

Analyzing Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) of Urdaneta City University

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Abstract- This study evaluated Urdaneta City University's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) in the contexts of brand resonance, brand identity, brand meaning, and brand responsiveness. It specifically sought to ascertain the degree of perceived CBBE via Keller's hierarchical brand equity creation framework. Survey responses from students and alumni served as the main stakeholders in this descriptive-quantitative study design. A standardized Likert-scale instrument was used to gather data, and weighted mean analysis was used to evaluate the degree of brand equity in each dimension. The results indicated that the university has a moderately high degree of psychological attachment and sense of community in brand resonance, favorable functional and symbolic brand associations in brand meaning, positive brand judgments and affective responses in brand response, and high levels of brand salience and cognitive awareness in terms of brand identity. Variations across variables, however, point to unequal development in behavioral loyalty, experiential engagement, and top-of-mind memory, suggesting a partial advancement toward complete brand equity maturity. In essence, the university shows a solid foundational CBBE structure with positive cognitive and affective evaluations, but it has deficiencies in higher-order dimensions like active loyalty, conative engagement, and persistent brand advocacy, indicating the need for additional relational brand equity consolidation.

Index Terms- Brand Identity, Brand Meaning, Brand Resonance, Brand Responsiveness, Conative Engagement, Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE)

I. INTRODUCTION

Customer-based brand equity (CBBE) is the differential impact of brand knowledge on consumer reaction to a brand by which this knowledge is organized into four hierarchical dimensions: brand identity, brand meaning, brand response, and brand resonance. CBBE is a term used in higher education to describe how stakeholders, alumni, and students assess a university cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally based on cumulative experiences,

perceptions, and connections. Because university branding is intrinsically relational and experiential, as opposed to commercial branding, CBBE is an essential paradigm for comprehending stakeholder loyalty, competitiveness, and institutional reputation in an increasingly globalized educational setting.

A robust university CBBE improves student recruitment, perceived academic excellence, institutional trust, and alumni advocacy, according to Rana (2026), since brand equity grows via consistent exposure, significant academic experiences, and emotional identification. The four components of Keller's model function as a sequential hierarchy: brand resonance denotes strong psychological connection and behavioral commitment, brand identity increases awareness, brand meaning creates associations, and brand reaction expresses opinions and emotions. Effective CBBE institutions consistently achieve greater levels of satisfaction, stronger institutional preference, and sustained involvement among stakeholders (De Chavez, et al., 2020; Stukalina and Pavlyuk, 2021; and Perera, et al., 2023)

Due to challenges from economic integration and growing rivalry among higher education institutions, CBBE has grown in importance in the Philippine environment. Although many institutions exhibit sufficient levels of brand identity and perceived excellence, research shows that deeper brand reaction and brand resonance are consistently lacking, especially when it comes to encouraging sustained emotional commitment and active stakeholder participation. Studies are still scarce and dispersed in provincial contexts involving Pangasinan, where Urdaneta City University is situated. These studies frequently concentrate on student satisfaction or institutional image rather than a whole CBBE-based assessment including all four dimensions.

For numerous stakeholders, this study is therefore important. It offers factual support for enhancing stakeholder involvement, quality assurance, and strategic branding for university administrators. It provides information about students' and alumni's emotional and cognitive alignment with the educational institution. Crucially, the results offer the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) useful evidence-based inputs for assessing institutional success beyond conventional academic criteria, especially with regard to stakeholder perception, reputational capital, and service quality outcomes. This may help CHED develop policies that foster academic excellence as well as strong institutional branding and global competitiveness in Philippine higher education, benchmark institutional competitiveness, and improve quality assurance procedures.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed quantitative descriptive research design. To assure statistical adequacy and population representativeness, the Raosoft online sample size calculator was used to establish the total sample size of 388, which included first through fourth year students for the Academic Year 2025–2026. Respondents were assigned according to their respective population shares using proportionate or ratio sampling to provide equitable representation across year levels. The weighted mean was used to ascertain respondents' opinions on UCU's brand equity in terms of brand identity, brand meaning, brand response, and brand resonance. A four-point Likert scale was utilized to evaluate the data in order to characterize the degree of agreement for each dimension under the Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model. This method guaranteed balanced representation, rigorous sampling, and statistically supported assessment of students' opinions of institutional brand equity.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Perceived Customer-Based Brand Equity of Urdaneta City University in Terms of Brand Identity

Table 1: Level of Perceived Customer-Based Brand Equity of Urdaneta City University in Terms of Brand Identity

