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The Mediation Role of Brand Image in Achieving Customers Brand Satisfaction and Commit- ment in the Egyptian Banking Sector

Abstract

Egyptian banks face various challenges, including intensified competition from new banks, competition from non-banking enterprises, new and expensive technologies, and instability in the economic and political macro environment. Therefore, branding becomes an important topic nowadays with the increasing competitiveness in the banking sector. This paper discusses the relations between Brand Equity dimensions; Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness and Customer Brand Loyalty and the research dependent variables; Brand Commitment and Brand Satisfaction taking in consideration Brand Image as a mediator. The research methodology adopted is based on the development of a questionnaire that allows for the measurement of customers' perceptions and past experiences with brands. The adoption of this data-collection method was due to the need to measure the focal constructs of the model, as well as the extensive use of survey methodology in previous studies examining customer branding. A correlation, regression and SEM were applied as an in-depth statistical tool of measuring the direct and indirect hypothesized relations. It was found that there is a significant full mediation role of Brand Image between the Brand Equity dimensions and Brand Satisfaction and Brand Commitment, except for Brand Engagement, implying that Brand Image is a key role of achieving Customer Satisfaction and Commitment through gaining a competitive advantage.

Keywords: Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty, Brand Commitment and Brand Satisfaction.

المخلص

تتعرض البنوك المصرية للكثير من التحديات المتمثلة في التنافس القوي من البنوك الجديدة التي تدخل السوق المصرية، إلى جانب المؤسسات المالية غير البنكية، والتكنولوجيات الحديثة ذات التكاليف العالية، وهدد الاستقرار الاقتصادي والسياسي في البيئة المحيطة. وبناء عليه، فقد أصبحت العلامات التجارية أحد أهم الوسائل للحصول على ميزة تنافسية ضمن بنوك السوق المصرية. ويناقش هذا البحث العلاقة بين المتغيرات المؤثرة على العلامات التجارية - مثل جذب العملاء، تجربة العملاء، إدراك العملاء وولاء العملاء - والمتغيرات التابعة - وهي رضا والتزام العملاء. كما يناقش البحث دور الوسيط للعلامات التجارية بين العلاقات السابق ذكرها وبعضها البعض. وقد قام الباحث باعداد الاستقصاء الخاص بمتغيرات البحث وتحليل البيانات باستخدام تحليل الارتباط والانحدار وبناء نموذج المعادلة الهيكلية. وقد أظهرت النتائج الدور المعنوي للعلامات التجارية بين كل من المتغيرات المستقلة والتابعة، مما يستلزم اهتمام البنوك بالعلامات التجارية وتوعية العملاء بها وبدورها للحصول على الميزة التنافسية المطلوبة من خلال رضا والتزام العملاء باستخدام علامة تجارية دون غيرها.

1 Introduction

As the current economic environment becomes more competitive and introducing new brands becomes increasingly costly, companies must find new strategies to increase their capacity and competitiveness (Lee et al., 2011). A wide variety of programs have been developed and implemented to increase customer loyalty. Most of these programs are directed to customers' functional and economic benefits, like price-discounts, coupons, and mileage programs. It should be highlighted that these types of loyalty programs are not adequate to simultaneously increase multifaceted customer loyalty despite their importance (Gustafsson et al., 2005). That is, increasing customer loyalty in a full sense requires a series of customized marketing strategies altered to various loyalty types (Hur et al., 2011).

Branding has been described as "the cornerstone of services marketing for the twenty-first century" (Berry, 2000, p. 129). In fact, due to the inherent service characteristics (i.e. tangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability), it has been argued that the notion of branding is more important to services than to physical goods (Kapferer, 2004). There is a difference between products and services, where it was emphasized that what is really important is the services for all organizations; whether they are introducing products or services. New perspectives for marketing have emerged in which service provision rather than goods is fundamental to economic exchange. With this approach in mind, organizations need to appreciate how to effectively market the service component of their product offering in or-

der for a competitive advantage to be realized. In the context of services, as fewer tangible cues exist to assist customers in making decisions when purchasing services (Javalgi et al., 2006), brand name is considered as a source of information and risk reducer, simplifying the decision-making process (Kayaman and Arasli, 2007).

While customer pre-purchase evaluation of services has largely changed as a result of the advancement of the internet and its facilitation of greater customer access to various consumption-related information (Peterson et al., 1997; Moon, 2004), it has not completely resolved the issues that are inherent when marketing a service. Access to greater information can reduce the customer's perceived risk level with respect to service purchase decisions. However, such availability of information is unlikely to replace the actual experience for services that are high in experience qualities. In situations, such as these, a strong brand is a requirement for reducing the challenges customers may face when making a purchase decision. Therefore, a strong service brand is considered as a promise of future satisfaction, as well as developing customer trust associated with the invisible purchase (Berry, 2000).

The competitive advantage of firms that have brands with high equity include price premiums, increased customer demand, brands that can be extended easily to competitive marketing activity (Keller, 2003). Early studies engrossed on the financial influence of branding strategies, finding that branded products delivered higher yields (Kalafatis et al., 2012). Branding started in the form of fast-moving consum-

er goods industry (FMCG), where traditional models of brand equity developed by Aaker (1991, 2002), Keller (1993, 2003) have been largely inspired by that industry. There is no uncertainty that the service industry can benefit from the knowledge accumulated by consumer goods firms. Nonetheless, the nature of services, specifically their immateriality and the inseparability between production and consumption requires a different method to build an influential service brand. In the services marketing literature, a few authors have recommended new methods to establish a strong brand in the service sector, such as De Chernatony (2002) and Berry (2000). They identify and emphasize the significance of employees during their communications with customers and their capability to refine the brand values (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1998; Bitner et al., 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1988) in order to generate a specific meaning to the brands (Kimpakorn and Tocquer, 2010).

