New Delhi: Dreamtech Press.
- Lings, I. N. & Greenley, G. E. (2010). Internal market orientation and market oriented behaviours. *Journal of Service Management*, 21(3), 321-343.
- Lockwood, R. C. & Hadd, J. (2007). Building a brand in higher education: why business practice - particularly brand strategies - are becoming essential in today's universities. *Gallup Management Journal Online*, 12 July, 1-6.
- Lorange, P. (2005). Communication and strategic processes. In P. S. Brønn & R. W. Berg(Eds.), *Corporate communication: A strategic approach to building reputation* (2nd ed.), 41-57. Oslo, Norway: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Low, G. S. & Lamb, C. W. Jr (2000). The measurement and dimensionality of brand associations. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 9(6), 350-68.
- Lowrie, A. (2007). Branding higher education: equivalence and difference in developing identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(9), 990-999.
- Luck, D. J. & Rubin, R. S. (1987). *Marketing Research*. (7th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall International.
- Luis, J., Javier, M. and Rubio, O.N. (2011). The relative importance of brand-packaging, price and taste in affecting brand preferences. *British Food Journal*, 113(10), 1229–1251.
- Luis, J., Sánchez, F., Sotorrío, L.L. & Diez, E.B. (2015). The relationship between corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation in a turbulent environment: Spanish

- evidence of the Ibex35 firms. *Corporate Governance: The international journal of business in society*, 15(4), 563-575.
- Mackay, M. M. (2001). Evaluation of brand equity measures: Further empirical results. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 10(1), 38–51.
- MacMillan, K., Money, K., Downing, S., & Hillenbrand, C. (2005). Reputation in relationships: Measuring experiences, emotions and behaviors. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 8(2), 214–232.
- Malhotra, N. K. & Burks, D. (2000). *Marketing Research: An Applied Approach*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Malhotra, N. K. (2004). *Marketing research: an applied orientation*. (4th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Malhotra, N. K. (2010). *Marketing research: An applied orientation*. (6th ed.). Global edition. England: Pearson Education.
- Manuh, T., Gariba, S. & Budu, J. (2007). *Change and transformation in Ghana's publicly funded universities - A study of experience, lessons and opportunities*. Published in Association with Partnership for Higher Education in Africa. Oxford: James Curry Ltd.
- Marconi, J. (1993). *Beyond Branding: How Savvy Marketers Build Brand Equity to Create Products and Open New Markets*. Chicago, IL: Probus Publishing Company.
- Margulies, W. (1977). Make the most of your corporate identity. *Harvard Business Review*, 55(4), 66 –77.
- Maringe, F. (2005). Interrogating the crisis in higher education marketing: The CORD model. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 19(7), 564-78.
- Maringe, F. (2006). University and course choice: Implications for positioning, recruitment and marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 20(6), 466–479.

- Martin, S. S. & Camarero, C. (2005) Consumer reactions to firm signals in asymmetric relationships, *Journal of Service Research*, 8(1), 79-97.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews: Forum: *Qualitative Social Research (FQS)*, Volume 11, No. 3, Art. 8
- Mathew, J., Eileen, W. M. & Deborah, S. (2012.). University branding: Understanding students' choice of an educational institution. *Journal of Brand Management* 20(1), 1-12.
- Matthew, T. L., Ipin, A. W., Chu, R., Ting-Hsiang, T. (2014). Do perceived CSR initiatives enhance customer preference and loyalty in casinos? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 26(7), 1024-1045.
- Mattila, A. S. & Enz, C. A. (2002). The role of emotions in service encounters. *Journal of Service Research*, 4(4), 268-277.
- Maxwell, J. A., & Mittapalli, K. (2010). Realism as a stance for mixed method research. In Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*, 2nd edition (pp. 145-167). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mazzarol, T. (1998). Critical success factors for international education marketing. *International Journal of Education Management*, 12(4), 163-175.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G. (2008). *The Global Market for Higher Education: Sustainable Competitive Strategies for the New Millennium*. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.
- Mazzarol, T. & Soutar, G. N. (2012). Revisiting the global market for higher education. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 24(5), 717-737.

- McAlexander, J. H., Koenig, H.F. & Schouten, J.W. (2006). Building relationships of brand community in higher education: a strategic framework for university advancement. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 6(2), 107-18.
- McDougall, G. H. G. & Snetsinger, D. W. (1990). The intangibility of services: measurement and competitive perspectives. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 4(4), 27-40.
- McGivern, Y. (2003). *The Practice of Market and Social Research: An Introduction*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- McMillan, K. & Weyers, J. (2007). *How to write dissertations and project reports*. Pearson Education Limited, London: Prentice Hall
- Mei, T. G., Chai, L. G. & David, W. (2014). Constructing a brand identity scale for higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2014, 24(1), 59 – 74.
- Melewar, T. C. & Akel, S. (2005). The role of corporate identity in the higher education sector: a case study. *Corporate Communications*, 10(1), 41-57.
- Melewar, T. C. (Ed.). (2008). *Facets of corporate identity, communication and reputation*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis; an expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- Milewicz, J. & Herbig, P. (1994). Evaluating the brand decision using a model of reputation building. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 3(1), 39-47.
- Milo, K., Edson, K. C. & McEuen, V. (1989). The impact of negative publicity on institutional reputation and student college choice. *College and University*, 64(3), 237-45.
- Mitchell, V. (1999). Consumer perceived risk: conceptualizations and models. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33(1/2), 163-195.

