

## *Chapter 11*

# **Recommendations, Implications and Scope for Further Research**

<b>Contents</b>	11.1	<i>Introduction</i>
	11.2	<i>Recommendations to Bank Management</i>
	11.3	<i>Recommendations to Customers</i>
	11.4	<i>Research Implications</i>
	11.5	<i>Scope for Further Research</i>

### **11.1 Introduction**

A brand is an assurance offered by the marketer that they would continuously provide their customers with a set of benefits, features, and services. Therefore, the banks adopted various brand building practices to communicate the value proposition and to reinforce customers perceptions. The present study pointed out that brand building practices adopted by the commercial banks in Kerala had only a moderate effect on reinforcing the behavioural intentions of the customers. However, brand building practices helped to communicate and popularise the brand among potential customers. As banks are operating in a highly competitive environment, they have to focus on customer-based brand equity parameters, which would help them to foster branding and enhance customer satisfaction, thereby creating favourable behavioural intentions among the customers.

The present empirical research brought out useful insights upon which recommendations can be made to the commercial banks in Kerala to enhance their brand performance.

### **11.2 Recommendations to Bank Management**

- The findings reveal that corporate social responsibility is the most positively perceived brand building practice adopted by commercial banks in Kerala. Therefore, banks can analyse the current corporate social responsibility strategies' and allocate funds for more noble causes to evoke a favourable behavioural intention. The banks can also foster their responsibilities by addressing regional, ethical, and environmental issues and taking proper measures to resolve them. Further, the banks can devise strategies to effectively communicate their corporate

social responsibility initiatives to strengthen their customer-based brand equity. Furthermore, the banks can formulate policies to ensure legal and ethical aspects while dealing with customers to foster brand equity parameters and evoke a favourable behavioural intention.

- Social media is found to be the least perceived brand building practice among banks. Though social networking platforms are widely used by banks for brand building, their opportunities are not fully tapped by commercial banks. Therefore, banks can make use of social media platforms to communicate customised services to foster continuous engagement, thereby building long-lasting relationships with them. Further, social media can also be used by banks to connect easily with customers and enhance their experience. Moreover, the data from social media can also be used by banks to analyse customer needs and devise strategies to address them. All these would help banks to enhance branding among them.

- Customers of commercial banks in Kerala perceived their banks brand building practices differently with respect to social demographic characteristics. So, the banks have to employ creative and segmented strategies to create a strong impression in the minds of potential customers. Further, banks need to understand the attributes, preferences, and requirements of every customer segment and perform market research, analysis, and gather information to develop strategies that are suitable for each segment. Additionally, they have to conduct various advertisement campaigns and choose the most effective communication channel to convey their brand value. Hence, banks would be able to influence the targeted audience and their behaviour favourably towards the brand.

- The Banks can organise customer education programmes to enhance their financial literacy and make them aware of their rights. Additionally, to achieve high involvement and ensure participation in the customer education programmes, banks can use a variety of communication methods to ensure that customers know about the programme and its advantages, including email campaigns, website ads, social media postings, and personal contact. All these initiatives would help the bank to create a lasting impression in the minds of potential customers.

- The findings indicate that all the parameters of brand equity had only a moderate effect on customers. The banks can examine their current brand building practices and adopt measures to amplify their effect on customers. Therefore, banks can regularly monitor the brand equity parameters to provide useful insight into those aspects that require more attention and the measures to be adopted to further enhance brand visibility and recognition by using different communication channels to continuously engage with customers. Further, they have to consistently uphold brand promises by providing outstanding experiences for customers and thus foster trust, loyalty, and brand associations. As such, an improvement in brand equity parameters would help to magnify the behavioural intentions of customers.

- The study also emphasises that among the brand equity factors, brand loyalty has a significant effect on customer behaviour and found that brand loyalty varies among banks. Therefore, banks can consider this while developing their branding strategy to encourage favourable customer behaviour.

- Customers' expectations of financial services have changed significantly because of an upsurge in their standard of living. The services offered by banks have to be improved and expanded to attract existing customers and ensure customer retention.

