Corporate Image Management and the Performance of United Bank for Africa Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the relationship between corporate image management and the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study investigated the relationship between corporate identity and performance, as well as the relationship between corporate communication and performance. A survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 111 employees of the bank. A sample size of 87 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) sampling formula and was increased to 95 respondents to account for possible non-response and incomplete questionnaires. A total of 87 valid questionnaires were retrieved, representing a 91.6% response rate, and were used for the analysis. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that corporate identity and corporate communication each had a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with organizational performance. The study concluded that effective corporate image management, through a strong corporate identity and effective corporate communication, significantly enhances organizational performance. It was recommended that the management of the bank should strengthen its corporate identity by maintaining a distinctive and consistent corporate brand, while sustaining effective corporate communication through timely, transparent, and stakeholder-focused communication practices to enhance organizational performance.

Keywords: *Corporate Image Management, Corporate Identity, Corporate Communication, Performance, Banking Sector.*

1. INTRODUCTION
The banking industry operates in an increasingly competitive, technology-driven, and customer-oriented environment where financial institutions are expected not only to provide efficient financial services but also to build and sustain strong relationships with their stakeholders. Rapid advances in digital banking, financial technology (fintech), artificial intelligence, and data-driven financial services, coupled with increasing customer expectations and stringent regulatory requirements, have significantly transformed the global banking landscape (Uford, 2026). Consequently, banks are under continuous pressure to improve service quality, enhance customer experience, strengthen stakeholder confidence, and maintain sustainable competitive advantage.

In this dynamic environment, organizational success depends not only on financial strength but also on intangible assets such as trust, credibility, and stakeholder confidence (Peters et al, 2024). Corporate image has therefore emerged as one of the most valuable strategic assets for organizations, particularly within the banking industry. It represents the overall impression, beliefs, perceptions, and expectations that stakeholders develop about an organization through their interactions, experiences, and available information (Obialor *et al.*, 2024; Eze *et al.*, 2022). A favourable corporate image enhances customer confidence, strengthens stakeholder relationships, promotes customer loyalty, attracts investors and competent employees, and differentiates an organization from its competitors. Conversely, an unfavourable corporate image may weaken public confidence, discourage customer patronage, and adversely affect organizational competitiveness and long-term performance (Obialor *et al.,* 2024). In service industries such as banking, where customers cannot physically evaluate service quality before consumption, corporate image serves as an important signal of reliability, credibility, and trustworthiness.

Corporate image does not develop by chance but is the outcome of deliberate managerial efforts aimed at creating, maintaining, and enhancing favourable stakeholder perceptions. This strategic process, commonly referred to as corporate image management, involves coordinating organizational activities, communications, and stakeholder engagements to establish and sustain a positive organizational image. Iachim and Frumosu (2025) defines corporate image management as the process of creating, maintaining, and restoring a favourable corporate image, while more recent studies view it as a strategic capability that integrates corporate identity, corporate communication, and stakeholder relationship management to enhance long-term competitiveness (Melewar *et al.,* 2021; Foroudi *et al.,* 2021).

Consequently, corporate image management has evolved beyond a public relations function to become an important strategic tool for improving organizational effectiveness. This study focuses on two key dimensions of corporate image management: corporate identity and corporate communication. Corporate identity refers to the unique characteristics that distinguish an organization from its competitors, including its mission, values, culture, visual identity, behaviour, and overall manner of conducting business (Raposo *et al.,*2018). Markwick and Fill (1997) described corporate identity as what an organization is, what it does, and how it conducts its activities, while Balmer (2001) conceptualized it as the combination of tangible and intangible attributes that make an organization distinct. A strong corporate identity enables stakeholders to recognize and differentiate an organization, thereby enhancing customer confidence, organizational credibility, and competitive positioning. Recent empirical evidence further suggests that a well-managed corporate identity positively influences customer trust and organizational performance (Obialor *et al.*, 2024).