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I am familiar with UCU as an institution.	3.30	Strongly Agree
2. I can easily recognize the official logo and visual symbols of UCU.	3.52	Strongly Agree
3. I can confidently describe UCU to others.	3.28	Strongly Agree
4. I can easily recall UCU when I think of higher education institutions.	3.22	Agree
5. I am aware of the programs and services offered by UCU.	3.23	Agree
6. I frequently encounter information about UCU through school-related events or announcements.	3.19	Agree
7. I am aware of UCU's achievements and recognitions.	3.21	Agree
8. The university has a strong presence on social media and promotions.	3.20	Agree
9. The university's vision, mission, goals, and objectives (VMGO) are known to students.	3.30	Strongly Agree
10. UCU is one of the first universities	3.12	Agree

that comes to mind when choosing a school in Pangasinan.

Average Weighted Mean	3.26	Strongly Agree
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The average weighted mean of 3.26 (Strongly Agree) indicates that Urdaneta City University exhibits a very high level of brand identity. This implies that students have a solid awareness of and familiarity with the university, suggesting that the institution has effectively integrated itself into the stakeholders' cognitive environment. This level is associated with great brand salience in the Kevin Lane Keller framework, especially during the recognition stage. Though identity is well-formed, a closer examination of certain markers shows that it is asymmetrically developed, with strengths centered in institutional and visual familiarity and weaker performance in memory and exposure.

Recognition of the university's official logo and visual symbols, which received the highest rating (WM = 3.52), indicates a very successful visual identity system. This implies that UCU has effectively developed unique and memorable brand components that enable instant recognition. According to Gyori et al. (2017), visual cues including logos are fundamental to brand understanding since they greatly improve brand encoding and retrieval. In a similar vein, students not only know the brand but also comprehend its fundamental identity and institutional direction, according to the second-highest measure, familiarity with the university as an institution and understanding of its VMGO (WM = 3.30). Having a clear institutional mission improves internal brand alignment and increases cognitive association (Osei, et al., 2026; Perera, 2020, Roskosa and Stukalina, 2022; Stukalina and Pavlyuk, 2021).

Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator, UCU being among the first colleges that spring to mind (WM = 3.12), indicates a deficiency in top-of-mind awareness, a crucial element of brand recall. The university is not constantly given priority when making decisions, despite its widespread renown. To

establish a position in the consumer's evoked set, top-of-mind awareness necessitates considerable distinction and frequent exposure (Tammubua, 2021). This disparity is further supported by the second-lowest indicator, the frequency of coming across information about UCU (WM = 3.19), which suggests inadequate brand reinforcement and visibility across communication channels. Even well-known companies find it difficult to attain recall dominance without regular exposure.

The findings show that UCU's brand identity is strategically under-reinforced yet visually and cognitively established. The institution has been successful in making itself identifiable and comprehensible, but in order to go from familiarity to mental availability and preference in students' decision-making processes, it needs to improve ongoing engagement, promotional visibility, and competitive distinction

Table II: Level of Perceived Customer-Based Brand Equity of Urdaneta City University in Terms of Brand Meaning

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The faculty members and admin staff are knowledgeable and well-trained.	3.20	Agree
2. The university has a positive image in the local community.	3.09	Agree
3. The tuition and fees are reasonable for the education provided.	3.15	Agree
4. The university provides quality academic programs.	3.18	Agree
5. The university facilities support effective learning.	3.15	Agree
6. The university is committed to continuous	3.24	Agree

improvement.				positive, the university's brand positioning still has opportunity for improvement and distinction.
7. The university encourages students to participate in academic and extracurricular activities.	3.28	Strongly Agree		The highest-rated factor, "the university reflects the core values of integrity, competence, teamwork, and transcendence" (3.29, Strongly Agree), emphasizes that UCU's value-driven institutional identity is its most prominent brand association. This implies that stakeholders have a strong affinity for the university's fundamental values, which form the basis of credibility and trust. According to the study of Garkavenko (2025) on higher education branding, institutional principles that are regularly and clearly expressed greatly improve brand authenticity and emotional connection, which in turn strengthens total brand equity. The second-highest statement, "the university encourages students to participate in academic and extracurricular activities" (3.28, Strongly Agree), highlights UCU's prowess in fostering comprehensive student involvement. This suggests that the institution is perceived as promoting both academic success and well-rounded development, which is a factor that is commonly acknowledged in current research as a driver of favorable brand connections and student satisfaction.
8. The academic programs of UCU prepare students for real-world professional demands.	3.19	Agree		
9. The university reflects a culture of professionalism and integrity.	3.23	Agree		
10. The university reflects the core values of integrity, competence, team work, and transcendence which serve as the foundation of its academic and institutional culture.	3.29	Strongly Agree		
Average Weighted Mean	3.19	Agree		