1.1 Problem Statement

The banking industry has changed considerably in the last few years, to the point where several traditional services had been no longer working. Customers have high demands on advanced technical solutions. Thus, it becomes important to study factors affecting customers choice of certain banks rather than others through brand satisfaction and commitment. One of the main factors found in literature is the brand equity. An exploratory study had been done with 30 customers of the Egyptian banking sector to explore the dimensions of Brand Equity and its impact on brand satisfaction and commitment, where customers reveal the

fact that they based their choices on a certain bank rather than another according to their experiences with the bank, its services, as well as the awareness with such services and the degree to which their banks let them engaged in choosing their favorable system. The majority of customers also revealed that they prefer private banks branding rather than public banks.

Investigating the previous studies in the field of research, it was observed that although former research studies have been conducted to figure out brand equity in developed markets and economies but there are still gaps related to interpret brand equity in developing market and economies like Egypt specially in the banking sector. To fulfill these gaps, this study examines brand equity antecedents in the Egyptian banks and its impact on achieving brand satisfaction and commitment to be able to gain a competitive advantage. As customers complains was mainly focused on public banks branding, this research focuses on this sector so as to be able to identify problems and challenges facing such sector. Accordingly, the current research investigates the main question of:

Q1: Is there a significant role of Brand Equity between its antecedents and Brand Satisfaction and Commitment?

1.2 Research Aim and Objectives

This research comes to test the influence of Customer Engagement, Experience, Awareness and Loyalty on Brand Satisfaction and Commitment to know the right and effective approach of Brand Equity for achieving the Brand Commitment and Satisfaction.

This research addresses the issue of how Egyptian banks respond to various challenges that are disrupting the traditional business model. Also, it is investigating the mediation role Brand Equity in the mentioned relationships.

The following section will present a review of literature of the Brand Equity antecedents and how they might impact Satisfaction and Commitment. The third section will present the methodology of the current research, while the fourth section will present the results and findings. Finally, the fifth section will provide the conclusion of the research and main recommendations for future research.

2 Literature Review

This section is designed to explore previous studies and show the research gap by reviewing literature and recent studies in the field of research. The following sub sections discusses the research variables investigated through the current research.

2.1 Brand Equity Dimensions

Customer-based brand equity happens as soon as customers are aware with the brand and grasp favorable, strong and unique brand associations in memory (Keller, 1993). Aaker (1996b) has stated that BE is a set of assets and liabilities. Five brand equity assets – brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association and other proprietary brand assets – are fundamentals of value creation. This study uses these five brand equity groupings from Aaker (1991), as they are the most acceptable to-date. As brand equity is a multidimensional thought (Aaker, 1991), there was a variety of ways measuring the dimensions for branding – some include brand loyalty and brand association

(Shocker and Weitz, 1988). There is also brand knowledge, which comprises of brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). Furthermore, Yoo et al. (2000) have suggested that perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand awareness have a strong brand association. Among the five brand equity assets, it is very difficult to operate a consumer's observation of brand association in an experiment (Pappu et al., 2006).

Furthermore, other proprietary brand assets, such as patents, are not easy to assess. Therefore, the current study uses brand loyalty, brand association and perceived quality as the dimensions of BE. Brand loyalty is randraa significant contemplation when assessing the value of a brand as loyalty can translate into profit (Aaker, 1991). Brand loyalty is a barrier for new entrants and forms the basis for a price premium (Aaker, 1996b). Brand loyalty also encourages repeated purchase behavior from consumers, and discourages them from switching to competitor brands (Yoo et al., 2000). Therefore, the greater the customer loyalty, the higher the BE will be. Perceived quality is another dimension of brand value that can encourage customers to choose a product or service (Zeithaml, 1988).

“Perceived quality can be definite as the customer's observation of the overall quality or advantage of a product or service with respect to its future purpose, relative to substitutions” (Aaker, 1991). Customers' product experiences, expenditure situations and unique needs might influence their decision of product quality (Yoo et al., 2000). Since customers make their choices based on product attributes and compare these to other products, perceived quality is not an objective

measure. Perceived quality can increase customer satisfaction, provided the customer has had some previous experience with the product or service (Aaker, 1996a). Hence, perceived quality is generally associated with BE (Motameni and Shahrokhi, 1998), and the better the perceived quality, the greater the BE (Yoo et al., 2000). From a brand association perspective, Aaker (1991) felt that BE is closely related to brand association. "A brand association is anything linked in memory to a brand" (Aaker, 1996a).

Keller (1998) suggested that brand association can be divided into three major categories: attributes (including product-related attributes and non-product-related attributes such as price, brand personality, emotions and experience), benefits (what customers think the product or service can do for them, including functional benefits, symbolic benefits and experiential benefits) and attitudes (customers' overall evaluations of the brand). The most powerful brand associations are those that deal with the intangible or abstract traits of a product. Brand association can assist with spontaneous information recall (Osselaer and Janiszewski, 2001) and this information can become the basis of differentiation and extension (Aaker, 1996b). Strong association can help strengthen brand and equity. Similar to perceived quality, brand association can also increase customer satisfaction with the customer experience (Lee et al., 2011).

2.2 Brand Image

Brand image describes the consumer's thoughts and feelings towards the brand (Roy and Banerjee, 2007). In other words, brand image is the overall mental image that consumers have of a

brand, and its uniqueness in comparison to the other brands (Faircloth, 2005). Brand image comprises a consumer's knowledge and beliefs about the brand's diverse products and its non-product attribute. Brand image represents the personal symbolism that consumers associate with the brand, which comprises of all the descriptive and evaluative brand-related information (Iversen and Hem, 2008). When consumers have a favorable brand image, the brand's messages have a stronger influence in comparison to competitor brand messages (Hsieh and Li, 2008). Therefore, brand image is an important determinant of a buyer's behavior (Burmann et al., 2008).

Brand image has been defined as the consumer's mental picture of the offering and it includes symbolic meanings that consumers associate with the specific attributes of the product or service (Salinas and Pérez, 2009; Bibby, 2011). Sääksjärvi and Samiee defined brand image as a series of or the sum the total of brand associations held in the memory of the consumers that led to perceptions about the brand, while Low and Lamb (2000) defined it as the reasoned or emotional perceptions consumers attach to specific brands. In other words, it is seen as the representation of a brand in the consumer's mind that is linked to an offering or a set of perceptions about a brand the consumer forms as reflected by brand associations (Cretu and Brodie, 2007).