Corporate communication constitutes another fundamental dimension of corporate image management. It encompasses the coordinated management of both internal and external communication activities aimed at establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders. Cornelissen (2020) defines corporate communication as the management of all organizational communications directed toward creating favourable relationships with stakeholders upon whom the organization depends, while Van Riel (2012) maintains that effective corporate communication enhances organizational credibility, transparency, and stakeholder confidence. In the contemporary banking environment, timely, transparent, and consistent communication has become increasingly important for strengthening customer relationships and managing stakeholder expectations. Recent studies have equally demonstrated that effective corporate communication significantly improves customer satisfaction and organizational performance within financial institutions (Victor & Konya, 2021; Kitemu *et al.*,2024).

Effective corporate image management is widely recognized as a critical driver of organizational performance across service-oriented industries, particularly the banking sector. Organizational performance refers to the extent to which an organization achieves its strategic and operational objectives through the efficient utilization of available resources. In the banking industry, organizational performance is reflected in indicators such as customer satisfaction, customer retention, market share, profitability, operational efficiency, and sustainable competitive advantage (Famoti *et al.*,2024; Edem *et al.*,2026). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that organizations with strong corporate identities and effective corporate communication strategies are better positioned to achieve superior performance outcomes than those with weaker image management practices (Foroudi *et al.*, 2021; Eze *et al.*,2022).

The Nigerian banking industry has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades through regulatory reforms, technological innovation, financial sector consolidation, and increasing adoption of digital financial services. These developments have intensified competition among deposit money banks and heightened customer expectations regarding service quality, transparency, and responsiveness. Consequently, effective corporate image management has become increasingly important for banks seeking to strengthen stakeholder confidence and improve organizational performance.

Among the leading deposit money banks operating within this dynamic environment is United Bank for Africa Plc. (UBA), one of Africa's foremost financial institutions with operations across several African countries and international financial centres (Uford, 2017). In Nigeria, UBA has established itself as a major provider of retail, commercial, and corporate banking services through an extensive branch network and digital banking platforms. Like other commercial banks, UBA operates in an environment characterized by rapid technological advancement, evolving customer expectations, and intense competition. These conditions underscore the importance of maintaining a strong corporate identity and effective corporate communication for improved organizational performance. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the relationship between corporate image management and organizational performance of United Bank for Africa Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

The banking industry in Nigeria has become increasingly competitive due to rapid technological advancements, the emergence of financial technology (fintech) firms, changing customer expectations, and continuous regulatory reforms. In this environment, banks are expected not only to deliver quality financial services but also to maintain a favourable corporate image capable of inspiring customer confidence, strengthening stakeholder relationships, and enhancing organizational performance. Despite substantial investments in branding, corporate communication, and customer relationship management, many banks continue to experience challenges related to customer dissatisfaction, declining loyalty, reputational risks, and intense competition for market share (Eze *et al.*, 2022; Obialor *et al.*, 2024).

Studies have established that corporate image management significantly influences organizational performance. However, most existing studies have focused on corporate reputation, branding, or customer satisfaction, while relatively few have specifically examined the combined influence of corporate identity and corporate communication on organizational performance within deposit money banks in Akwa Ibom State. Furthermore, previous studies have largely concentrated on other banks and geographical locations, creating limited empirical evidence regarding United Bank for Africa Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Therefore, there remains inadequate context-specific evidence on how corporate identity and corporate communication influence the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc., Uyo. It is this gap in empirical knowledge that necessitated this study, which examines the relationship between corporate image management and the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between corporate image management and the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives were to;

i. examine the relationship between corporate identity and the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

ii. evaluate the relationship between corporate communication and the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between corporate identity and the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between corporate communication and the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc,Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Corporate Image Management

Corporate image management is a strategic managerial process through which an organization deliberately develops, communicates, and sustains favourable perceptions among its stakeholders. Rather than being confined to promotional activities, it encompasses the alignment of organizational values, behaviour, communication, and stakeholder relationships to establish a positive and credible organizational image. Iachim and Frumosu (2025) views corporate image management as the continuous process of creating, maintaining, and restoring an organization's image whenever necessary. Expanding this perspective. Similarly, Foroudi *et al.* (2021) noted that effective corporate image management integrates corporate identity, communication, reputation, and stakeholder engagement to ensure consistency between what an organization represents and how it is perceived.