The average weighted mean of 3.19 (Agree) shows that Urdaneta City University's (UCU) Level of Perceived Customer-Based Brand Equity in terms of brand meaning is generally satisfactory. This indicates that respondents believe the university has legitimate and pertinent brand connections based on both symbolic meaning (such as values, culture, and institutional identity) and functional performance (such as competent professors, suitable facilities, and high-quality instruction). This degree of agreement suggests that UCU has developed a somewhat strong brand meaning from the standpoint of customer-based brand equity (CBBE), where stakeholders acknowledge its ability to provide educational value while simultaneously representing institutional ideals. The lack of a "Strongly Agree" overall grade, however, suggests that although opinions are

However, the indicator with the lowest rating, "the university has a positive image in the local community" (3.09, Agree), indicates that UCU's external brand reputation is relatively weaker. This suggests that the university's reputation outside of its internal stakeholders may not be as well-established or communicated, even though it is still positive. The study by Kirana and Wulansari (2026) shows that stakeholder perception and community image are important aspects of brand meaning that affect institutional appeal and long-term viability. The second-lowest rating, "the tuition and fees are reasonable for the education provided" (3.15, Agree; tied with facilities), indicates a somewhat mild opinion of value for money. This suggests that although respondents recognize the value of education, there can be some reluctance concerning how well perceived advantages and expenses line up. Perceived affordability and cost-value balance have massive influence on brand equity, especially in higher education where money is a major deciding factor. All things considered, UCU has a strong

internal brand meaning rooted in ideals and student involvement, however, focused initiatives to improve its outward image and perceived economic worth could further strengthen the entirety of its brand equity.

Table III: Level of Perceived Customer-Based Brand Equity of Urdaneta City University in Terms of Brand Response

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I believe that enrolling in UCU was a wise decision.	3.24	Agree
2. I am satisfied with my learning experience at UCU.	3.18	Agree
3. I feel respected and valued as a student of UCU.	3.17	Agree
4. I trust UCU to support my academic needs.	3.21	Agree
5. I feel confident recommending UCU to other people.	3.14	Agree
6. I believe the university maintains fair policies for students.	3.04	Agree
7. My experiences at UCU influence my perception of the university positively.	3.12	Agree
8. The university meets my expectations as a student.	3.03	Agree
9. The university handles student concerns appropriately.	3.01	Agree
10. The university gives me a positive overall impression.	3.04	Agree
Average Weighted	3.12	Agree

Mean

An average weighted mean of 3.12 (Agree) indicates that Urdaneta City University (UCU) has a generally positive but measured amount of customer-based brand equity in terms of brand responses. This implies that although students have positive opinions and feelings about the school, these reactions are still somewhat anchored rather than fully assimilated. According to O'Brien Caceres and Arana Barbier (2025), brand responses include both affective reactions (feelings) and cognitive evaluations (judgments). As a result, the results show that UCU has been successful in building baseline trust, satisfaction, and approval, however, has not yet fully elevated these into strong advocacy or emotional attachment. To enable satisfaction into loyalty and brand resonance, institutions operating at this level must strategically improve experiential quality, according to recent study on higher education (Balderaz and Campos, 2020).

The areas where UCU's brand responses are most solidly based can be found by closely examining the highest-rated metrics. The statement "I think that enrolling in UCU was a wise decision" (3.24, Agree) demonstrates a strong post-choice validation, showing that students justify their enrollment as sensible and advantageous. This is important since Rana (2026) has shown a strong correlation between choice affirmation and lower cognitive dissonance as well as higher retention intentions. "I trust UCU to support my academic needs" (3.21, Agree), which emphasizes the school's dependability and trustworthiness in carrying out its primary academic mission, complements this. According to Gupta, et al. (2024), trust is a crucial precondition for greater engagement and sustained institutional loyalty. In this context, trust functions as a stabilizing element in brand perception. When taken as a whole, these key indications imply that students view UCU's brand as trustworthy and justified, grounding its power in logical assurance rather than just sentimental appeal.

The indications with the lowest ratings, on the other hand, offer a more complex perspective on underlying vulnerabilities. The item "The university handles student concerns appropriately" (3.01, Agree)

indicates a relatively lower view of institutional responsiveness, suggesting that although processes may be in place, students may not be totally satisfied by their efficacy or visibility. This is especially significant because Perera, et al. (2022) highlight how important feedback systems and service responsiveness are in influencing students' overall emotional perceptions of an educational institution.