- Mitra, K., Reiss, M. C. & Capella, L. M. (1999). An examination of perceived risk, information search and behavioral intentions in search, experience and credence services. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 13(3), 208-28.
- Mittal, B. & Kamakura, W. A. (2001). Satisfaction, repurchase intent, and repurchase behaviour: investigating the moderating effect of customer characteristics. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48(1), 131-42.
- Modell, S. (2009). In defence of triangulation: A critical realist approach to mixed methods research in management accounting. *Management Accounting Research*, 20(3), 208-221.
- Morgan, R. P. (2000). A consumer-oriented framework of brand equity and loyalty. *International Journal of Market Research*, 42(1), 65-78.
- Morphew, C. (2001). A rose by any other name? Which colleges become universities. *The Review of Higher Education*, 25(2), 1-26.
- Morphew, C. C. & Hartley, M. (2006). Mission statements: A thematic analysis of rhetoric across institutional type. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77(3), 456-471.
- Morrish, S. C., & Lee, C. (2011). Country of origin as a source of sustainable competitive advantage: The case for international higher education institutions in New Zealand. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19(6), 517-52.
- Mortimer, K. (2002). Integrating advertising theories with conceptual models of services advertising. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 16(5), 460-8.
- Moshe, S. (2013). Managing and improving service quality in higher education. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 5(3), 309 – 320.
- Mourad, M. (2010). Internationalisation: a new positioning strategy in the higher education market. *International Journal of Management in Education*, 4(2), 185-200.

- Mourad, M. (2013). Conceptualizing brand equity in the higher education market: an exploratory study. *American Marketing Association / Winter 2013*.
- Mourad, M., Ennew, C., & Kortam, W. (2011). Brand equity in higher education. *Marketing Intelligence Planning*, 29(4), 403-420.
- Muffo, J. A. & Whipple, T. W. (1982). *The use of an expectancy-value model in studying a university's image*. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Denver, CO.
- Mugabushaka, A. M., Techler, U. & Schomburg, H. (2003). Failed or Self-hindering Prophecies? Employment Experiences of African Graduates in the 1990s. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*. myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201111/76543.php. Date accessed: 20/05/2012.
- Muller, C. C. (1998). Endorsed branding. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 90-6.
- Murphy, J. (1990). Assessing the value of brands. *Long Range Planning*, 23(3), 23-9.
- Myjoyonline, (2012). myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201111/76543.php. Date accessed: 20/05/2012.
- Narayandas, D. (1998). Measuring and managing the benefits of customer retention. *Journal of Service Research*, 1(2), 108-28.
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2011). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Date accessed: 11/09/12).
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2013). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Date accessed: 21/03/14).
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) (2015). <http://nab.gov.gh/web3/>. Date accessed: March, 2016.

- National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE) (2010). *Summary of basic statistics on public tertiary education institutions*. 2008/2009 academic year.
- National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE). (2013). *Summary statistics for accredited tertiary education institutions*. 2011/2012 academic year.
- National Commission for Tertiary Education (NCTE). (2015). *Summary statistics for accredited tertiary education institutions*. 2013/2014 academic year.
- Nebojsa, S. D., Rui, V. da S. & Joe, F. H. (2015). Towards a unified theory of brand equity: conceptualizations, taxonomy and avenues for future research. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(1), 3–17.
- Nelson, P. (1974). Advertising as information. *Journal of Political Economy*, July/ August, 81, 729-54.
- Neuman, W. L. (2000). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Neuman, W.L. (2003). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, (5th ed), Boston, Allyn & Bacon.
- Newman, F., Couturier, L., & Scurry, J. (2004). *The future of higher education: Rhetoric, reality, and the risks of the market*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ng, I. & Forbes, J. (2009). Education as service: the understanding of university experience through the service logic. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 19(1), 38-64.
- Nguyen, N. and Leblanc, G. (2001). Corporate image and corporate reputation in customers' retention decisions in services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 8(4), 227-36.
- Nguyen, T.D., Barrett, N.J. & Miller, K.E. (2011). Brand loyalty in emerging markets. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(3), 222-32.

- Nicholls, J., Harris, J., Morgan, E., Clarke, K. & Sims, D. (1995). Marketing higher education: the MBA experience. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 9(2), 31-38.
- Nijssen, E. J., & Douglas, S. P. (2008). Consumer world-mindedness, social-mindedness and store image. *Journal of International Marketing*, 16(3), 84–107.
- Nilson, T. (2000). *Competitive Branding Winning in the Market Place with Added Value Brands*. (3rd ed.), Wiley, Chichester.
- Nunnally, J. C. & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory*. (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- O’Cass, A. & Grace, D. (2003). An exploratory perspective of service brand associations. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 17(55), 452-75.
- Olins, W. (1989). *Corporate identity: Making strategy visible through design*. Thames & Hudson, London.
- Oliver, R. L. (1997). *Satisfaction: A behavioural perspective on the consumer*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Olsen, N.V., Menichelli, E., Meyer, C. & Naes, T. (2011). Consumers liking of private labels: an evaluation of intrinsic and extrinsic orange juice cues. *Appetite*, 56(3), 770-7.
- Omar, M., Williams, R. L. & Lingelbach, D. (2009). Global brand market-entry to manage corporate reputation. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(3), 177-87.
- Onkvisit, S. & Shaw, J. J. (1989). Service marketing: image, branding, and competition. *Business Horizons*, 32, 13-18.
- Opoku, R., Abratt, R. & Pitt, L. (2006). Communicating brand personality: are the websites doing the talking for the top South African business schools? *Brand Management*, 14(1/2), 20-39.

