

The Impact Of Brand
Personality On Student
Enrolment Intentions: The
Mediating Role Of Brand
Engagement - Evidence
From Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the impact of brand personality on student enrolment intentions; the mediating role of brand engagement. The population of the study comprised of students from Christian Service University College in Ghana. 302 students were selected and the total valid questionnaire received for the study was 252 representing 83.44%. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were adopted in selecting respondents and 7 point likert questionnaire was used to collect data. Explanatory research design was used. Stata version 13 and IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 were the software used in data analysis whiles Structural Equation Model was used to explore direct, indirect and total effect relationships as presented in the hypothesis. The study found brand personality and engagement positively and significantly impact on future enrolment intentions. The research also revealed that brand engagement fully mediate the relationship between sophistication and future enrolment decision and partially mediates the relationship between excitement and future enrolment decision. However, there is no mediation between ruggedness, competence, sincerity and future enrolment intention when brand engagement comes to play.

Keywords: Brand Engagement, brand personality, future enrolment decision, Christian Service University College, Ghana.

1. INTRODUCTION

Branding is an important management responsibility and also has implications to marketing theory and practice. Individual brands have human-like characteristics that make them different from others. These brand features make customers form emotional and symbolic relationship with brands which tend to affect their intentions to purchase. As a result, the topics on brand personality and the relationships that customers form with brands attracts marketing managers and researchers' attention (Birkner, 2011; Aaker, 1997) and share interest to know the reasons why customers form relationship with brands (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011; Consumer Brand Relationship Colloquium, 2011). Brand engagement offers efficient and effective ways to improve customers' evaluation and decision about intentions to purchase a particular brand. In addition, customers' decision to purchase and prefer a particular brand needs review for theoretical and practical purposes (Teng, Laroche & Zhu, 2007). The significance of this development is the extent that many world products are structured through their brands (Baker, Hunt & Scribner, 2002). Customers exercise their power on purchase decisions and predisposition to pay extra cost on the brand power (Aaker, 1991). At present, useful brand constructs such as brand personality and brand engagement have entered into the brand literature (Aaker, 1997), and are influencing the behaviour intentions models in a broad range leading to non-price competitive advantage strategies (Bouhleb et al., 2011; Bruwer & Buller, 2005). This development has the greatest possibility to reveal the main factors and real causes of customers' purchase intentions that lead to their purchase decision.

There is a visible trend of transformation in the landscape of the tertiary educational sector in Ghana. At present, there are 10 Public Universities (including 7 Public Professional Institutions) and 74 Private Universities (National Accreditation Board, 2017). Most Public Universities have extensively embarked on national distance learning and online tertiary programmes. A large number of foreign universities are gaining a larger portion of market share through online learning platforms resulting in Private Universities struggling to survive in this increasingly competitive tertiary education. In line with the mainstream theories of buyer behaviour, it is assumed that brand choice is not random but systematic and rational within the buyer's 'bounded rationality' (March & Simon, 1958 as cited by Howard, 1969). Much buying behaviour is more or less repetitive, and the buyer establishes purchase cycles for various products which determine how often he or she will buy. For products that are important to the customer and of durable nature, customers involved themselves in the buying process. For many other products with frequent purchase, customers do not involve themselves much but store relevant information to facilitate the routine decision making. A number of researchers have investigated brand personality and customer buyer behaviour in the context of cars, alcoholic beverages and fast moving consumer goods and highlighted the need to adapt general marketing constructs to the unique market environment. Some of the earlier studies have showed that, one of the ways to seek differentiation is to develop corporate brand (Keller and Richey, 2006; Anisimova, 2007; Davies, 2008) through customer engagement.

The theory of brand personality emphasis that, brand evolves into a state where customers perceive it to have certain features much like human personality traits (Aaker, 1997). As brand identity is common among consumer research, little investigation has been done in the context of higher education sector. The few scattered studies on the brand identity of higher education and on faculties are secondary to other research objectives. The main aim of this study is to determine the impact of brand personality on students' future enrolment intentions; the mediating role played by brand engagement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 BRAND PERSONALITY

Branding and brand-based differentiation are important means for developing and sustaining competitive advantage at the market place (Aggarwal, 2004). Many useful constructs and measurements have been developed recently in the brand literature including brand personality, brand community, brand trust and brand attachment (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Thomson, McInnis and Park 2005; Delgado-Ballester, Munuera-Aleman and Yagüe-Guillen, 2003; McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig, 2002; Aaker, 1997) as a way to determine organisation's resources for sustainable competitive advantage. These studies have concluded that customers form relationships with brands in much the same way in which they form relationships with other persons in a social context. Freling and Forbes (2005) have established that, brand personality is an important organizational resource that can differentiate and create competitive advantage in the customer's mind for brands that

otherwise inseparable from the competition. The brand personality is a lifeless object associated with personality lines resulting from interactions that the customer has with it or through the marketing communication (Plummer, 1984). A well established brand personality influences customer's preference and patronage (Malhotra and Naresh, 1988; Sirgy, 1982) and develops stronger emotional ties (Biel, 1993), trust, and attachment with the brand (Fournier, 1998). Contrarily to product attributes which are mainly functional, brand personality tends to have a symbolic function and one of self-expression (Keller, 1993). With the notion of one-to-one marketing, marketers are shifting away from mass marketing (Barwise and Farley, 2005) to a personalized, interactive and immediate ways. Customers need to be addressed individually and one at a time (Peppers, Rogers and Dorf, 1999).