In a similar vein, "The university meets my expectations as a student" (3.03, Agree) implies a threshold-level fulfillment of expectations, when experiences are sufficient but do not continuously surpass students' expectations. This is consistent with the study of Husain (2025) that contends that higher education's brand strength is increasingly dependent on its capacity to not only meet but also exceed expectations, leading to greater affective ties and advocacy behaviors.

All things considered, UCU has a capable and reliable brand response profile; yet, strengthening its total brand equity would need moving toward a more responsive, student-centered, and expectation-exceeding environment.

Table IV: Level of Perceived Customer-Based Brand Equity of Urdaneta City University in Terms of Brand Resonance

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I enjoy being part of the UCU community.	3.22	Agree
2. I am willing to participate in university activities and events.	3.12	Agree
3. I would encourage others to enroll in UCU.	3.21	Agree
4. I feel proud to say that I study at UCU.	3.25	Agree
5. I am proud to be associated with UCU	3.22	Agree

even outside the campus.

6. I would continue to support UCU even after graduation.	3.20	Agree
7. I value the relationships I build within the UCU community.	3.26	Strongly Agree
8. I feel proud whenever UCU receives recognition or achievements.	3.35	Agree
9. I will defend UCU if others speak negatively about it.	3.19	Agree
10. The university has contributed to my personal growth.	3.25	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.23	Agree

With an overall weighted mean of 3.23 (Agree), Urdaneta City University's brand resonance results show a somewhat high degree of customer-brand relational depth. The highest-order construct in Kevin Lane Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) framework is brand resonance, which includes behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, feeling of community, and active involvement. The findings imply that although the degree of resonance varies across its component dimensions, students generally show a positive psychological brand relationship.

Pride in institutional accomplishments (WM = 3.35), the strongest indicator, shows significant affective affiliation and self-congruity, where students integrate institutional success as a component of their own self-concept. This suggests that institutional recognition functions as a prominent identity-enhancing stimulus and shows the existence of emotional brand attachment and evaluative

alignment. Because it enhances the psychological connection between the person and the organization, this kind of affective congruence is a crucial precondition for deep-level brand resonance.

A strong sense of community (SOC), which is a fundamental structural component of brand resonance, is reflected in the second-highest indicator, valuing interpersonal interactions within the university community (WM = 3.26, Strongly Agree). This implies that students encounter social integration and relational embeddedness in the educational setting. From the standpoint of branding, this suggests the existence of social capital formation, in which interpersonal networks strengthen long-term relational stability toward the brand and institutional commitment.

On the other hand, the lowest measure, readiness to take part in university events and activities (WM = 3.12), indicates comparatively low conative loyalty and behavioral involvement. This implies that there is a gap in the behavioral activation of brand attachment, even while attitudinal and emotional components are present and do not always convert into active engagement in brand-related or institutional activities.

In a similar vein, the second-lowest indicator, desire to defend the organization against unfavorable opinions (WM = 3.19), only shows a mild inclination toward brand advocacy and attitudinal loyalty. This suggests a restricted level of active loyalty, in which brand advocates behave in a protective or promotional manner. This indicates that resonance has not reached the level of sustained behavioral advocacy and engagement intensity in Keller's hierarchy.

The results show that UCU has developed strong relational and affective aspects of brand resonance. However, to reach full-scale resonance maturity, behavioral loyalty, participatory engagement, and advocacy-oriented brand citizenship conduct must be further strengthened.

IV. CONCLUSION

Results show a generally strong but hierarchically uneven brand equity structure across the four CBBE dimensions: brand identity, brand meaning, brand response, and brand resonance. Although top-of-mind memory and evoked set positioning are still relatively limited, brand identification exhibits significant brand salience and cognitive recognition, especially through strong visual encoding and institutional familiarity. Good functional and symbolic brand associations are reflected in brand meaning, indicating good views of institutional credibility and quality. Brand reaction reflects favorable assessments of perceived quality and institutional performance, as well as generally satisfactory brand judgments and affective responses. Although readily apparent brand resonance is defined by a moderate sense of community and psychological brand attachment, but relatively lower levels of behavioral loyalty, conative engagement, and brand advocacy propensity. Overall, the findings point to a partially developed but structurally coherent CBBE hierarchy, with UCU having a solid base in brand awareness and evaluative perceptions but gradually losing intensity as brand relationships move toward deeper levels of active loyalty and behavioral engagement.

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