2.3 Brand Commitment

Commitment was firstly defined as the development of stable relationships with partners, accepting short-term problems to maintain relationships and

assuring the stability of the relationships (Anderson and Weitz, 1992). Therefore, Commitment is considered as a core feature of relationship marketing management and as a requirement for achieving a company's goals. When a customer is committed to a brand or a company, it is highly likely that the customer will cooperate actively and will not easily be attracted to competitors, which in turn will increase profits. In addition, commitment is viewed as the source of competitiveness as it has causal relations with a company's cost reduction and profit increase, the word-of-mouth effect through recommendations, and a premium pricing effect (Hur et al, 2011).

2.4 Brand Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is one of the most widely researched topics in marketing (Oliver, 1999). Several authors have attempted to define customer satisfaction with one of the most popular definitions given by Oliver (1997), who defined satisfaction as "the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with prior feelings about consumer experience". Customer satisfaction is a judgement that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, has provided a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment. It is also defined as the result of a cognitive and affective evaluation, where some comparison standard is compared to the actually perceived performance (Homburg and Giering, 2001). Oliver (1999) summarises satisfaction as pleasurable fulfilment.

2.5 Previous Studies Related to the Research

Brand image is the soul of the product or service. In business markets, brand image can also be expected to play an important role, especially where it is difficult to differentiate products or services based on tangible quality features (Mudambi et al., 1997; Shankar et al., 2008). It is usually transmitted to consumers, makes them believe in the products in a certain level, and further helps them to make a purchase decision (Torres and Bijmolt, 2009). Marketers usually regard brand image as the basis of how consumers assess the quality of the product or service, that is, the external clue of the products (Cretu and Brodie, 2007). The understanding is that, consumers will utilize brand image to infer their awareness of the product or service or maintain their quality consciousness to the product or service (Bibby, 2011).

Moreover, brand image can be viewed as a set of relative localization, identical quality guaranteeing and the function attribute of the product and service which make consumers reflect their self-image and which help make purchase decisions (Aghekyan-Simonian et al., 2012). In addition to that, the extant branding literature points out that the products with stronger brand image can really reduce consumers' cognitive risk and increase consumers to appraise to the target product or service (Kwon and Lennon, 2009). In this regard, consumers often make use of the sense of brand image to infer the quality of the product or service and decide their behaviour (Salinas and Pérez, 2009).

Thus, the quality of the brand image indirectly cause consumers' cognition of the product or service quality. Besides, utilizing the ideal brand image not only assists enterprises to establish market positions, but also protect brands from other competitors (Cretu and Brodie, 2007). For this reason, enterprises today work hard to maintain their brand image and as such invest substantial resources to develop names with a favourable image (Shankar et al., 2008). Given this recognized importance, it is not surprising why brand images have been increasingly considered primary topics for many marketing businesses (Torres and Bijmolt, 2009). Therefore, the first hypothesis could be formulated as follows:

H₁: There is a significant influence of Brand Equity dimensions on Brand Image.

Therefore, BE from the customer perspective suggests that positive BE occurs when the customer responds more favorably to a marketing activity (e.g. advertising and promotion) for the brand than they do to the same activity for an unbranded product or service from the same category (Keller, 1993). For example, measuring customer BE overtime allows managers to understand how the firm's marketing activities affect brand knowledge held by customers, and how changes in such knowledge affect sales. To realize such important insight, a number of brand models have been developed for the distinct purpose of understanding the elements of customer-based BE (Berry, 2000).

Berry's (2000) emphasis on customer experience in building service brands can be described by the fact that the customer's awareness of a ser-

vice brand, while initially designed by the marketing department through external communication, eventually rests on employee-customer interaction and the reliability of service delivery that is managed internally within the service firm (McDonald et al., 2001). Further indication of the significance of the customer's experience is provided in the relation marketing literature (Berry, 2002; Lewis, 1989). In addition to cutting off costs to gain new customers, the relation marketing literature encourages that a key benefit of retaining customers is the capability to progress expertise within the customer base, thereby providing better service encounters (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Therefore, the second hypothesis could be formulated as follows:

H₂: There is a significant influence of Brand Equity dimensions on Brand Commitment.

Satisfaction with functional brands appears to serve as a key determinant of customer commitment, consistent with the concept of brand management (Fournier, 1998). Consumers who are satisfied with functional brands are committed to preserving the relationship with the brand. Therefore, satisfaction with a functional brand and consumer commitment should be related, as satisfaction is important in the relational exchange (Oliver, 1999). Therefore, the third hypothesis could be formulated as follows:

H₃: There is a significant influence of Brand Equity dimensions on Brand Commitment.

In illumination the creation of service BE, the model captures the importance of service experience, which has been overlooked in Aaker (1991) and Keller's (1993) theoretical models. Furthermore, Berry's (2000) model

clearly allocates areas of management responsibilities in building a service brand. In addition, the brand awareness and brand engagement were determined as important for brand equity achievement. As had been shown in the previous studies, few researches had been done on the banking sector in the Egyptian context. Thus, this research comes to fill such gap by investigating the brand equity antecedents in the banking sector and explore the mediation role of brand equity between its antecedents and brand satisfaction and commitment. According to the above hypotheses developed, this research formulates the following four additional hypotheses to test the mediation role of Brand Image. The four hypotheses are as follows:

H₄: There is a significant influence of Brand Image on Brand Commitment.

H₅: There is a significant influence of Brand Image on Brand Satisfaction.

H₆: Brand Image mediates the relation between Brand Equity dimensions and Brand Commitment.

H₇: Brand Image mediates the relation between BE Antecedents and Brand Satisfaction.

The following section will investigate the model under study proposed according to the research variables discussed above and present the methodology used by the researcher to test the assigned relationships.