Brand and customer relationships have been the latest research focus in brand research. Blackston (1992) compared brand relationships to interpersonal relationships and established a new research direction by pointing out that cherished, enduring and stable brand relationship can form a good resource for organization leading to buying of organisation's offer. Research has established that customers vary not only in how they perceive brands but also in how they relate to them (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Fournier, 1998). Some customers become so attached to brands that they develop emotional relationship with them. The assertion that, brand has personalities like human characteristics is now well established in the literature. Brand personality serves as a vehicle of customer's self-expression and an instrument to help customers to express different aspects of their self (Johar, Sengupta and Aaker, 2005; Escalas, and Bettman, 2005; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004; Belk, 1988; Aaker, 1997). The brand personality provides the brand with a "soul" that is essential to the decision to buy. This refers to the emotional side of a brand image (Ouwensloot and Tudorica, 2001), and the psychological and human characteristic attributed to brand value (Aaker, 1997).

Customers and brands have a kind of relationship which is like the relationship between two persons. The relationship can be friendly and the two parties can act as close friends or just some kind of fun friends comfortable to be around (Rajagopal, 2006). When customers come to choose between brands in the same category, customers evaluate the congruency between the personality of the brand and the personality they want to project. The use of brand personality in brand management studies helps organisations to gain customer satisfaction, loyalty, profitability (Rajagopal, 2006 as cited by Ranjbar, 2010) and overall economic advantage at the market place (Park, 2005). When customers are buying a brand which has a clarified personality in their minds, they are buying symbolic meaning associated with the brand rather than its physical product-related features. Guthrie (2007) has concluded that, brand personality can cause increase in customer preference, usage, trust, and loyalty. Brand personality can also be described as a strategic tool and a metaphor that can help brand researchers to understand people's perceptions of brand and differentiate brand identity to create brand equity (Aaker, 1996). Today, customers have deep personal relationships with brands and believe that branding is a way to strategically personify products (Power, 2008). Most researches into branding have concluded that,

customers prefer brands that match their personality and deal with important relations in social activities that give higher positions in the minds of customers (Rajagopal, 2006; and Guthrie, 2007).

Aaker and Fournier (1995) have grouped research in brand personality topic into three main areas. They are conceptual level, relationship approach, and personality measurement scales. The conceptual level considers people's perception about brands in their daily activities. The areas of the conceptual level includes brand personality levels before and after brand use; the role of brand elements in developing brand personality; effect of brand personality on organisational resources such as profit, sales, loyalty, and engagement; preferences of different brand elements; and types of advertising forms that are most effective in developing brand personality. The relationship approach deals with brand as an active member of a relationship and customers observe this activity in the process of brand behaviour. In this way, brands are viewed as an active and contributing partner in a dyadic relationship that exists between persons and brands. This approach to the study of brand treats brands as partner whose behaviours and actions generate trait inferences that collectively summarise customers' perception of brand personality. Scholars who share relationship approach believe that advertising alone cannot build brand personality but all marketing activities and strategic management decisions need to pull together. The personality measurement scale also deals with the way brand is applied in line with core factors that identify personality. So the personality meaning of a brand includes the specific set of meanings that describe the 'inner' characteristics of a brand. These 'inner' characteristics are constructed by customers based on behaviours exhibited by personified brands (Aaker, 1995). A key uniqueness to brand can be to strengthened relationship with customers instead of focusing on advertising profiles and packaging. Customers' choice between brands in the same category is largely determined by the congruency between the personality of the brand and the personality customers want to project (De Chernatony, 1998). The relationship between brands and customers has two sides that both parties have roles to play. Customers' role in this relationship can be rooted from self-concept theories where brand use affects people. This notion can be more flexible in brand identity because the focus is on customer behaviour and perception towards brand. The other role focuses on the static personality in the market for all persons that can also be understood through personality theories like 'Big Five'. In all, customers hold favourable attitudes towards brands and are most likely to purchase brands that match their own personality. Therefore, brand personality can be considered as a metaphor like a person-as-a-computer in psychology (Aaker, 1995).