- Oppenheim, A. N. (1984). *Questionnaire design and Attitude Measurement*. London: Heinemann
- Ostrowski, P. L., O'Brien, T. V. & Gordon, G. L. (1993). Service quality and customer loyalty in the commercial airline industry. *Journal of Travel Research*, 32(2), 16-24.
- Paden, N. & Stell, R. (2006). Branding options for distance learning programs: managing the effect on university image. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 3(8), 45-54.
- Palacio, A. B., Meneses, G. D. & Pe´rez, P. J. (2002). The configuration of the university image and its relationship with the satisfaction of students. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 40(5), 486-505.
- Pappu, R. & Quester, P. G. (2016). How does brand innovativeness affect brand loyalty? *European Journal of Marketing*, 50 (1/2), 2–28.
- Pappu, R., Quester, P. G. & Cooksey, R. W. (2006). Consumer-base brand equity and country-of-origin relationship. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(5/6), 696-717.
- Parahoo, K. (2006). *Nursing research: Principles, process and issues*. (2nd ed.). Basingstoke, Palgrave.
- Parameswaran, R., & Glowacka, A. E. (1995). University image: An information processing perspective. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 6(2), 41–56
- Parasuraman, A., Berry, L., Leonard L., Zeithaml, V. & Valarie A. (1988). SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12-40.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. & Berry, L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implication for future research. *Journal of Marketing*, 49(4), 41-50.
- Park, C. W. & Lessig, V. P. (1981) Familiarity and its impact on consumer biases and heuristic. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8(2), 223-30.

- Pavlin, S., & Svetlik, V. (2014). Employability of higher education graduates in Europe. *International Journal of Manpower*, 35(4), 418–424.
- Pedro, M. T., Mário, G. A. & João, V. L., (2015). Determining the causal relationships that affect consumer-based brand equity: The mediating effect of brand loyalty, *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 33(6), 944 – 956.
- Penny, E. (2016) What I talk about when I talk about branding. *Design Week* (Online Edition), 2/4/2016, 1-1.
- Peters, A. & Kemp, J. (2014). Ask Us Anything: Communicating the Value of Reference Services through Branding. *Public Services Quarterly*, Jan-Mar.10(1), 48-53.
- Pike, S., Bianchi, C., Kerr, G. & Patti, C. (2010). Consumer-based brand equity for Australia as a long- haul tourism destination in an emerging market. *International Marketing Review*, 27(4), 434-49.
- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt, T. E. (2011). Utilizing brand ecosystem for branding and building brand equity in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 25(7), 724-739.
- Pinar, M., Trapp, P., Girard, T. & Boyt, T. E. (2014). University brand equity: an empirical investigation of its dimensions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(6), 616-634.
- Prasad, K. & Dev, C. S. (2000). Managing hotel brand equity: a customer-centric framework for assessing performance. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41(3), 22-31.
- Price, I., Matzdorf, F. & Agathi, H. (2003). The impact of facilities on student choice of University. *Facilities*, 21(10), 212-222.
- Rami, A. & Hicham, A. S. (2013). Quality care perceptions in private Syrian hospitals. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 6(2), 76 – 86.

- Ramírez, G.B. (2016). Many choices, one destination: multimodal university brand construction in an urban public transportation system. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 29, 186-204.
- Rao, A. R. & Monroe, K. B. (1989). The effect of price, brand name, and store name on buyers' perceptions of product quality: an integrative review. *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 26(3), 351-7.
- Rao, A. R., Qu, L. & Ruekert, R. W. (1999) Signalling unobservable product quality through a brand ally. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36 (2), 258-68.
- Rassler, J., & Abratt, R. (2009). Assessing the impact of university reputation on stakeholder intentions. *Journal of general management*, 35(1), 35-45.
- Ravi, K., Satyabhusan, D. & Prem, P. 2(013). The nature and antecedents of brand equity and its dimensions. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 31(2), 141-159.
- Reichardt, C. S., & Cook, T. D. (1979). Beyond qualitative versus quantitative methods. In T. D. Cook & C. S. Reichardt, Eds., *Qualitative and quantitative methods in program evaluation* (pp. 7-32). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.
- Reidheld, F. & Sasser, W. (1990). Zero defections – quality comes to services. *Harvard Business Review*, 68, 105-11.
- Richard, C. (2016). Brand communication, brand image and brand trust as antecedents of brand loyalty in Gauteng Province of South Africa. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 7(1), 124–139.
- Richardson, P. S., Dick, A. & Jain, A. K. (1994). Extrinsic and intrinsic cue effects on perceptions of store brand quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(4), 28-37.
- Riley, F. D. & Chernatony, L. D. (2000). The service brand as relationships builder. *British Journal of Management*, 11(2), 137-50.

- Rindova, V., Williamson, I. & Petkova, A. (2010). When is reputation an asset? Reflections on theory and methods in two studies of business schools. *Journal of Management*, 36(3), 610–619.
- Ringle, C. M., Wende, S., & Will, A. (2005). *SmartPLS 2.0 (M3) beta*, Hamburg: <http://www.smartpls.de>. Date accessed: June, 2016.
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis, J. (2011). *Qualitative research practice for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage.
- Ross, S., James, J. & Vargas, P. (2006). Development of a scale to measure team brand associations in professional sport. *Journal of Sport Management*, 20(2), 260-79.
- Rossiter, J. R. & Percy, L. (1997). *Advertising and Promotion Management*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Roulston, K. (2001). Data analysis and 'theorizing as ideology'. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 279-302.
- Rueda, M. (2002). How to make e-learning work for your company. *Workspan*, 45(12), 50-3.
- Rundle-Thiele, S. & Mackay, M. (2001). Assessing the performance of brand loyalty measures. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 15(7), 529-46.
- Rust, R. T., Katherine N., Valarie A. & Zeithaml, V. (2004). Return on Marketing: Using Customer Equity to Focus Marketing Strategy. *Journal of Marketing*, 68, 109-127.
- Sackey, H. A. & Osei, B. (2006). Human Resource Underutilisation in an Era of Poverty Reduction: An Analysis of Unemployment and Underemployment in Ghana. *African Development Review*, 18(2), 21–47.
- Samo, P., & Ivan, S. (2014). Employability of higher education graduates in Europe. *International Journal of Manpower*, 35(4), 418– 424.