- Banks can devise strategies to build a comprehensive customer experience. The opportunities in digital technology can be used by banks to gather data on customers, which could be used to deliver a personalised experience while dealing with them. This would help the banks to improve customer satisfaction and create favourable behavioural intentions.

- Banks need to remain proactive in meeting the requirements of customers to enhance brand performance. This would require the banks to modify their products and services to match the expectations of their customers.

- Banks can conduct periodic training and development programmes for their employees to imbibe the bank culture and enhance their performance while dealing with customers. This would help to improve the brand performance of the banks.

- In India, there are considerably more foreign banks than there were a few years ago. Indian banks have to reconsider their numerous branding strategies to increase brand exposure and improve customer services, which would help them to attract customers and outperform the competition on a global level.

### **11.3 Recommendations to Customers**

Customers would have to be watchful and cautious while dealing with the bank, as it helps to improve their banking experience. The present study proposes the following suggestions for customers to augment their banking experience.

- Banks are providing numerous services to their customers, such as loyalty programmes, chatbots, a 24-hour customer complaint portal, mobile apps, digital services, offers and discounts, personal bankers, etc. Unfortunately, the customers are not aware of the different services provided by the banks and remain unutilized. It is recommended that customers have to take the initiative to contact bank personnel to improve their knowledge of the different services offered by the banks.

- The customers can share their feedback and criticism if they feel uncomfortable while using the services rendered by the bank. They can also make use of the opportunities provided by the digital platform to raise their query or contact the bank branch to resolve the issue as early as possible.

- The customers would have to understand their unique financial needs to aid in the selection of the best products and services that match their expectations. This would help the customers to bargain with the banks to avail tailor-made products and services, which would enhance customer satisfaction.

- Customers can engage in activities to enhance their financial literacy. They can evaluate the services provided by the different banks and choose the best one. As such, the customers have to consider different factors like the reputation of the banks, service charges, interest rates provided on deposits, convenience, etc.

- Customers would have to regularly update their bank statements to check for any suspicious transactions. Further, they can regularly monitor the service charges and interest rates provided by their bank and compare them with

those of their competitors. This would help the customers to keep updated about the market rates and check for any discrepancies with the bank to enhance their experience.

- Get acquainted with the latest banking trends, such as innovative banking technology, to experience the best banking practices. Most banks use integrated technology in their banking services, and customers can make use of digital banking services as they provide real-time access and transactions can be done from any part of the world.

#### **11.4 Research Implications**

The present study would significantly advance the understanding of the complexities of the relationship between customers and brands. The study improves our comprehension of brand-customer relationships by examining the interaction between customer-based brand equity, customer satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. It would also offer useful implications for businesses looking to forge lasting and enduring relationships with their customers.

- The study presents a holistic model that maps the role of brand building practices, customer-based brand equity, and customer satisfaction on behaviour intentions which would provide valuable information for the banks in strategy formulation. Using this model, banks could identify those brand building practices that require their attention and devise strategies to foster brand equity to remain competitive in the industry. It was also found that brand building practices have the power to enhance brand equity elements that improve customer satisfaction and evoke positive behavioural actions. Further, the study also highlights the relevance of customer acquisition and retention in banks, as it was identified that both aspects influenced bank profitability. Therefore, fostering brand equity parameters would be crucial in the banking industry in Kerala. Moreover, as the banks are dealing with the hard-earned money of the customers, it would require them to foster brand equity elements to win their confidence.

- Today, banks are operating in a highly dynamic environment where they are confronted with numerous challenges. Hence, developing brand equity is very important to create a position in the minds of customers and remain

competitive. The present study helped to identify the perceptions of the customers towards the bank's brand building practices and its outcomes. The previous studies included only few parameters of brand building practices, whereas the present study analysed the combined effect of six brand building practices and it was identified that all the parameters of brand building practices had a moderate effect on customers. Further, the study figures out which components of the brand appealed to the customers, and which may require modification. Looking at the strategic aspect, it was identified that different parameters of brand building practices partially communicated its unique value proposition, which indicated that banks would have to regularly monitor customer perceptions, market trends, and refine their brand strategies. In this aspect, the study makes valuable contributions to the existing literature and offers a comprehensive model that illustrates how brand building practices create brand equity and customer satisfaction to influence customer behavioural intentions.