Brand personality is helpful to consumers, marketing practitioners and researchers alike as it creates procedure to differentiate among various brands and is a key determinant for consumer purchase intention (Bruwer & Buller, 2005). In most cases, when customers face difficulties to evaluate product's features, they usually trust in brand personality. Aaker (1997) has emphasised that brand personality is a set of human characteristics which consumers assign to brands. She proposed a five-dimensional model for brand personality namely sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. This model is regarded as one of the most widely used

instruments for measuring brand personality in different industries. According to Aaker, brand sincerity is about integrity and reality of a brand; brand excitement emphasised how exciting and exploratory a brand stand; brand sophistication also looks at brand's attraction and elegance; and brand ruggedness means how resistance and power of a brand. Mengxia (2007) found out that brand personality affects customer preferences, loyalty and purchase intention. He used a comparative approach using 230 Chinese customers' ideas about two brands (Nike and Sony) and demonstrated that brand personality has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention. Some recent research works have confirmed the significant effect of brand personality on customers' purchase intention (Wang, Yang & Liu, 2009; Akin, 2011; Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gomez, 2015). Akin (2011) studied Cell Phone Markets and found that brand personality dimensions of competence, excitement, traditionalism and masculinity have significant and direct effects on customers' behavioural intention, and the effects of competence and excitement are more than the other two dimensions. The findings of Toldos-Romero and Orozco-Gomez (2015) on 400 undergraduate students in Mexico revealed that brand personality and its dimensions are significant predictors for purchase intention, and brand personality effect is higher among the users of brands compared to the non-users.

Some researchers including Fennis (2007) have used brand personality scale model to ascertain the effect of brand personality on customers. The outcome of the investigations have concluded that some brand personality scale dimensions like sincerity can affect self-perceptions of agreeableness, and ruggedness dimension influences human character of extroversion, exciting evokes hedonism, and competent affects sophistication. By comparing brand personality structures across cultures, values and needs of customers, it is assumed that brand personality is perceived differently among customers. Aaker et al. (2001) have noted that, although utilitarian attributes of commercial brands tend to exhibit limited variability in meaning and importance across cultures, the symbolic and value-expressive functions associated with a brand tend to vary to some degree because of the variation of individuals' needs, self-views and socialization.

On the bases of the argument put forward so far, the study therefore hypothesized that brand personality affects customer's purchase intention and brand engagement.

H₁: Brand personality positively and significantly affects student's enrolment intention.

H₂: Brand Personality positively and significantly affects student's brand engagement.

2.2 BRAND ENGAGEMENT

Some customers just buy while others connect to the total value of organisations. Those who connect to the value proposition cannot imagine life without brands. These customers love the brand value and appreciate it the more when the organisations reciprocate the love to such customers. In today's marketing practice, marketers are interested to know more about how their brands connected to customers and what the customers' values are. Glenser (2013) has argued that, the present marketing practice needs a long-term, holistic measure

of customers' total brand experience and their level of engagement which they termed as Return on Experience and Engagement (REE). Brand engagement involves the actions the customer takes such as visiting website, posting an online review, opening a marketing email, referring the brand to relations, and downloading marketing information. These activities are not one-off actions to establish brand engagement. The engagement encounter fosters long term loyalty which promotes purchase intentions. One thing known to the marketing literature is that, true customer engagement is emotional, not transactional. Gensler (2013) argued that purchases goes up when there is emotion behind them, and they are more likely to be repeated when customers are engaged with a brand. Customers with high emotions are truly engaged with their favourite brands which ultimately help them to satisfy their inherent human desires and accustom to a brand. This study therefore hypothesized that higher level of brand engagement play a mediating role in between brand personality and enrolment intention;

H₃: Brand engagement mediates the relationship between brand personality and enrolment intention

Researchers have noted that it is very important to take a closer look at how consumers develop engagement with brands and how they form communities of brand in their own personal lives (Esch et al., 2006) that facilitates their purchase intentions. For the purchase intentions, customers consider brands personality characteristics and the level of brand engagement. Kakkos et al (2015) reviewed on private brand labels in three supermarket chains provided preliminary evidence on various drivers of consumers' purchase intention which included brand awareness, perceived value, quality and risk while controlling for age, household size and income effects. Intentions to purchase private labels are found to be influenced by perceptions of risk, value for money, social value and brand awareness. These factors can be correlated to brand engagement and brand personality. Kumar and Pansari (2016) have observed that the influence of employee engagement on customer engagement is significant and moderated by employee empowerment, type of firm, and nature of industry. The authors have concluded that customer engagement and employee engagement positively influence firm performance. It can be inferred from these findings that, brand engagement affects customers' intention to purchase which in this case intention to enrolment has been the focus of this study. This study therefore hypothesized that;

H₄: Brand engagement positively and significantly affects student's intention to enrolment.

2.3 PURCHASE INTENTION

Purchase intention refers to the likelihood that customers purchase a particular brand from a class of products (Crosno, Freling and Skinner 2009). Fishbin and Ajizen (1975) have explained that the sole predictor of a person's behaviour is the measure of his or her intention to do that behaviour. In another way, purchase intention is the probability of customers to purchase a specific product in the future. These meant that purchase intention is the extent to which a customer purchases a particular product, at the same time and decline to move to other

products (Yoo, Donthu and Lee 2000). Purchase intentions are personal actions relating to the purchase of a brand (Bagozzi et al. 1979; Ostrom 1969). Intentions are distinct from attitudes. Attitudes are summary evaluations, but intentions represent customer's motivation in the sense of his or her conscious plan to bring to bear an effort to carry out the behaviour (Eagly and Chaiken 1993). Customers' purchase intention is the conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand. Most past studies have indicated that the link between attitude toward a brand and behaviour is not always clear. In some cases, attitudes have a direct effect on behaviours (Bagozzi & Warshaw 1992; Bagozzi & Yi 1988) but in others they do not (Bagozzi, 1992).