3 Research Methodology

In order to test the research hypotheses that underpin this study, the research methodology adopted is based on several issues as illustrated below:

Unit of Analysis: It is the step of gathering of the data collected for the purpose of the data analysis process. It is represented in customers of the

Egyptian banking sector who are users of deposits services of the public banks in Egypt. Those customers are considered as they are the customers who have money and have the option to select the target bank according to its equity and image. The public banking sector is considered in this research as it is the sector suffering relatively more challenges and is still not performing in the same level of the private banking sector.

Population and Sample: The target population for this research is considered as the total number of all customers using the deposit services in the Egyptian banking of the public sector. Since obtaining data about all members of a population is not available and very difficult (Fowler, 2013), the sampling frame for this research could not be identified and accordingly a probability sampling is not obtained. Therefore, a convenient sampling technique was used as respondents were selected from customers of the Egyptian public banking sector who accepted to respond to the questionnaire. A total number of 429 were considered in the study after excluding questionnaire with missing responses from three banks currently representing the public sector of banks in Egypt. An almost equal number of respondents were collected from each bank, where a number of 143 respondents are considered from each bank. Customers are considered from the users of deposits services. Thus, the sample is considered as a convenient purposive sampling, as respondents are considered from the three banks representing the public sector (National Bank of Egypt, Banque Masr and Banque de Caire).

Data Collection: the data collection process is handled through the development of a questionnaire that allows for the measurement of customers' perceptions and past experiences with brands. The adoption of this data collection method was due to the need to measure the focal constructs of the model, as well as the extensive use of survey methodology in previous studies examining customer branding. The questionnaire is shown in the appendix, where a total number of 28 statements were defined for the research variables. The questionnaire was adopted from the studies of Khan et al.

(2016), Ding and Tseng (2015), Lee et al. (2011); Alam et al. (2012), Rambo-cas et al. (2018), Kemp and Bui (2011), Louis et al. (2010), and Shuv-Ami (2016).

Research Framework and Hypotheses: The proposed framework was introduced in Figure 1, where it could be observed that Customers Engagement, Experience, Awareness and Loyalty were considered as the independent variables; Brand Satisfaction and Commitment are considered as the dependent variables, while BE is considered as the mediator.

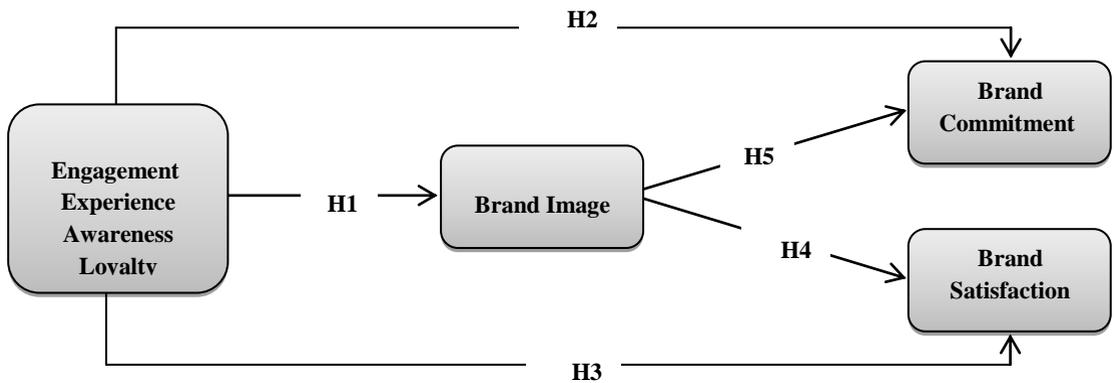


Figure 1: Research Framework

Accordingly, the research hypotheses could be formulated as follows:

H₁: There is a significant influence of Brand Equity dimensions on Brand Image.

H₂: There is a significant influence of Brand Equity dimensions on Brand Commitment.

H₃: There is a significant influence of Brand Equity dimensions on Brand Satisfaction.

H₄: There is a significant influence of Brand Image on Brand Commitment.

H₅: There is a significant influence of Brand Image on Brand Satisfaction.

H₆: Brand Image mediates the relation between Brand Equity dimensions and Brand Commitment.

H₇: Brand Image mediates the relation between BE Antecedents and Brand Satisfaction.

Research Variables Measurement:

the research variables are defined in Table 1 with their measurement scale, where the independent variables are the brand equity dimensions, including Engagement, Experience, Awareness and Loyalty. Also, the dependent variables are Satisfaction and Commitment. Finally, the mediator is the Brand Image.

Table 1: Research Variables Measurement Scale

Research Variable	Description	Measurement Scale
Engagement (Khan et al., 2016)	Independent Variable	Using this bank website gets me to think about this bank
		I think about this bank a lot when I'm using its website
		Using this bank website stimulates my interest to learn more about this bank
		I feel very positive when I use this bank's website
Experience (Khan et al., 2016)	Independent Variable	The operating hours of the bank are convenient and sufficient
		The ATMs of the bank is at the convenient locations
		The bank provides me proper information
		The statements and letters sent by the bank are clear
Brand Awareness (Kim, 2012; Ding and Tseng, 2015)	Independent Variable	This bank is one of the most popular ones
		I have heard this bank name
		I can recognize this bank among competing banks
		I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of this bank
Brand loyalty (Lee et al, 2011; Alam et al, 2012)	Independent Variable	This bank would be my first choice
		I consider myself loyal to this bank
		I use this bank because it is the best choice for me
		I consider myself to be a loyal patron of this bank
Brand Image (Rambocas et al., 2018)	Mediator Variable	It makes sense to transact with this bank instead of any other bank, even if they are the same
		Even if another bank has the same products as my bank, I prefer to transact with mine
		If there is another bank as good as my bank, I prefer to transact with mine
		It seems smarter to transact with my bank, even if banks are not all that different
Brand Commitment (Kemp andBui, 2011; Louis et al., 2010)	Dependent Variable	I consider myself to be a loyal supporter of the bank services.
		This bank services are my first choice when it comes to banking services.
		I would use this bank services over other banks services.
		This bank has a lot of meaning to me
Brand Satisfaction (Shuv-Ami, 2016)	Dependent Variable	I am satisfied with this bank.
		I am satisfied with the way this bank meets my expectations.
		I am satisfied with the way this bank fits my needs.
		Overall, I am satisfied with this bank

The following section will investigate the research hypotheses proposed above using correlation analysis and

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Thus, both; SPSS and AMOS statistical packages – versions 24.