- Sasmita, J. & Suki, N. M. (2015). Young consumers' insights on brand equity: Effects of brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 43(3), 276 - 292
- Saunders, M. L. P. & Thornhill, A. (2007). *Research methods for business students*. (4th Ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hal.
- Sayyed, M. A., Javad, K. P., Akbar, J., Reza S. & Hassan, A. (2015). Factors influencing sport tourists' revisit intentions: The role and effect of destination image, perceived quality, perceived value and satisfaction. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 27(2), 191–207.
- Schiffman, L., Bednall, D., O'Cass, A., Paladino, A. & Kanuk, L. (2005). *Consumer Behaviour*, (3rd ed.). Sydney: Pearson Education, Australia.
- Schmeltz L. (2014). Identical or Just Compatible? The Utility of Corporate Identity Values in Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 51(3), 234–258.
- Schofield, C., Cotton, D., Gresty, K., Kneale, P. & Winter, J. (2013). Higher education provision in a crowded marketplace. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 35(2), 193–205.
- Schriesheim, C. A. (1979). The similarity of individual directed and group directed leader behavior descriptions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 22 (2), 345-355.
- Schubert, B. (2007). *Development and implementation of branding concepts: the case for internal marketing*. HEIST information bank, available at: www.heist.co.uk/corporate_identity (accessed 15 January 2012).
- Schuler, M. (2004). Management of the organizational image: A method for organizational image configuration. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 7(1), 37–53.

- Schultz, D. E. & Block, M. P. (2014). Sales promotion influence on consumer brand preferences/purchases. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 31(3), 212 – 217.
- Schultz, H. (2005). The customer isn't always. *Marketing Management*, 14(1), 9-10.
- Scott, D. (2000). One day and a lifetime of brand lessons. *Brandweek*, 41(34), 30-2.
- Scott, I. & Mazhindu, D. (2005). *Statistics for health care professionals; an introduction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Segev, E., Raveh, A., & Farjoun, M. (1999). Conceptual maps of leading MBA programs in the United States: Core courses, concentration areas and the ranking of the school. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20, 549 – 565.
- Seidel, J. V. (1998) *Qualitative data analysis*. In: *The ethnography user's manual*. Available at <www.quadisresearch.com>. Date accessed: August 2013.
- Sevier, R. (2002). *Building a brand that matters*. Hiawatha, IA: Strategy Publishing.
- Shah, M., Grebennikov, L. & Nair, C. S. (2015). A decade of study on employer feedback on the quality of university graduates. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 23(3), 262 – 278.
- Shahijan, M. K., Rezaei, S. & Amin, M. (2015). International students' course satisfaction and continuance behavioural intention in higher education setting: an empirical assessment in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 17(1), 45-70. Available at: http://fac.ksu.edu.sa/sites/default/files/shahijan_rezaei_amin_2015.course_satisfaction.pdf. Date accessed: April, 2016.
- Sharma, A., Raob, V. R. & Poplic, S. (2013). Measuring consumer-based brand equity for Indian business schools. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 2013, 23(2), 175 –203.
- Shekarchizadeh, A., Rasli, A. & Hon-Ta, H. (2011). SERVQUAL in Malaysian universities: perspectives of international students. *Business Process Management Journal*, 17(1), 67- 81.

- Shocker, A. D. & Weitz, B. (1988). *A perspective on brand equity principles and issues – Defining, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*. Marketing Science Institute, MA: Cambridge.
- Silverstein, M. J. & Singhi, A. (2012). *Can US universities stay on top?* Wall Street Journal, September, 29-30, C3.
- Simon, C. J., & Sullivan, M. W. (1993). The measurement and determinants of brand equity: A financial approach. *Marketing Science*, 12, 28–52.
- Sirgy, M. J., Grewal, D., Mangleburg, T. F., Park, J., Chon, K. S., Claiborn, C. B., Johar, J. S. & Berkman, H. (1997). Assessing the predictive validity of two methods of measuring self-image congruence. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(3), 229-41.
- Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Smith, R. & Ennew, C. (2000). *Service quality and its impact on word of mouth communication in higher education*. Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing Annual Conference, University of Derby, Derby, 5-7 July.
- Sobb, R. & Perry, C. (2005). *Research Design and Data Analysis in Realism Research*. Thousand Oaks. Sage Publication.
- Srivastava, R. K. & Shocker, A. D. (1991). *Brand Equity a Perspective on its Meaning and Measuremen. Report No. 91-124, Cambridge, MA: Marketing Science Institute*.
- Srivastava, R. K. (2010). Understanding brand identity confusion. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 29(4), 340 –352.
- Standifird, S. S. (2005). Reputation among peer academic institutions: An investigation of the US News and World Report's rankings. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 8(3), 233–244.
- Steiner L., Agneta, C., Sundstrom, K. & Sammalisto, K. (2013). An analytical model for university identity and reputation strategy work. *Higher Education*, 65, 401–415.

- Stensaker, B. (2015). Organizational identity as a concept for understanding university dynamics. *High Education* (2015) 69, 103–115
- Steven, B. Scott, D. G. & Richard, J. G. (2016). Understanding the direction, magnitude, and joint effects of reputation when multiple actors' reputations collide. *Academy Management Journal*. 59(1), 188-206.
- Steven, I. & Dennis, P. (2013). Using financial analysis to assess brand equity. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 22(1), 65–78.
- Stolz, I., Hendel, D. D., & Horn, A. S. (2010). Ranking of rankings: Benchmarking twenty-five higher education ranking systems in Europe. *Higher Education*, 60(5), 507–528.
- Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative (SAPRI) (2001). *Structural Adjustment and Tertiary Education in Ghana (1983-1999), Presented at the Second National SAPRI Forum, Accra. February, 2001.*
- Su, J. & Tong, X. (2015). Brand personality and brand equity: evidence from the sportswear industry. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 124–133.
- Sujchaphong, N. Nguyen, B. & Melewar, T. C. (2015) Internal branding in universities and the lessons learnt from the past: the significance of employee brand support and transformational leadership. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 25(2), 204-237.
- Suomi, K., Kuoppakangas, P., Ulla Hytti, U., Hampden-Turner, C. & Kangaslahti, J. (2014). Focusing on dilemmas challenging reputation management in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(4), 461 – 478.
- Suomi, K., Kuoppakangas, P., Ulla Hytti, U., Hampden-Turner, C. & Kangaslahti, J. (2014). Focusing on dilemmas challenging reputation management in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(4), 461–478.