In this paper, our concern is brand attitude-behavioral intention to pursue further studies in future. The attitude threshold needed for a subject to indicate a favourable intent should be much lower than the threshold needed for behaviour. Customer purchase intention has wider scope of assumption than consumer behaviours that affect purchase actions (Ajzen and Driver, 1992; Pierre et al., 2005; Schlosser et al., 2006). It is interesting to note that brand utilization has a significance relationship with customer purchase (Dubois and Paternault, 1995; Yoo and Lee, 2009; Zeithaml, 1988). Customer intention towards a branded product is largely depended on the brand attributes and customer self attributes (Porter, 1974). Brands that are associated with customer personality leads to customer preference, frequent usage, positive feeling confidence, and relieve into the mind of the customer (Biel, 1993). Brand personality influences customers' purchase decision making process and the purchase intention (Aaker, 1997). Customers' attention toward brands can be defined subjectively and objectively. The objective form indicates the brands' market share, promotional cost, and strength of distribution system (Reddy et al., 1994) while the subjective form represents the brand image, brand association, brand awareness, brand preference and brand engagement (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Smith and Park, 1992). Brand awareness is a component of brand image. Brand image is also part of brand engagement which has significant effect on customers' purchase intention (Aaker and Keller, 1990 Smith and Park, 1992). Brand awareness refers to the strength of a brand's presence in consumers' minds and it is an important component of brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Aaker (1991) suggested that brand associations could provide value to the customer by providing a reason for customers to buy the brand and by creating positive attitudes and feelings among customers.

Kotler (2003) proposes that individual attitudes and unpredictable situations also influence purchase intention. Individual attitudes include personal preferences to others and obedience to other expectation and unpredictable situations. These individual attitudes signify that customers can change purchase intention when the situation demand so. Customer purchase intention is considered as a subjective inclination toward a product and can be an important index to predict customer behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Zeithaml (1988) uses possible to buy intended to buy and considered to buy as measurement items to measure purchase intention. Customers' buying decision is very complex as purchase intention is related with customers' 'self' and brand engagement. Purchase intention is an important key point for customers and organisations when evaluating brand value

(Keller, 2001). Ghosh (1990) has stated that purchase intention is an effective tool to use in predicting purchasing process. Once the customer decides to purchase product from a particular organisation, he or she is mostly driven by intentions. However, purchase intentions can also be distorted by the influence of price, quality perception, and value perception, (Zeithaml, 1988; and Grewal et al, (1998) as well as brand engagement. In addition, customers can also be interrupted by internal impulse and external environment during purchasing process. Notwithstanding, customers are driven by their physiological motivation of intentions that stimulates their response at point of sale to fulfill their need (Kim and Jin, 2001). It is interesting to note that customer experiences are easy to share with others and this influence customer decision-making process (Jarvala, 1998).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND MEASUREMENT OF CONSTRUCT

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adapted Aaker's brand personality scale to examine the brand personality of Christian Service University College in Ghana. The explanatory research design aimed at establishing causal relationship between the brand personality, brand engagement and purchase intention was used. The population of the study comprised of students from Christian Service University College (CSUC), a private university in Ghana precisely Kumasi; the second largest city in Ghana. Given the total population of 1400 (CSUC Admissions Office, 2015) and using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size from a given population, the sample size for this study was set at 302. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were adopted in selecting respondents. Structural Equation Model (SEM) was used in estimating the relationships among the variables. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used in purifying the variables and problematic variables were removed.

3.2 MEASUREMENT OF CONSTRUCT

The aforementioned constructs: Aaker's Brand Personality scale (1997), Keller's Brand Engagement (2003) and students' future enrolment intentions in Private Universities were each measured on seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (excellent or very well) to 7 (very weak or not at all). Each construct was purified to assess the constructs' suitability in Private University students' context (Lavee, 1988; Byrne, 2001). The study also verified the variables in the Brand Personality and brand engagement scales to determine their relationship with students' future enrolment intentions using structural equation model. The research data was collected by the use of structured questionnaire made up of three sections. The section A is on brand personality adapted from Aaker's brand personality measurement scale. The measurement scale contains five dimensions, namely sincerity, excitement, competence, sophisticated and ruggedness. The sincerity dimension has eleven (11) items, excitement has eleven (11) items, competence has nine (9) items, sophisticated has six (6) items, and ruggedness has five (5) items. The section B is on students' brand engagement and used an adapted measurement scale developed by Keller (2003). The measurement scale has six (6) items. The section C is on

students' intention to further studies in Private Universities with six (6) items. All the items in the three (3) sections were presented as statements on a questionnaire with rating scales ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). The drafted questionnaire were put to test with 30 students and were requested to give their opinion on the state of the questions in the area of clarity, omissions and errors. The feedbacks received were on the number of questions involved which translates to more time needed for completion, and clarity of some items. The number of questions could not be reduced due to the research scope but action was taken on the clarity of the questions. Subsequently, the revised questions were sent to three faculty members whose specialties are in brand management.

4. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The first step was to enter the data into Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) version 20.0 and checked for incorrect entries and missing data. CFA was used to purify the measurement scales, evaluate their internal consistency, and assess their discriminant validity. The objective was to derive a relatively rich and manageable number of factors that capture as much information as possible in the observed variables (Leech et al, 2011). The alpha coefficients of higher than 0.7 (Hair et al, 2010), and coefficient of determination values which are greater than 0.8 indicated that the research. Therefore, it can be concluded that the items measured the variables of observation correctly (Tinsley & Brown, 2000). The Cronbach alpha coefficient showing the internal consistencies of the variables are also proved accepted. The table 1 below shows the number of items retained and their fitness values after the CFA test was conducted.

Table 1: Items and Fit Indices

SN	Dimension/Construct	Items Retained	Chi ² Value	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
1	Excitement	5	0.240	0.037	0.996	0.992	0.016
2	Sincerity	4	0.359	0.010	1.000	0.999	0.016
3	Competence	4	0.135	0.063	0.996	0.987	0.014
4	Sophisticated	4	0.191	0.051	0.997	0.992	0.014
5	Ruggedness	4	0.559	0.000	1.000	1.000	0.009
6	Brand Engagement	4	0.300	0.029	0.999	0.997	0.012
7	Purchase Intention	4	0.145	0.061	0.996	0.987	0.013

Notes: χ^2 =Chi-square d.f.=Degree of freedom; $\chi^2/d.f$ = normed Chi-square; RMSEA=Root mean standard error of approximation; CFI=Comparative fit index; SRMR=Standardized mean square residual; TLI=Tucker Lewis Index

Following concerns regarding research that deploys self-report instruments such as questionnaires as used in this study as a possible source of bias, it became expedient for the researchers to assess the presence of Common Method Bias (CMB) in the study (Podsakoff et al., 2003). A method-only model was estimated by linking all the measures to a single factor. Factor loading and there corresponding Average variance explained, Cronbach

alpha were presented in table 2. Construct validity is achieved hence variables are measuring what they seems to measure.

Table 2: Factor loading, AVE, Cronbach Alpha

Measures		Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Construct Validity	AVE
Excitement	Item 1	.6145659	0.8422	0.851	0.71
	Item 2	.7754212			
	Item 3	.7542253			
	Item 4	.7503381			
	Item 5	.7031203			
Sincerity	Item 1	.3240699	0.7206	0.800	0.68
	Item 2	.7852953			
	Item 3	.7598087			
	Item 4	.691038			
Competence	Item 1	.8051437	0.8612	0.876	0.76
	Item 2	.8577163			
	Item 3	.7743639			
	Item 4	.6917505			
Sophisticated	Item 1	.6958469	0.8613	0.883	0.76
	Item 2	.8774109			
	Item 3	.8312362			
	Item 4	.7108952			
Ruggedness	Item 1	.6116633	0.8067	0.885	0.72
	Item 2	.7533033			
	Item 3	.915846			
	Item 4	.5982641			
Brand Engagement	Item 1	.7306432	0.8588	0.849	0.74
	Item 2	.6930426			
	Item 3	.8303688			
	Item 4	.7569738			
Purchase Intention	Item 1	.6497268	0.8517	0.871	0.75
	Item 2	.8155672			
	Item 3	.8564341			
	Item 4	.7532964			

Cronbach alpha: alpha, Construct validity (CR), Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Highest Correlation (HC). Average Variances Extracted (AVE);

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 302 questionnaires were sent out and the total valid questionnaire received for the study was 252 representing 83.44%. Out of the remaining 50 questionnaires, 30 were not returned and 20 were also not properly completed. One of the key reasons for this shortfall is that, the period of the data collection coincided with examination revision week and most students could not give the due attention to the completion of the questionnaires. Notwithstanding, the 83.44% of a sample size is acceptable to research work of this nature (Neuman, 2005). The data was collected using personal contact approach at the University's campus and this is in line with the recommendations by Sureshchandar et al (2002) that personal contact provides detail engagement to survey.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study was conducted on a total of 252 university students studying different disciplines. 107 (42.5%) of students are studying business, 65 (25.8%) studying social sciences, 36 (14.3%) studying theology and 44 (17.5%) are studying applied sciences. The study confirms the dominance of business courses in the Ghanaian Universities. The respondents are undergraduate students studying at level 100, 200, 300 and 400. The finding have evenly distribution of various students at various stages of study (level 100, 33 students; level 200, 68 students; level 300, 99 students and level 400, 52 students). With respect to gender distribution, 127 respondents representing 50.4% are male whiles 125 representing 49.6% are female.