4 Results and Findings

As a preliminary step for analysis, the researcher displays the descriptive statistics for the respondents' personal profile. The frequency in this research has been analyzed and several observations were considered. As shown in Table 2, the sample under study comprised 58% Males and 42% Females. As for the education level of the sam-

ple, 43% had bachelor degree, 19% were postgraduate, 24% had master degree, and 14% had doctoral degree. Also, the majority of the sample belonged to the "31 to 40" age group with a percentage of 50% of the total sample while the "41 to 50" age group was 32%, "Less than 30" was 15% and "More than 50" was 3%.

Table 2: Respondents Personal Profile

	Frequency	Percent	Total
Gender			
Male	249	58%	429
Female	180	42%	
Education			
Bachelor Degree	184	43%	429
Post Graduate	82	19%	
Master Degree	102	24%	
Doctoral Degree	61	14%	
Age			
Less than 30	64	15%	429
31 to 40	215	50%	
41 to 50	137	32%	
More than 50	13	3%	

The collected data cannot be used until validity and reliability tests are applied and give the result that this data is valid and reliable. At this point data could be used for testing the research hypotheses. The questionnaire statements are designed in which it can measure what it expected to measure correctly, this what is called validity (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). To measure the factor validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) is used to represent the average community for each latent factor. This measure should exceed 0.5 to state adequate validity (Hair et al., 1998). Then Factor loading

for each item is used to examine validity, in which it should be 0.4 minimum (Chin, 1998).

To examine reliability, each factor is measured using a group of statements, the consistency between these statements refers to reliability in which it can be examined by Cronbach's Alpha, the most common used test of reliability. The range of Alpha coefficient comes between 0 to 1, the higher the score the higher the reliability. The adequate reliability should be referred by Alpha coefficients exceeding 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). Validity testing and

reliability of the data used for this research were displayed in Table 3.

By studying the variables in the model which consists of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Cus-

tomers Brand Loyalty, Brand Image, Brand Commitment and Brand Satisfaction, it was found that all variables exceed the 50% in the AVE indicator and also exceeding 0.4 factor loading for each item.

Table 3: Data Validation

Variables	KMO	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Item Loading
Engagement	0.719	75.08%	0.889	Engagement1	0.773
				Engagement2	0.751
				Engagement3	0.723
				Engagement4	0.757
Experience	0.83	76.27%	0.896	Experience1	0.794
				Experience2	0.751
				Experience3	0.725
				Experience4	0.782
Awareness	0.687	81.80%	0.919	Awareness1	0.862
				Awareness2	0.723
				Awareness3	0.947
				Awareness4	0.74
Loyalty	0.819	77.29%	0.9	Loyalty1	0.771
				Loyalty2	0.723
				Loyalty3	0.773
				Loyalty4	0.825
Brand Image	0.828	78.67%	0.908	Brand Image1	0.74
				Brand Image2	0.859
				Brand Image3	0.746
				Brand Image4	0.802
Brand Commitment	0.777	75.51%	0.89	Brand Commitment1	0.781
				Brand Commitment2	0.806
				Brand Commitment3	0.712
				Brand Commitment4	0.721
Brand Satisfaction	0.713	56.20%	0.74	Brand Satisfaction1	0.622
				Brand Satisfaction2	0.525
				Brand Satisfaction3	0.472
				Brand Satisfaction4	0.629

Descriptive analysis provides summary statistics about the research variables, including the mean, median, variance and standard deviations. Table 4 shows the descriptive analysis for the research variables. It was observed that the mean of Customer Brand Engage-

ment, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty, Brand Image, Brand Commitment and Brand Satisfaction are 2.3566, 2.4592, 2.6037, 2.3823, 2.5664, 3.5385 and 4.4149 respectively.

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis for Research variables

Research Variables	N	Mean	Variance	Std. De- viation	Frequency Percent				
					1	2	3	4	5
Engagement	429	2.3566	0.716	0.84615	14.5	44.3	33.3	7.0	0.9
Experience	429	2.4592	0.726	0.85179	12.4	39.9	38.2	8.6	0.9
Awareness	429	2.6037	0.698	0.83531	8.4	37.1	40.6	13.8	0.2
Loyalty	429	2.3823	0.699	0.83625	13.5	43.1	36.1	6.1	1.2
Brand Image	429	2.5664	0.657	0.81079	7.9	38.9	42.9	9.1	1.2
Brand Commitment	429	3.5385	0.604	0.77733	0.2	7.7	39.4	43.4	9.3
Brand Satisfaction	429	4.4149	0.477	0.69063	0.2	0.7	8.2	39.2	51.7

Testing the Effect of Customer Brand Equity Dimensions on Brand Image

Table 5 shows the correlation matrix between independent variables Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty and Brand Image. There is a significant positive correlation between Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand

Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty and BI, as corresponding Pvalues is less than 0.05 and $r > 0$. It was observed that the values of Pearson's correlation for the research variables; Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty and BI, are 0.757***, 0.692**, 0.660** and 0.714** respectively.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix between Customer Brand Equity Antecedents and Brand Image

		1	2	3	4	5
1. Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	429				
2. Experience	Pearson Correlation	.758**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	429	429			
3. Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.650**	.470**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	429	429	429		
4. Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.761**	.665**	.542**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	429	429	429	429	
5. Brand Image	Pearson Correlation	.757**	.692**	.660**	.714**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	429	429	429	429	429

Table 6 shows the multiple regression analysis of the influence Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Image. It could be observed that the P-value of the whole model is 0.000 which stated a significant influence of the model generally on the Brand Image. Also, the R square is 0.682 which means that the model explains 68.2% of the variation in Brand Image. Then,

it was found that P-values of the variables; Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty are 0.000, 0.000, 0.000 and 0.000, implying a positive significant impact of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Image ($\beta = 0.198, 0.229, 0.272$ and 0.237).