- Supornpraditchai, T., Miller, K. E., Lings, I. N. & Jonmundsson, B. (2007). *Employee-based brand equity: antecedents and consequences*. AMZMAC, Conference Proceedings, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 3-5 December, 2007.
- Swait, J., Erdem, T., Louviere, J. & Dubelaar, C. (1993). The equalization price: a measure of consumer-perceived brand equity. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 10(1), 23-45.
- Sweeney, J. C. & Soutar, G. N. (2001). Consumer Perceived Value: The Development of a Multiple Item Scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 77, 203-220.
- Tajfel, H. (1978). *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Academic Press, London, 61-76.
- Tariq, V. N. & Durrani, N. (2012). Factors influencing undergraduates' self-evaluation of numerical competence. *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology*, 43(3), 337-56.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology; combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (2010) (eds). *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research*, Thousand Oaks, C.A. Sage.
- Taylor, S. A., Goodwin, S. & Celuch, K. (2004). The relative importance of brand equity to customer loyalty in an industrial setting. *Journal Product & Brand Management*, 13(4), 217-227.
- Teddie, C. & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioural sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Temple, P. (2006). Branding higher education: Illusion or reality? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 10(1), 15-19.

- Tenenhaus, M., Vinzi, V., Chatelin, Y. M. & Lauro, C. (2005). PLS path modelling. *Computational Statistics and Data Analysis*, 48(1), 159-205.
- Theo, L. (2014). *Global Branding Based on Brand Gender and Brand Equity*. AMA Winter Educators' Conference Proceedings, 2014.
- Theus, K. T. (1993). Academic reputations: the process of formation and decay. *Public Relations Review*, 19(3), 277-91.
- Tingchi L., Ipkin A. W., Chu R. and Ting-Hsiang T. (2014). Do perceived CSR initiatives enhance customer preference and loyalty in casinos? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* (26)7, 1024-1045.
- Tofallis, C. (2012). A different approach to university rankings. *Higher Education*, 63(1), 1–18.
- Tolba, A. H. & Hassan, S. S. (2009). Linking customer- based brand equity with brand market performance: a managerial approach. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 18(5), 356-66.
- Tolbert, D. (2014). An exploration of the use of branding to shape institutional image in the marketing activities of faith-based higher education institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, 13(4), 233–249.
- Toma, J., Dubrow, G., & Hartley, M. (2005). The uses of institutional culture: Strengthening and building brand equity in higher education. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 31(2), 1–105.
- Tomlinson, M. (2008). The degree is not enough: students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29(1), 49-61.

- Torres, P. M., Augusto, M. G., & Lisboa, J. V. (2015). Determining the causal relationships that affect consumer-based brand equity: The mediating effect of brand loyalty. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 33(6), 944–956.
- Tortosa, V., Moliner, M. A. & Sanchez, J. (2009). Internal market orientation and its influence on organisational performance. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(11/12), 1435-1456.
- Tuli, F. (2010). The Basic of Distinction between Qualitative and Quantitative Research in Social Science: Reflection on Qutological, Espistemological and Methodological Perspectives (Review Article). *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Science*, 6, 97-108.
- Turley, L. W. & Moore, P. A. (1995). Brand name strategies in the service sector. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 12(4), 42-50.
- Ugolini, M. M., Cassia, F. & Vigolo, V. (2014). Services branding: is it a matter of gender? *TQM Journal*. 2014, 26(1), 75-87.
- UNESCO (2009). *The new dynamics of higher education and research for societal change and development*. Proceedings of the COMMUNIQUE. 8th July 2009. UNESCO, Paris.
- Upshaw, L. (1995). *Building brand identity, a strategy for success in a hostile marketplace*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Urdan, T. A. & Weggen, C. C. (2000). *Corporate E-learning: Exploring a New Frontier*. Berwyn, PA: WR Hambrecht & Co.
- Va'zquez, R., R'io, A. B. & Iglesias, V. (2002). Consumer-based brand equity: development and validation of a measurement instrument. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 18, 27-48.

- Vakratsas, D. & Ambler, T. (1996). *Advertising effects: a taxonomy and review of concepts, methods and results from the academic literature*. Working Paper, Cambridge, MA: Marketing Science Institute.
- Van Knippenberg, D., & van Schie, E. C. M. (2010). Foci and correlates of organizational identification. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 73, 137-147.
- VanRiel, C. (2005). Defining corporate communication. In P. S. Brønn & R. W. Berg (Eds.), *Corporate communication: A strategic approach to building reputation* (2nd ed., 21-40). Oslo, Norway.
- VanRiel, C.B.M. & Balmer, J.M.T. (1997). Corporate choice. *Management*, 10(4), 26-38.
- Varghese, N. V. (2006). *Growth and Expansion of Private Higher Education in Africa*. International Institute for Education Planning, UNESCO.
- Veale, R. & Quester, P. (2009). Tasting quality: the roles of intrinsic and extrinsic cues. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 21(1), 195-207.
- Veloutsou, C. (2015). Brand evaluation, satisfaction and trust as predictors of brand loyalty: the mediator-moderator effect of brand relationships. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 32(6), 405 – 421.
- Veloutsou, C., Lewis, J. W. & Paton, R. A. (2004). University selection: information requirements and importance. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 18(3), 160-71.
- Vera, J. (2015). Perceived brand quality as a way to superior customer perceived value crossing by moderating effects. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(2), 147–156.
- Vorhies, D. W. (1997). Building strong brands. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 25(3), 260-261.