Stata 13 was used to undertake the regression and structural equation model analysis. The resulting regression analysis indicated that, 27.77% of future enrolment intention variance can be explained by brand personality. However, changes to brand personality can cause future enrolment intention to change by 67.29%. It can be seen from the regression analysis that, the proposed relationship between future enrolment intention and brand personality is positive and significant. The results indicated that there is statistically significant difference between future enrolment intention and brand personality (F=97.52; p=0.00). This has supported the study's hypothesis H₁. The regression analysis of brand engagement on future enrolment intention showed that, 36.45% of future enrolment intention variance can be explained by brand personality. However, changes to brand engagement can cause future enrolment intention to change by 60.78%. It can be seen from the regression analysis that, the proposed relationship between future enrolment intention and brand engagement is positive. The results indicated that there is statistically significant difference between future enrolment intention and brand engagement (F=144.94; p=0.00). This has supported the study's hypothesis H₂. Another resulting regression analysis indicated that, 33.48% of brand engagement variance can be explained by brand personality. However, changes to brand personality can cause brand engagement to change by 73.55%. It can be seen from the regression analysis that, the proposed relationship between brand engagement and brand personality is positive. The results indicated that there are statistically significant difference between brand engagement and brand personality (F=127.33; p=0.00). This has also supported the study's hypothesis H₄. The tables 3 and 4 below show the statistical information on the regression analysis:

Table 3: Summary of Regression Information on Future Enrolment Intention, Brand Engagement and Brand Personality

Constructs	Degree of Freedom	F - Value	R - Squared	Adjusted R - Squared	Significant Value
Brand Personality effects on Future Enrolment Intention	1, 250	97.52	0.2806	0.2777	0.000
Brand Personality effects on Brand Engagement	1, 250	144.94	0.3670	0.3645	0.000
Brand Engagement effects on Future Enrolment Intention	1, 250	127.33	0.3375	0.3348	0.000

Table 4: Summary of Regression Information on Future Enrolment Intention and Brand Engagement

Concepts	Coefficient Values	Standard Error	T – Value	P – Value
Future Enrolment Intention				
Brand Personality	0.6729	0.0681	9.88	0.000
Brand Engagement	0.6077	0.0505	12.04	0.000
Brand Engagement				
Brand Personality	0.7355	0.0652	11.28	0.000

As regards the relationship between future enrolment intention and brand personality dimensions, sincerity has negative relationship with future enrolment intention with no significant effect ($F=-0.4727$; $p=0.576$). This means that an improvement in sincerity reduces students' future enrolment intention but the effect is not significant for management action. On the other hand, sophisticated ($F=0.0480$; $p=0.576$), competence ($F=0.0154$; $p=0.858$) and ruggedness ($F=0.0755$; $p=0.365$) dimensions have positive relationship with future enrolment intention but with no significant effect. This also shows that improvement in these dimensions causes future enrolment intention to go up but the effect is not significant for management action. However, excitement has positive relationship with future enrolment intention with significant effect ($F=0.2521$; $p=0.002$). This also means that the positive effect excitement has on future enrolment intention is important for management action.

The relationship between brand engagement and brand personality dimensions shows important information. Sincerity ($F=0.0168$; $p=0.851$), competence ($F=0.0335$; $p=0.714$) and ruggedness ($F=0.1178$; $p=0.180$) have positive relationship with brand engagement with no significant effect. What this means is that the improvement of these dimensions causes brand engagement to increase but the changes is not significant for managerial action. On the other hand, sophisticated ($F=0.313$; $p=0.000$) and excitement ($F=0.234$; $p=0.006$) also have positive effect on brand engagement with significant effects. The meaning is that improvement in these later dimensions causes brand engagement to go up and the changes are significant for management action. The table 5 below shows the regression output of the relationship between brand personality dimensions, and future enrolment intention and brand engagement.

Table 5: Summary of Regression Information on Future Enrolment Intention and Brand Engagement, and Brand Personality Dimensions

Dimensions	Coefficient Values	Standard Error	Z – Value	P – Value
Future Enrolment Intention				
Sincerity	-0.4727	0.0846	-0.56	0.576
Sophisticated	0.0480	0.0858	0.56	0.576
Excitement	0.2521	0.0820	3.07	0.002
Competence	0.0154	0.0864	0.18	0.858
Ruggedness	0.0755	0.0833	0.91	0.365
Brand Engagement				
Sincerity	0.0168	0.0895	0.19	0.851
Sophisticated	0.3130	0.0888	3.53	0.000
Excitement	0.2340	0.0855	2.74	0.006
Competence	0.0335	0.0914	0.37	0.714
Ruggedness	0.1178	0.0978	1.34	0.180

Testing Structural Relationships using Structural Equation Model

Structural equation modeling was used to estimate parameters of the structure model to specify the relationships among future enrolment intention, brand personality and brand engagement using Stata 13. The model specifies sincerity, competence, sophisticated, excitement and ruggedness dimensions as exogenous constructs to brand personality. Other four items each was also specify as exogenous construct to future enrolment intention and brand engagement. The figure 1 below specifies the result output of the relationships among brand personality, brand engagement and future enrolment intention.