Recent research also suggests that organizations that systematically manage their corporate identity and communication are more likely to strengthen their reputation, improve stakeholder confidence, and achieve sustainable performance (Foroudi *et al.*, 2024). From these perspectives, corporate image management is not a one-time activity but a continuous strategic process that requires organizations to consistently project values and behaviours that align with stakeholder expectations. In the context of this study, corporate image management is operationalized through corporate identity and corporate communication.

Corporate Identity

Corporate identity refers to the distinctive attributes that define an organization and differentiate it from competitors in the minds of its stakeholders. It reflects the organization's mission, vision, core values, culture, behaviour, visual identity, and overall philosophy that collectively communicate who the organization is and what it represents. Markwick and Fill (1997) describe corporate identity as the combination of what an organization is, what it does, and how it conducts its activities, while Balmer (2001) considers it the totality of tangible and intangible characteristics that distinguish one organization from another.

More recently, Foroudi *et al.* (2024) argue that a clearly defined corporate identity promotes consistency in organizational behaviour, strengthens stakeholder confidence, and reinforces corporate reputation. Similarly, Eze *et al.* (2022) maintains that a well-managed corporate identity enables organizations to build trust, foster customer loyalty, and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage in increasingly dynamic business environments. From the foregoing, corporate identity extends beyond logos, colours, or organizational symbols to include the values, culture, and behaviours that shape stakeholders' perceptions of an organization.

Corporate Communication

Effective communication is fundamental to the success of every organization because it shapes stakeholders' understanding, perceptions, and responses to organizational activities. Within the corporate context, communication serves as a strategic mechanism through which organizations interact with employees, customers, investors, regulators, and the wider public to promote mutual understanding and achieve organizational objectives. Cornelissen (2020) views corporate communication as the coordinated management of internal and external communications aimed at developing favourable relationships with stakeholders, on the contrary, Van Riel (2012) emphasizes that corporate communication contributes to organizational credibility and stakeholder confidence. More recent studies have expanded this perspective by describing corporate communication as a strategic management function that integrates traditional and digital communication channels to strengthen corporate reputation, enhance stakeholder engagement, and support organizational performance (Balmer, 2024; Kitemu *et al.*,2024)

For organizations operating in the banking sector, effective corporate communication promotes transparency, minimizes uncertainty, and strengthens customers' trust in the institution. It also enables management to communicate organizational values consistently, respond promptly to stakeholder concerns, and maintain a positive corporate image in a highly competitive environment.

Performance

The ability of an organization to achieve its strategic goals and sustain competitiveness is commonly reflected in its performance. Performance is a multidimensional concept that assesses how effectively and efficiently an organization utilizes its resources to accomplish predetermined objectives. Although financial indicators such as profitability and market share have traditionally been used to measure performance (Charles & Uford, 2023), contemporary scholars argue that non-financial indicators, including customer satisfaction, customer retention, service quality, innovation, and operational efficiency, are equally important in evaluating organizational success (O'Connell, V., & O'Sullivan, 2016; Edem *et al.*, 2025). In service-oriented organizations such as banks, performance depends increasingly on the ability to deliver high service quality, satisfy customers, create superior value, and foster long-term customer loyalty in a competitive environment (Özkan *et al.*, 2020).

From a strategic management perspective, performance is influenced by both tangible resources and intangible assets such as corporate reputation, stakeholder trust, effective communication, and organizational identity (Akpan et al, 2024). Recent empirical evidence indicates that organizations with strong intangible assets are more likely to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and superior performance than those that focus solely on financial resources (Foroudi *et al.*, 2021). In this study, organizational performance refers to the degree to which the organization achieves enhanced customer satisfaction, customer retention, operational efficiency, and overall organizational effectiveness as a result of effective corporate image management

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder Theory

This study is anchored on Stakeholder Theory developed by R. Edward Freeman in 1984. The theory posits that an organization's long-term success depends on its ability to create and sustain value for all stakeholders, including customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, regulators, and the host community, rather than focusing solely on shareholders' interests. According to Freeman (1984), organizations that understand and respond effectively to stakeholders' expectations are more likely to achieve sustainable growth, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and enhance organizational performance.