- The present study found the mediating role played by brand equity and customer satisfaction, which provide additional insights into the creation of favourable behavioural intentions from customers. To promote the business, banks take numerous initiatives to develop their brand through various brand building practices. The study also assessed the mediating role of brand equity and customer satisfaction in relation to brand building practices and behavioural intentions, and it was found that customer satisfaction and brand equity partially mediate the relationship. On the other hand, if the organisations concentrate only on brand building practices while ignoring brand equity and customer satisfaction, expenditure on brand building would increase without a corresponding increase in favourable behavioural intentions. Hence, the study confirms the need to focus on creating brand equity and satisfying their customers, which would lead to favourable behavioural actions from customers.

- The study also highlights that brand loyalty is the sole factor that influences the behavioural actions of the customers of public sector banks, whereas brand association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality have the power to evoke positive behavioural action among the private sector bank's customers. At the same time, when the brand loyalty of both type of banks are compared, it was found that

the public sector banks have higher brand loyalty when compared to private sector banks. So, while formulating branding strategies, public sector banks would have to take measures to increase brand awareness, brand association, and perceived quality. On the other hand, private sector banks would have to take initiatives to enhance their brand loyalty.

- The study identified the effect of brand building practices and provides an overview of the parameters that influences the touch points of banking customers while associating with a bank brand. Based on these findings, appropriate suggestions are formulated for the management as well as the customers to enhance their competitiveness and experience, respectively. The findings reinforce the importance of strengthening brand building practices, as there exist scope for the banks to further augment their brand performance.

### **11.5 Scope for Further Research**

The present study is unique in terms of topic, dimensions, and context, which provides conclusive evidences and opens the scope for further investigation in the future. This research has contributed to the area of customer-based brand equity in commercial banks in Kerala. Its implications would further help in probing the relationship between brand building practices and behavioural intentions among the customers of commercial banks in Kerala. The present study attempted to outline the future direction in the related area by acknowledging the findings and limitations of the study.

- The results of this research can be used to draw useful insights on how the model developed could be effectively used to predict the behavioural intentions of the customers of the banks in India. The present study would give a direction for conducting similar research in the future.

- The theoretical foundation and test adopted in this study can be further explored by involving more samples from all type of banks, NBFCs, and other financial institutions. Further, the samples can also be sourced from other business sectors like manufacturing, services, and trading. Furthermore, the sample can be drawn from other states, as the current study was restricted to the banking sector of Kerala state.

- Further studies with more measures to assess brand recall and brand recognition by exploring more brand building practices such as sponsorship, publicity, rebranding, event marketing, and personal selling in relation to market outcomes can also be explored.
- Additional studies may also be undertaken by examining other brand constructs such as brand personality, brand affinity, brand architecture, brand extensions, brand revitalization, brand leadership, and brand community that contribute to the development of a strong corporate identity irrespective of the industry.
- In the future, the studies also recommended assessing cost-effective brand building practices and the impact of third-party communication. Exploring the impact of brand building practices expenditures on corporate brand value would provide useful insight into the expenditures spent on brand building practices.
- The study can further examine the relationship between brand building expenditure and the profitability of the organisation through a longitudinal study, which would provide useful evidence on the impact of brand building practices on the banks' performance.
- To draw conclusive evidence on brand equity measures, the study recommends investigating 360-degree brand equity by examining financial, organisational, and customer-based brand equity.
- Further studies can also explore the mediating role of brand trust, brand experience, brand credibility, brand attitude, brand love, and the moderating role of sociodemographic factors.

The findings significantly enhance the knowledge base of the discipline of brand management, particularly regarding the relationship that exists between bank brands and customers. Therefore, banks are able to gain insights into the success of their brand management and make wise decisions about how to strengthen their brand positioning by evaluating the efficacy of brand building practices. Further, the study brings out the moderate effect of brand equity on customer perceptions, based on which suggestions are put forward for the banks as well as the customers to improve their behavioural intentions. Additionally, this chapter elucidates the



implications of the findings for management, which would help them to concentrate on those parameters that would enhance brand preference. Finally, admitting the constraints and outcomes of the study outlines the scope for future research.