Table 6: Regression Model of Customer Brand Equity Dimensions on Brand Image

Research Variables	Unstandardized		Standardized		T	P-value	Overall P-value	R Square
	Coefficients		Coefficients					
	B	Std. Error	Beta					
(Constant)	.264	.083			3.193	.002		
Engagement	.198	.052	.206		3.811	.000		
Experience	.229	.041	.241		5.605	.000	0.000	0.682
Awareness	.272	.035	.280		7.721	.000		
Loyalty	.237	.042	.245		5.638	.000		

Thus, the hypothesis that Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty has a significant impact on Brand Image was fully supported.

Testing the Effect of Customer Brand Equity Dimensions on Brand Commitment

Table 7 shows the correlation matrix between independent variables of Engagement, Experience, Awareness and Loyalty, and Brand Commitment.

It was observed that the value of Pearson's correlation for the research variables; Engagement, Experience, Awareness and Loyalty, and Brand Commitment are 0.634, 0.573, 0.549, and 0.603 respectively, with P-values of 0.000. Thus, there is a significant positive correlation between Brand Commitment and Research variables.

Table 7: Customer Brand Equity Dimensions and Brand Commitment

		1	2	3	4	5
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	429				
Experience	Pearson Correlation	.758**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	429	429			
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.650**	.470**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	429	429	429		
Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.761**	.665**	.542**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	429	429	429	429	
Brand Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.634**	.573**	.549**	.603**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	429	429	429	429	429

Table 8 shows the multiple regression analysis of the impact of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Commitment. It could be observed that the P-values of the whole model are 0.000 which stated a significant impact of the model generally on the Brand Commitment. Also, the R square is 0.640 which means that the model explains 64% of the variation in

Brand Commitment. Then, it was found that P-value of the variables; Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty are 0.000, 0.000, 0.000 and 0.000, implying a positive significant impact of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Commitment ($\beta = 0.190, 207, 257$ and 215).

Table 8: Regression Model of Customer Brand Equity Dimensions on Brand Commitment

Research Variables	Unstandardized		Standardized		T	P-value	Overall P-value	R Square
	Coefficients		Coefficients					
	B	Std. Error	Beta					
(Constant)	1.401	.084			16.623	.000		
Engagement	.190	.053	.207		3.580	.000		
Experience	.207	.042	.226		4.945	.000	0.000	0.640
Awareness	.257	.036	.276		7.155	.000		
Loyalty	.215	.043	.232		5.009	.000		

Thus, the second hypothesis that Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty have a significant impact on Brand Commitment was fully supported.

Testing the Effect of Customer Brand Equity Dimensions on Brand Satisfaction

Table 9 shows the correlation matrix between independent variables of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty

and Brand Satisfaction. There is a significant positive correlation between Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty and Brand Satisfaction, as corresponding P-values is less than 0.05 and $r > 0$. It was observed that the value of Pearson's correlation for the research variables; Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty and Brand Satisfaction, are 0.734**, 0.667**, 0.642 and 0.689 respectively.

Table 9: Correlation Matrix between Customer Brand Equity Dimensions and Brand Satisfaction

		1	2	3	4	5
1. Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	429				
2. Experience	Pearson Correlation	.758**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	429	429			
3. Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.650**	.470**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	429	429	429		
4. Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.761**	.665**	.542**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	429	429	429	429	
5. Brand Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.734**	.667**	.642**	.689**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	429	429	429	429	429

Table 10 shows the multiple regression analysis of the impact of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Satisfaction. It could be observed that the P-values of the whole model is 0.000 which stated a significant impact of the model generally on Brand Satisfaction. Also, the R square is 0.476 which means that the model explains 47.6% of the variation in Brand Satisfaction. Then, it was found

that P-value of the variables; Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty are 0.011, 0.001, 0.000 and 0.000 implying a positive significant impact of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.146, 0.149, 0.187$ and 183).

Table 10: Regression Model of Brand Equity Dimensions on Brand Satisfaction

Research Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	P-value	Overall P-value	R Square
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	2.781	.090		30.818	.000		
Engagement	.146	.057	.178	2.566	.011		
Experience	.149	.045	.184	3.333	.001	0.000	0.476
Awareness	.187	.038	.226	4.861	.000		
Loyalty	.183	.046	.222	3.982	.000		

Thus, the third hypothesis that Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty have a significant impact on Brand Satisfaction was fully supported.

Testing the Effect of Brand Image on Brand Commitment

Table 11 shows the correlation mat-

rix between the independent variable; Brand Image and the dependent variable; Brand Commitment. There is a significant positive correlation between Brand Image and Brand Commitment, as corresponding P-value is less than 0.05 and Pearson’s correlation coefficient $r = 0.976^{**}$, which is greater than 0.

Table 11: Correlation Matrix between Brand Image and Brand Commitment

		BI	BC
Brand Image	Pearson Correlation		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		429
Brand Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.976**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	429	429

Table 12 shows the simple regression model of the influence of Brand Image on Brand Commitment. It could be observed that there is a positive significant influence of Brand Image on Brand Commitment with regression

coefficient $\beta = 0.935$, as well as P-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Also, the R square is 0.952 which means that the model explains 95.2% of the variation in Brand Commitment.

Table 12: Regression Model of Brand Image on Brand Commitment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	P-Value	R Square
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.138	.027		41.481	.000	0.952
Brand Image	.935	.010	.976	91.743	.000	

Thus, the fourth hypothesis was supported, which means that Brand Image has a significant impact on Brand Commitment.

Testing the Effect of Customer Brand Image on Brand Satisfaction

Table 13 shows the correlation matrix between the independent variable;

Brand Image and the dependent variable; Brand Satisfaction. There is a significant positive correlation between Brand Image and Brand Satisfaction, as corresponding P-value is less than 0.05 and Pearson’s correlation coefficient $r = 0.844^{**}$, which is greater than 0.