Stakeholder Theory recognizes that both corporate identity and corporate communication influence stakeholders' perceptions, trust, attitudes, and behaviour. A strong corporate identity enables stakeholders to clearly understand an organization's values, mission, and unique characteristics, thereby enhancing credibility and confidence. Similarly, effective corporate communication facilitates timely, transparent, and consistent interactions with stakeholders, promotes mutual understanding, and strengthens organizational reputation (Eze *et al.*,2022; Obialor *et al.*,2024). When these dimensions are strategically managed, they foster customer satisfaction, loyalty, trust, and positive stakeholder relationship, which ultimately translate into improved organizational performance.

Stakeholder Theory provides the theoretical foundation for this study by explaining the mechanism through which corporate image management influences organizational performance. The theory posits that organizations create sustainable value by developing and maintaining positive relationship with their stakeholders (Freeman, 2015). Within the context of this study, corporate identity and corporate communication are viewed as strategic dimensions of corporate image management that shape stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes toward the organization. A well-defined corporate identity, supported by effective corporate communication, fosters trust, credibility, and a favourable organizational reputation, which, in turn, enhances customer satisfaction, customer retention, operational efficiency, and overall organizational performance (Damberg *et al.*,2024). Consequently, Stakeholder Theory offers an appropriate framework for explaining the relationship between corporate image management and organizational performance in the banking sector.

Empirical Review

Obialor *et al.* (2024) investigated the relationship between corporate image management and the performance of Zenith Bank Nigeria Plc. in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study examined the effects of corporate identity, corporate communication, and corporate reputation on organizational performance. A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from 103 employees selected from a population of 138 staff of Zenith Bank Plc., Uyo. Their findings revealed that corporate identity, corporate communication, and corporate reputation each had a positive and statistically significant relationship with organizational performance. The authors concluded that effective management of corporate image enhances organizational performance and recommended that banks should integrate corporate image management into their strategic decision-making processes to improve competitiveness and stakeholder confidence.

In a related study, Foroudi *et al.* (2024) examined the influence of corporate identity management on corporate reputation within the retail and hospitality sectors in the United Kingdom. The study sought to develop and validate a multidimensional corporate identity framework by investigating how dimensions such as corporate purpose, strategy, culture, employee empowerment, and inclusion contribute to corporate reputation. A quantitative research design was employed and found that corporate identity significantly enhances corporate reputation, with employee empowerment exerting a direct positive effect, while corporate purpose, organizational strategy, culture, and an inclusive organizational climate exerted significant indirect effects on corporate reputation. It was concluded that organizations with a clearly defined and effectively managed corporate identity are more likely to strengthen stakeholder confidence and sustain favourable organizational outcomes.

Eze *et al.* (2022) explored the relationship between corporate image management strategy and the performance of First Bank Nigeria Limited. The study specifically investigated how corporate identity, corporate communication, and corporate reputation management influence organizational performance, measured using customer retention. A survey research design was adopted. They found that corporate identity significantly contributed to organizational performance by communicating the bank's values and promises to both internal and external stakeholders, thereby strengthening customer interaction and retention. The study further established that corporate image management strategy had a significant relationship with the overall performance of First Bank Nigeria Limited. The authors recommended that banks should periodically evaluate and strengthen their corporate image management strategies to sustain customer confidence and improve organizational performance.

Kitemu *et al.* (2024) examined the relationship between corporate communication and organizational performance among commercial banks in Kenya. The study adopted a quantitative survey research design. Their findings revealed that corporate communication had a significant positive effect on organizational performance. The study concluded that corporate communication is a strategic management function that contributes to sustainable organizational performance and recommended that commercial banks strengthen their communication systems to improve stakeholder engagement and organizational outcomes.