- Walker, K. (2010). A systematic review of the corporate reputation literature: definition, measurement, and theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 12(4), 357-87.
- Wang, E. S. T. (2013). The influence of visual packaging design on perceived food product quality, value, and brand preference. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 41(10), 805–816.
- Wang, E. S. T. (2015). Effect of food service-brand equity on consumer-perceived food value, physical risk, and brand preference. *British Food Journal*, 117(2), 553-564.
- Wartick, S. L. (1992). The relationship between intense media exposure and change in institutional reputation. *Business and Society*, 31, 33-49.
- Washburn, J. H. & Plank, R. E. (2002). Measuring brand equity: an evaluation of a consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 10(1), 46-62.
- Washer, P. (2007). Revisiting key skills: a practical framework for higher education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 13(1), 57-67.
- Webb, J. R. (2000). *Understanding and designing marketing research*. International Thompson Business Press, London.
- Weissman, J. (1990). Institutional image assessment and modification in college and universities. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 6(1), 65-75.
- West, R. (1997). *Review of higher education financing and policy*. Report of the West Review, Department of Education, Training and youth Affairs, Canberra.
- Whelan, S. & Wohlfeil, M. (2006). Communicating brands through engagement with ‘lived’ experiences. *Brand Management*, 13(4/5), 313-29.
- Whisman, R. (2009). Internal branding: a university's most valuable intangible asset. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(5) 367-370.
- White, B. (2000). *Dissertation skills for business and management*. Cassell, London.

- White, S. S. & Schneider, B. (2000). Climbing the commitment ladder: the role of expectations disconfirmation in customers' behavioural intentions. *Journal of Service Research*, 2(3), 240-53.
- Whitelock, J. & Fastoso, F. (2007). Understanding international branding: defining the domain and reviewing the literature. *International Marketing Review*, 24(3), 252-70.
- Wilbur, S. (1988). *Assessing a university's image for short-term and long-term enrolment planning*. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Phoenix, AZ.
- Williams Jr, R.L.(2012). *Branding through renaming for strategic alignment in service organizations* (Doctoral dissertation (PhD) thesis). Edinburgh Napier University.
- Williams Jr, R.L., Osei, C., & Omar, M. (2012). Higher education institution branding as a component of country branding in Ghana: Renaming Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 22(1), 71–81.
- Williams Jr, R.L, & Omar, M. (2014). How branding process activities impact brand equity within higher education institutions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 24(1), 1 –10.
- Williams Jr, R.L., Robert L.; Omar, M. (2013). *Applying brand management to higher education through the use of the brand flux model: the case of arcadia university*. AMA Winter Educators' Conference Proceedings. 2013, 24, 248-258.
- Williams Jr, R.L., & Van Dyke, N. (2008). Reputation and reality: Ranking major disciplines in Australian universities. *Higher Education*, 56(1), 1–28.
- Willms, D. G., Best, J. A., Taylor, D. W., Gilbert, J. R., Wilson, D. M. C., Lindsay, E. A. & Singer, J. (1990). A systematic approach for using qualitative methods in primary prevention research, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 14, 391–409.

- Winters, L. C. (1991). Brand-equity measures: some recent advances. *Marketing Research*, 3, 70-3.
- Wold, H. (1982). Systems under indirect observations using PLS. in Fornell, C. (Ed.), *A Second Generation of Multivariate Analysis*. Praeger, New York, NY.
- Wolfram C. J. & Hassard, J. (2005). Triangulation in organizational research: A re-presentation. *Organization Studies*, 12(1), 109-133.
- World Bank (2010). *Financing higher education in Africa: A study by International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, Washington, DC, World Bank.
- World Bank/UNESCO (2000). *Higher education in developing countries: Peril and promise*. Washington, D.C: The World. Bank.
- <http://www.tfhe.net/report/downloads/report/whole.pdf>. Date accessed: April 2012.
- Xie, C., Richard P., Bagozzi K. and Meland, V. (2015). The impact of reputation and identity congruence on employer brand attractiveness. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 33(2), 124 - 146.
- Yang S. U. (2007). An integrated model of organisation-public relations outcomes, organisational reputation and their antecedents. *Journal of Public Relation Research*, 19(2), 91-121.
- Yasin, N. M., Noor, M. N. & Mohamad, O. (2007). Does image of country-of-origin matter to brand equity? *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 16(1), 38-48.
- Yoo, B. & Donthu, N. (2001). Developing and validating multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 52, 1-14.
- Yorke, M. (2006). *Employability in Higher Education: What It Is – What It Is Not*. Higher EducationAcademy.http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/employability/id116_employability_in_higher_education_336.pdf. Date accessed: May, 2012.

- Yunker, P. J., Yunker, J. A. (2003). Are students' evaluations of teaching valid? Evidence from an analytical business core course. *Journal of Education for Business*, 78(6), 313-7.
- Yusefu, T. M. (1993). *Creating the African university: Emerging issues for adjustment. Revitalisation and expansion*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Press.
- Zavyalova, A., Pfarrer, M. D., Reger, R. K. & Hubbard, T. D. (2016). Reputation as a benefit and a burden? How stakeholders' organizational identification affects the role of reputation following a negative event. *Academy of Management*, 59(1), 253-276.
- Zeithaml, V. A. (1988). Consumer Perceptions of Price, Quality and Value: a Means End Model and Synthesis of Evidence. *Journal of Marketing*, 52(7), 2-22.
- Zeithaml, V. A. & Bitner, M. J. (2006). *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus across the Firm*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Zikmund, G. W. (2000). *Business Research Methods*. 6th ed., The Dryden Press, Harcourt College Publishers, New York.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Introductory Letter to Universities

Dear Sir/Madam,

Introductory Letter

I am a lecturer at Central University College (CUC). I am currently undertaking my PhD studies at London Metropolitan University under the topic “Assessing the Applicability of Student-Based Brand Equity Constructs in University Institution Preference in Ghana”. As part of the study, I need to collect data from students to be selected from twelve universities in the country, and your institution has been selected. I am, by this letter, seeking your permission to enable me undertake the exercise.