Table 13: Correlation Matrix between Brand Image and Brand Satisfaction

		1	2
1. Brand Image	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	429	
2. Brand Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.844 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	429	429

Table 14 shows the simple regression model of Brand Image influence on Brand Satisfaction. It could be observed that there is a positive significant influence of Brand Image with regression coefficient $\beta = 0.719$, as

well as P-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Also, the R square is 0.712 which means that the model explains 71.2% of the variation in Brand Satisfaction.

Table 14: Regression Model of Brand Image on Brand Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	P- Value	R Square
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	2.571	.060		43.154	.000	0.712
Brand Image	.719	.022	.844	32.462	.000	

Thus, the fifth hypothesis was supported, which means that BE has a significant influence on Brand Satisfaction.

Applying the SEM for the Research Model

Table 15 shows the SEM of the influence of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Commitment. It could be observed that there is an insignificant influence of Engagement and Experience on the dependent variable; Brand Commitment with Estimates of 0.116 and 0.087 respectively, as well as P-values of 0.101, and

0.185. respectively, while there is a significant impact of Awareness and Loyalty on Brand Commitment with Estimates of 0.258, and 0.130 as well as p-value of 0.000, and 0.011 respectively. Also, the R square is 0.382 which means that Awareness and Loyalty explains 38.2% of the variation in **Brand Commitment**.

Also, there is a significant impact of Experience on Brand Satisfaction with Estimates of 0.159, as well as p-value of 0.009, Also, the R square is 0.758 which means that Experience explains 75.8% of the variation in **Brand Satisfaction**.

Table 15: SEM for Research Model without Mediation

			Estimate	P-value	R Square
Brand Commitment	<---	Engagement	.116	.101	
Brand Commitment	<---	Experience	.087	.185	
Brand Commitment	<---	Awareness	.258	***	0.382
Brand Commitment	<---	Loyalty	.130	.011	
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Brand Commitment	.980	***	
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Engagement	.065	.330	
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Experience	.159	.009	0.758
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Awareness	.094	.121	
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Loyalty	.047	.337	

The model fit indices; CMIN/df = 2.639, GFI = 0.927, CFI = 0.963, and RMSEA = 0.062 are all within their acceptable levels.

Testing the Mediation Role of Brand Image for the Research Model

Table 16 shows the SEM of the influence of Engagement, Experience, Awareness, and Loyalty on Brand Equity. It could be observed that there is a positive significant influence of Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on the dependent variable; Brand Image with Estimates of 0.314, 0.432, and 0.266 respectively, as well as P-value of 0.000. respectively, while there is an insignificant relation between Engagement on Brand Image with p-value of 0.573, Also, the R square is 0.594 which means that Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty explains 59.4% of the variation in **Brand Image**.

In addition, there is insignificant influence of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Commitment with Estimates of 0.095, -0.036, 0.093, and 0.031 respectively with p-values of

0.154, 0.580, 0.153, and 0.545 respectively, while, there is significant influence of Brand Image on Brand Commitment Also, the R Square is 0.504 which means that BE explains 50.4% of variation on **Brand Commitment**.

Furthermore, there is significant influence between Brand Image, and Brand Commitment on Brand Satisfaction with p-value of 0.000 while there is insignificant influence between Engagement, Experience, Awareness, and Loyalty with p-values of 0.202, 0.296, 0.716, and 0.559 respectively. Also, the R Square is 0.790 which means that BE, and BC explains 79% of variation on **Brand Satisfaction**.

Therefore, it is could be considered that Brand Equity is fully mediating the relationship between Brand Awareness and Loyalty and Brand Commitment, as Brand Awareness and Loyalty tended to be insignificant in the presence of Brand Equity. Also, Brand Equity is fully mediating the relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Satisfaction, as Brand Experience turned to be insignificant in the presence of Brand Equity.

Table 16: SEM for Research Model with Mediation

			Estimate	P-value	R Square
Brand Image	<---	Engagement	.045	.573	
Brand Image	<---	Experience	.314	***	0.594
Brand Image	<---	Awareness	.432	***	
Brand Image	<---	Loyalty	.266	***	
Brand Commitment	<---	Brand Image	.390	***	
Brand Commitment	<---	Engagement	.095	.154	0.504
Brand Commitment	<---	Experience	-.036	.580	
Brand Commitment	<---	Awareness	.093	.153	
Brand Commitment	<---	Loyalty	.031	.545	
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Brand Image	.367	***	
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Brand Commitment	.790	***	0.790
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Engagement	.078	.202	
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Experience	.062	.296	
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Awareness	-.022	.716	
Brand Satisfaction	<---	Loyalty	-.028	.559	

The model fit indices; CMIN/df = 2.854, GFI = 0.911, CFI = 0.871, and RMSEA = 0.066 are all within their acceptable levels.