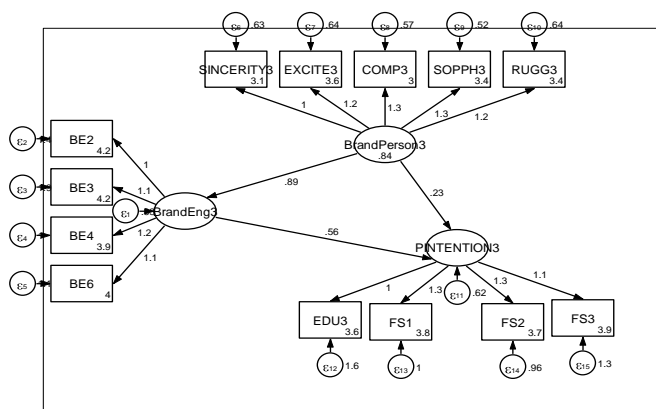


Figure 1: The Relationship among Brand Personality, Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention

The figure 1 shows that there is positive relationship between brand personality and future enrolment intention and same between brand personality and brand engagement. There is also positive relationship between brand engagement and future enrolment intention. Although there is no universally agreed standard for assessing the quality of structural equation models, the conventional approach has been to examine a basket of criteria against a set of rule-of-thumb acceptable levels. The structural equation model is expected to show a reasonably small error in relation to its complexity. RMSEA should be low (RMSEA < 0.08), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Normed Fit Index (NFI) should be high (TLI and NFI > 0.90), Standardised Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR) should be low (SRMR < 0.05), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) should be high (CFI > 0.90) (Bentler, 1990; Joreskog, 1978; Kline, 2005). In line with this conventional approach, the measurement model for purchase intention, brand personality and brand engagement exhibited good fit. The fit statistics of the relationship among brand personality, brand engagement and future enrolment intention has the following information;

Table 6: Fit Statistics

Description	Values
Chi Square	105.680
P – Values	0.000
Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation	0.053
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.977
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.971

Standard Root Mean Squared Residual	0.040
Coefficient of Determination	0.918

Given the fit statistics information, the model is fit.

Mediating role of brand engagement between brand personality and purchase intentions

The study investigated the mediating role by brand engagement on the relationship between brand personality dimensions and future enrolment intention. The figure 2 below shows the mediating effect of brand personality dimensions and future enrolment intention.

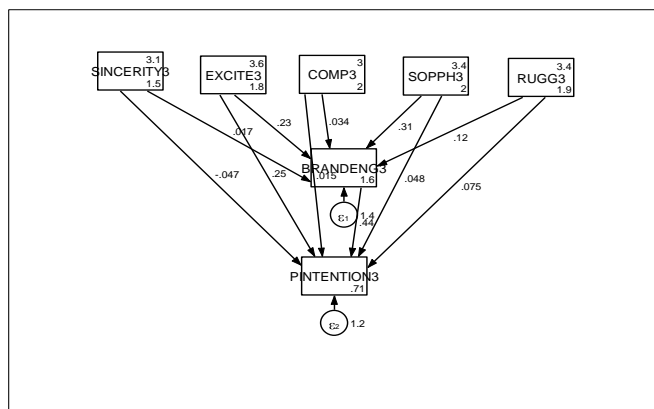


Figure 2: Mediating effect of Brand Engagement between Brand Personality Dimensions and Purchase Intention

The resulting output as showed in the figure 2 has indicated the brand engagement mediating effect between brand personality dimensions and future enrolment intention. The study investigated the direct, indirect and total effects of brand personality on future enrolment intention. As regards the individual brand personality dimensions, the direct effect of sincerity dimension on future enrolment intention is not significant ($Z=-0.56$; $p=0.576$), the indirect effect is not significant ($Z=0.19$; $p=0.851$), and the total effect is also not significant ($Z=-0.43$; $P=0.668$). This means that brand engagement does not mediate sincerity and future enrolment intention. As regards sophisticated dimension, the direct effect is not significant ($Z=0.56$; $P=0.576$) and the indirect effect ($Z=3.18$; $P=0.001$) and total effects ($Z=3.53$; $P=0.000$) are also significant. This also means that brand engagement fully mediate the relationship between sophisticated dimension and future enrolment intension. The resulting output on excitement dimension showed that, the direct effect ($Z=3.07$; $p=0.002$), indirect effect ($Z=2.56$; $p=0.010$) and total effect ($Z=3.98$; $p=0.000$) are significant. This means that brand engagement partially mediates between excitement and purchase intention. The competence dimension direct effect ($Z=0.18$; $p=0.858$), indirect effect ($Z=0.37$; $p=0.714$) and total effect ($Z=0.37$; $p=0.714$) are not significant. This also shows no mediation of brand engagement between competence and purchase intention. Finally ruggedness direct effect ($Z=0.91$; $p=0.365$), indirect effect ($Z=1.32$; $p=0.187$), and total effect ($Z=1.39$; $p=0.165$) are not significant. This also shows no mediating effect of brand engagement on purchase intention. The table 7 below

gives summary of values on the mediating effect between brand personality dimensions and future enrolment intention.