I thank you and count on your co-operation in this potentially mutually beneficial exercise.

Yours sincerely,

Ebenezer Asare Effah

Appendix B

Introductory Letter to Public Institutions for Information

.
Dear Sir/Madam,

Introductory Letter

I am a lecturer at Central University College (CUC) currently pursuing my PhD at London Metropolitan University under the topic “Assessing the Applicability of Student-Based Brand Equity (SBBE) Constructs in University Institution Preference in Ghana”. To make the study possible, I need to collect information relating to the higher education industry from relevant institutions like yours. I am, by this letter, seeking your permission to gather the relevant information from your institution.

I thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this important exercise.

Yours sincerely,

Ebenezer Asare Effah

Appendix C

GUIDE FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

1. University preference

- Is there any university you would prefer more than any other in Ghana?
- What are some of the factors that influence your preference for your most preferred university institution?
- Is there anything that would make you prefer any other university to the one you currently prefer?
- If this university was unavailable, would you consider attending any other university in the country?
- If you are currently not in the attendance of your most preferred university, what factor/s account/s for that?
- Do you feel emotionally committed to this university?
- Do you consider yourself to be loyal to your first choice university?

2. University image

- a. Comment on the level of reliability of your most referred university
- b. What do you think about the level of service provided by your most preferred university?
- c. Would you consider the university to be a successful one?
- d. Does the university do anything that contributes to society?
- e. Comment on the level of sincerity of the university.
- f. In your opinion, what do your colleagues think about that university?
- g. How would you generally evaluate this university among its competitors?
- h. What general impression do you have about this university?

3. University identity

- a. How popular is this university in Ghana?
- b. How attractive are the logo and other identity elements of this university among Ghanaians?
- c. Is this university any visually remarkably deferent from others in the country?
- d. How would you comment on fees charged at this university?

- e. In your opinion, what is the quality of advertising campaigns done by this university?

4. University reputation

- a. How does the university handle promises made to students?
- b. What kind of reputation does the university have?
- c. How would you compare the university to others in the country in terms of reputation?
- d. How credible is this university?
- e. How reliable are students' services provided by this university?
- f. How in tune is this university with students' needs?

5. Perceived university service quality

- a. Comment on the level of quality of this university
- b. What is the quality of tuition provided by this university?
- c. How consistent is this university in delivering quality?
- d. In your opinion, how well does this university function?
- e. What would you say about the level of general performance of this university?
- f. In your opinion, how reliable is this university in providing services to students?

6. Graduate employability

- a. Are qualifications obtained from this university appealing internationally?
- b. In your opinion, what do employers think about this university?
- c. How would you compare the level of acceptance of qualifications obtained from this university to others on the labour market?
- d. Do graduates from this university obtain any better jobs?
- e. Do graduates from this university earn any higher salaries?
- f. Do graduates from this university hold on to their jobs any better than their counterparts from other universities?

Recommendations

- In your opinion, what can be done to improve Ghana's universities' chances of attracting students?
- What can be done to improve the overall value of university institutions in Ghana to students?
- What are some of the challenges that militate against universities in Ghana in their quest to become students' first choice?

Bio data

a. Age

18 - 20 ()

21 – 24 ()

25 – 29 ()

30 – 34 ()

35 – 39 ()

40 and above ()

a. Gender: Male () Female ()

Appendix D

STUDENT-BASED BRAND EQUITY QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is intended to explore the possible relationship between some brand equity dimensions and students' preference for university institutions in Ghana. This research is being undertaken as part of my PhD qualification. Participation is voluntary and your completion would be very highly appreciated. There are no right or wrong answers and the accuracy of results of this research is entirely dependent on how honest you can be. All information provided will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Please answer all questions by ticking or writing as required. If you would like to provide any further comments, please feel free to do so at the end of the questionnaire.
Thank you.

Part One: University Preferences

Q1.a. From the list of universities below, add the phrase '*most preferred*' against your most preferable university and the phrase '*least preferred*' against your least preferable university.

<i>University Name</i>	<i>University Preference</i>
University of Ghana	
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology	
Central University College	
Cape Coast University	
University of Education	
Ashesi University	
Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration	
University of Development Studies	
Valley View University	
Kings University	

Q1.b. Regarding your most preferred university, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the following statements. (Please circle the appropriate answer that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)).

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>		<i>Neutral</i>			<i>Strongly agree</i>	
I like this university more than any other university in Ghana	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would attend this university rather than any other in Ghana	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be inclined to choose this university over all others in Ghana	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is my preferred university brand over all others in Ghana	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am committed to attending this university	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not attend any other university if this university was available	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I consider myself to be loyal to this university	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university would be my first choice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q2. If your most preferred university mentioned above is not where you currently are, please indicate which of the following reasons accounts for that.

Unable to attain sufficient passes	
Financial challenges	
Poor/distant location	
Limited programmes on offer	
Inadequate facilities	
Poor customer service	
Poor institutional image	

Other (Please specify).....

Part Two: For your first choice university institution, please answer the following questions.

(Please note that you are not necessarily talking about your present university of attendance. This is all about your most preferred university institution in Ghana).

University Awareness

Q3. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding your first choice university brand stated above. (Please circle the appropriate answer that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)).

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>		<i>Neutral</i>			<i>Strongly agree</i>	
I heard from my family about this university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I heard from my friends about this university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I heard from many other people about this university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I heard a lot of good things about this university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can recognize this university among other universities in Ghana.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I know all the services provided by this university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q4. Indicate how many of the following promotional activities done by your first choice university brand you found. (Please circle the appropriate answer that ranges from 1 (I found none) to 7 (I found a lot)).