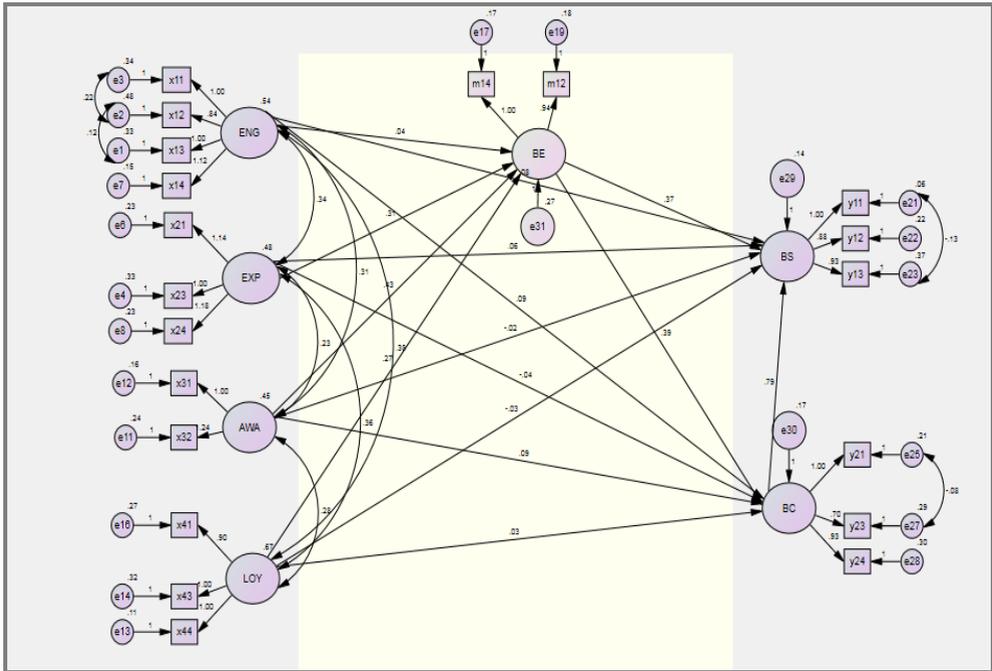


Figure 2: SEM Model

Thus, the sixth and seventh hypotheses were partially supported, which means that Brand Image partially mediates the relation between its antecedents and Brand Commitment and Brand Satisfaction.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

It was found that P-values of the variables; Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty are 0.000, 0.000, 0.000 and 0.000, implying a positive significant impact of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Image ($\beta = 0.198, 0.229, 0.272$ and 0.237). This means that the hypothesis that there is a significant influence of

Brand Equity dimensions on Brand Image is fully supported. This is consistent with the studies of Kwon and Lennon (2009), who claimed that the products with stronger brand image can really reduce consumers’ cognitive risk and increase consumers to appraise to the target product or service. Also, results are in line with Salinas and Pérez (2009), who claimed that consumers often make use of the sense of brand image to infer the quality of the product or service and decide their behavior.

Regarding the second hypothesis, it was found that P-value of the variables; Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty are 0.000, 0.000, 0.000 and 0.000, implying a positive significant impact of Customer Brand Engage-

ment, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Commitment ($\beta = 0.190, 207, 257$ and 215). This means that the hypothesis that there is a significant influence of Brand Equity dimensions on Brand Commitment is supported. This is consistent with the results obtained by Berry's (2000) and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2002).

Considering the third hypothesis, it was found that P-value of the variables; Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty are $0.011, 0.001, 0.000$ and 0.000 implying a positive significant impact of Customer Brand Engagement, Customer Brand Experience, Customer Brand Awareness, Customer Brand Loyalty on Brand Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.146, 0.149, 0.187$ and 183). This means that the hypothesis that there is a significant influence of Brand Equity dimensions on Brand Commitment is supported.

In addition, it could be observed that there is a positive significant influence of Brand Image on Brand Commitment with regression coefficient $\beta = 0.935$, as well as P-value of 0.000 , which is less than 0.05 . Also, the R square is 0.952 which means that the model explains 95.2% of the variation in Brand Commitment. This means that the hypothesis that there is a significant influence of Brand Image on Brand Commitment is supported.

Furthermore, it was noticed that there is a positive significant influence of Brand Image with regression coefficient $\beta = 0.719$, as well as P-value of 0.000 , which is less than 0.05 . Also, the R square is 0.712 which means that the model explains 71.2% of the variation in Brand Satisfaction. This means

that the hypothesis that there is a significant influence of Brand Image on Brand Satisfaction is supported.

The above results illustrate the role of Brand Image mediation to cope with the required level of Brand Commitment and Brand Satisfaction in the Egyptian public banking sector. This means that brand equity is an important issue for customers to achieve their satisfaction and commitment to a bank rather than another. It could be observed that customers are not relatively committed or satisfied by the public banks services, which implies the application of brand image through mainly having good experience and awareness regarding their banks and how they might serve their customers. This will lead to customers being satisfied and committed to their banks specially in that global world nowadays.

The following recommendations are suggested for future research:

- The same study could be conducted for the private banking sector to be able to determine factors affecting brand satisfaction and brand commitment for the private sector.
- A comparative analysis could be conducted between private and public Egyptian banks to be able to compare between different sectors performance.
- A study could be conducted to evaluate the role of brand equity in different sectors other than the banking sector.
- A future work could be done to examine customers responses using different services of the banking sector, like deposits and credits services, as well as comparing between different services.

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Appendix: Research Questionnaire

	Engagement (Khan et al., 2016)					
1-	Using this bank website gets me to think about this bank					
2-	I think about this bank a lot when I'm using its website					
3-	Using this bank website stimulates my interest to learn more about this bank					
4-	I feel very positive when I use this bank's website					
	Experience (
1-	The operating hours of the bank are convenient and sufficient					
2-	The ATMs of the bank is at the convenient locations					
3-	The bank provides me proper information					
4-	The statements and letters sent by the bank are clear					
	Brand Awareness (Kim, 2012; Ding and Tseng, 2015)					
1-	This bank is one of the most popular ones					
2-	I have heard this bank name					
3-	I can recognize this bank among competing banks					
4-	I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of this bank					
	Brand loyalty (Lee et al, 2011; Alam et al, 2012)					
1-	This bank would be my first choice					
2-	I consider myself loyal to this bank					
3-	I use this bank because it is the best choice for me					
4-	I consider myself to be a loyal patron of this bank					
	Brand Equity (Rambocas et al., 2018)					
1-	It makes sense to transact with this bank instead of any other bank, even if they are the same					
2-	Even if another bank has the same products as my bank, I prefer to transact with mine					
3-	If there is another bank as good as my bank, I prefer to transact with mine					
4-	It seems smarter to transact with my bank, even if banks are not all that different					
	Brand Commitment (Kemp andBui, 2011; Louis et al., 2010)					
1-	I consider myself to be a loyal supporter of the bank services.					
2-	This bank services are my first choice when it comes to banking services.					
3-	I would use this bank services over other banks services.					
4-	This bank has a lot of meaning to me					
	Satisfaction (Shuv-Ami, 2016)					
1-	I am satisfied with this bank.					
2-	I am satisfied with the way this bank meets my expectations.					
3-	I am satisfied with the way this bank fits my needs.					
4-	Overall, I am satisfied with this bank					