Table 7: Brand Engagement Mediating Effect on Brand Personality Dimensions and Purchase Intention Relationship

Dimension	Brand Engagement Mediating Effect Values						Comment
	Direct Effect		Indirect Effect		Total Effect		
	Z-Value	P-Value	Z Value	P-Value	Z- Value	P-Value	
Sincerity	-0.56	0.576	0.19	0.851	-0.43	0.668	No Mediation
Sophisticated	0.56	0.576	3.18	0.001	2.00	0.045	Full Mediation
Excitement	3.07	0.002	2.56	0.010	3.98	0.000	Partial Mediation
Competence	0.18	0.858	0.37	0.714	0.32	0.752	No Mediation
Ruggedness	0.91	0.365	1.32	0.187	1.39	0.165	No Mediation

The recent brand literature has focused on attributing the human characteristics to brands which is considered as brand personality. The result of the first hypothesis testing has showed that brand personality has a positive effect on the students' future enrolment intentions. This means that positive brand personality of product leads to the increase of students' future enrolment intention. This result is in accordance with the results of the other studies in this field (Bouhleb et al., 2011; Akin, 2011; Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gomez, 2015). According to the results of Figure 1 of the effective dimensions of brand personality on students' future enrolment intention, competence and sophisticated have the highest factor loading. This means that students trust in the Private University's brand and consider it as educational, hardworking, secure, confident, upper class, attractive, and good looking. Hence, Private Universities' investment on these dimensions could obtain more distinction in the minds of students. Besides, this study seeks to examine the effect of brand engagement on students' future enrolment intention which is positive effect. This means that if Private Universities engage students, it can enhance students' intention to enroll in the future. Among the effective items that measure brand engagement, 'students' feeling proud to have others know that they attend Private University' is reported as the most important component of brand engagement, which is an indicative of the engagement of the majority of students to Private University brand, and they probably would choose Private Universities brand when they need educational services. The outcomes of these findings are in line with the results of Chang and Liu (2009) and Irshad (2012) researches.

Moreover, one of the research aims was to investigate the mediating role of brand engagement. The research results showed that brand engagement has a positive mediating role between sophisticated dimension and students' future enrolment intention. This means that, students must be engaged before the brand personality character of sophistication can improve students' future enrolment intentions. In addition, brand engagement positively and partially mediates excitement dimension and students' future enrolment intentions. This also means that with or without brand engagement, the excitement character of Private University brand can improve students' future enrolment intentions. As regards sincerity, competence and ruggedness dimensions, brand

engagement does not mediate their effect on students' future enrolment intentions. This means that, students need not be engaged before sincerity, competence and ruggedness character affect their future enrolment intentions.

5.2 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study offer important implications for the development of students' future enrolment intentions into Private Universities. According to the results of this study, the researchers suggest to managers of Private Universities to strengthen different aspects of their brand personality based on the five personality characteristics. This is true because students choose the brands that are closest to their characters. Therefore, emphasizing on brand personality characteristics could be a mechanism for differentiation and also to improve brand engagement to increase the likelihood to enroll in Private Universities when it becomes difficult for students to choose between brands. The Private Universities managers who tend to focus on the five dimensions of brand personality especially the competence and sophisticated which have the most loading factors will achieve a perfect brand personality likely to improve students' future enrolment intentions. This can be achieved by working hard, ensure security, quality teaching, enhance support services, and attractive service environment.

In addition, brand personality can be formed through variety of ways such as marketing communications, customised services and empowering students to be good ambassadors. Therefore, the researchers recommend to Private University managers to develop effective and efficient methods of communication and public relations to achieve an appropriate brand personality. Because the creation of proper and strong brand personality can increase the students' future enrolment intentions leading to healthy corporate financial life. Moreover, Private University managers should consider the brand personality resources to build a positive character of their brand, make a differentiation in comparison to the other brands in the students' minds and being impressive in dimensions of brand engagement. Since one of the immediate resources of brand personality is faculty members, their physical appearance, social and professional behaviour in relation to students should be considered along with the brand personality and collectively must be presented to students to gain their engagement for future enrolment.

5.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The area covered by this study is limited to Christian Service University College; it is probable that the results could not be generalized to the other Private Universities, because the challenges and factors affecting students' future enrolment intention may vary. This suggests that future research could be expanded to other Universities. Similarly, other brand personality models can be used in future studies to improve insight into students' future enrolment intentions. Moreover, we suggest future research to measure the present research model on other brands to be able to compare their results, and determine the differences.

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