	I found None	Medium	I found a lot
--	-----------------	--------	------------------

Adverts (TV, Radio, newspapers, magazines, website, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
School visits by university staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mails from the university to students and parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsorship of events by the university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Special articles about the university in newspapers & magazines.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
University booklet, posters, flyers, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other promotional activities. Please Specify. _____							

University Image

Q5. Concerning the image of your first choice university brand, please mention to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Please circle the appropriate answer that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)).

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>		<i>Neutral</i>			<i>Strongly agree</i>	
This is a reliable university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university provides excellent service to students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is a successful university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university makes a lot of contribution to society.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university is sincere to students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have always had a good impression of this university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university has a good image in the minds of students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university has a better image than its competitors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

University Reputation

Q6. Concerning the reputation of your first choice university brand, please mention to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Please circle the appropriate answer that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)).

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>		<i>Neutral</i>			<i>strongly agree</i>	
This university always fulfils the promises it makes to its students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university has a good reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The reputation of this university is better than other unis in Ghana.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is a credible university.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university guarantees reliable students' service.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university focuses on students' needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

University Identity

Q7. Concerning the corporate identity of your first choice university brand, please mention to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Please circle the appropriate answer that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)).

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>			<i>Neutral</i>		<i>Strongly agree</i>	
The name of this university has a wide appeal in Ghana.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The logo of this university is attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university has distinctive features.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university charges fair/attractive fees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university undertakes good quality advertising.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Perceived Service Quality

Q8. Concerning perceived service quality of your first choice university brand, please answer questions in the following five tables indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with statements in the respective tables. (Please circle the appropriate answer that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)).

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>			<i>Neutral</i>		<i>Strongly agree</i>	
The quality of this university is very high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university functions very well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university provides high quality tuition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university performs very highly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university is consistent in delivering high quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university has acceptable standard of quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This university is reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Graduate Employability

Q9. Concerning employment prospects of graduates from your first choice university brand, please mention to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Please circle the appropriate answer that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)).

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>		<i>Neutral</i>			<i>Strongly agree</i>	
Qualifications from the university have international recognition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employers think highly of graduates from this university	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The degree from this university is superior in the labour market.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am sure that graduates of this university get good jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Salaries of this university's graduates are very high.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part Three: Consumer Attributes

Q10. Please tick against the type of university you are currently attending.

Public University ☐

Private University ☐

Q11. Please mention your gender ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**

Q12. Please indicate which of the following age brackets you belong to.

- ☐ 18 to 20 years
- ☐ 21 to 24 years
- ☐ 25 to 29
- ☐ 30 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 39
- ☐ 40 years and above

Q13. What is your family's monthly income?

- ☐ More than 5,000 GC/ month
- ☐ From 4,000 to 5,000 GC/ month
- ☐ From 3,000 to 3,999 GC/month
- ☐ From 2,000 to 2,999 GC/month
- ☐ From 1,000 to 1,999 GC/ month
- ☐ Less than 1,000 GC/ month

If you would like to make any further comments, please do so below.

.....

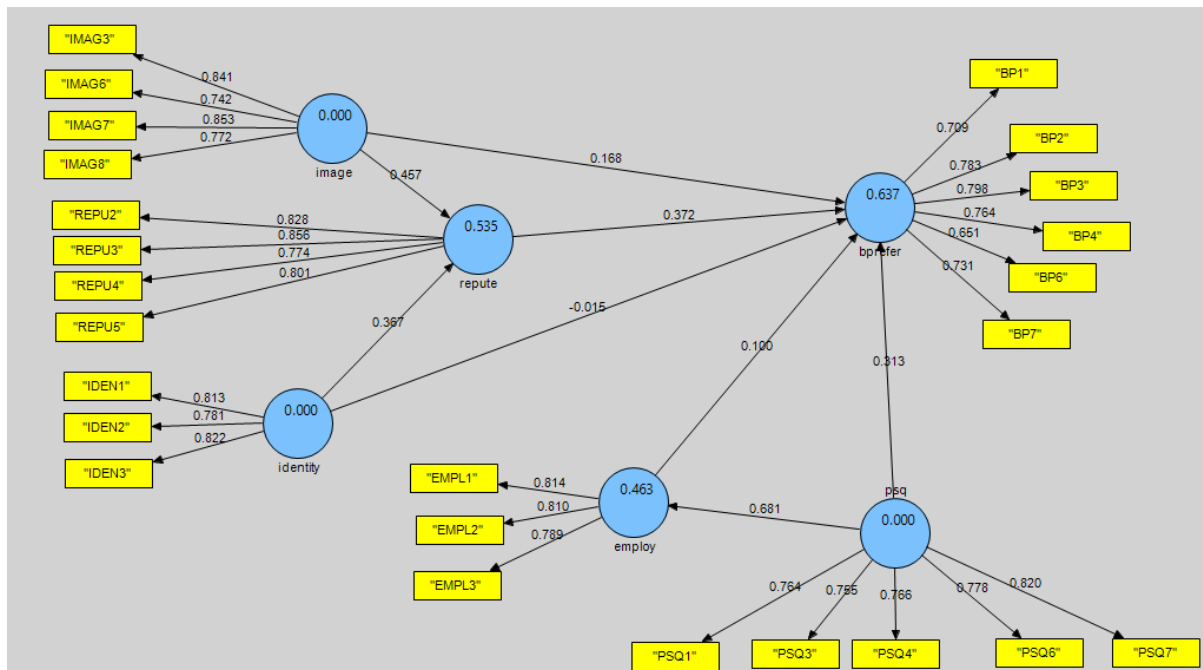
.....

.....

Thank you very much for your kind co-operation.

Appendix E

Structural paths showing regression weights and factor loadings.



Appendix F

Structural paths showing bootstrap t-values