Victor and Konya (2021) examined the relationship between organizational communication and employee performance optimization among deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study sought to determine whether effective organizational communication contributes to improved employee performance within the banking sector. A cross-sectional research design was adopted. The study indicated a significant positive relationship between organizational communication and employee performance optimization. The study concluded that effective organizational communication enhances feedback mechanisms, improves employee morale, encourages teamwork, strengthens customer service, promotes better management practices, and reduces operational costs. The authors recommended that banks should establish interactive communication systems to facilitate effective engagement with employees and customers, thereby improving service delivery and organizational performance.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data from respondents and examine the relationship between the study variables without manipulating or controlling them. It is particularly suitable for obtaining respondents' perceptions of corporate image management and organizational performance within the study setting. The population of the study comprised all 111 permanent employees of United Bank for Africa Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. A sample size of 87 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) sampling formula at a 5% level of precision. The Taro Yamane formula is expressed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

n = sample size
N = population size (111)
e = level of precision (commonly 5% or 0.05)

Calculation

$$n = \frac{111}{1+111(0.05)^2} = \frac{111}{1+111(0.0025)} = \frac{111}{1.2775} = 86.89 = 87$$

To account for potential non-response and incomplete questionnaire, the sample size was increased by eight (8) respondents, resulting in a final sample size of 95 respondents. Thereafter, respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique to ensure that every member of the population had an equal chance of being included in the study. Data for the study were obtained from primary sources through a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items measured on a modified five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The reliability of the research instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha, which was employed to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The reliability coefficient obtained exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for data collection. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Moment Correlation technique with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27 at the 0.05 level of significance.

Model Specification

The empirical models were specified in line with the two objectives and corresponding hypotheses of the study:

P = f(CI) +μ1 □.□□□□□□□□□□□□…………………………………………(1)
P = β0 +β1CI +μ1 ……………………………………………………………..(2)
P = f(CC) +μ1 ………………………………………………………………(3)
P = β0 +β2CC+μ1 …………………………………………………………...(4)

Where:
P = Performance
CI= Corporate Identity

CC= Corporate Communication
$\beta0$ = intercept or regression constant term
$\beta1$- $\beta2$ = Regression coefficient
$\mu1$ = error term

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the ninety-five (95) questionnaire administered to the respondents, eighty-seven (87) were successfully retrieved, representing a 91.6% response rate. The retrieved copies of questionnaire were screened, coded, and pre-processed for data cleaning and analysis. The valid responses obtained formed the basis for the subsequent data analysis and interpretation.

Testing of hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between corporate identity and the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Correlations

Variables		Corporate Identity	Organizational Performance
Corporate Identity	Pearson Correlation	1	.935**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	87	87
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	.935**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	87	87

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Researcher's Computation (2026)

Table 1 shows a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between corporate identity and organizational performance ($r = 0.935$, $p = 0.001$, $N = 87$). Since the p-value (0.001) is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating that corporate identity has a significant positive relationship with organizational performance.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between corporate communication and the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: Correlations

Variables		Corporate communication	Organizational Performance
Corporate communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.945**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	87	87
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	.945**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	87	87

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Researcher's Computation (2026)

The Table 2 shows a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between corporate communication and organizational performance ($r = 0.945$, $p = 0.001$, $N = 87$). Since the p-value (0.001) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating that corporate communication has a significant positive relationship with organizational performance.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of hypothesis one indicates that corporate identity is significantly associated with organizational performance, implying that organizations with a stronger corporate identity are more likely to achieve improved performance. This finding is consistent with Obialor *et al.* (2024), who reported a significant positive relationship between corporate identity and organizational performance among employees of Zenith Bank Nigeria Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, and Eze *et al.* (2022), who found a significant positive relationship between corporate identity and the performance of First Bank Nigeria Limited.

Similarly, the finding of hypothesis two indicates that corporate communication is significantly associated with organizational performance, implying that organizations with effective corporate communication are more likely to achieve improved organizational performance. This finding is consistent with Jemima and Konya (2024), who reported a significant positive relationship between organizational communication and employee performance optimization among deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria, and Obialor *et al.* (2024), who found a significant positive relationship between corporate communication and organizational performance among employees of Zenith Bank Nigeria Plc, Uyo,Akwa Ibom State.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that corporate image management has a significant relationship with the performance of United Bank for Africa Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the findings revealed that both corporate identity and corporate communication have significant positive relationship with organizational performance. The study therefore concluded that strengthening corporate identity and maintaining effective corporate communication are essential for enhancing organizational performance.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

i. Management of United Bank for Africa Plc. should continuously strengthen its corporate identity by maintaining a consistent brand image, organizational values, and professional standards to enhance organizational performance.

ii. The bank should improve its corporate communication by promoting timely, clear, and effective communication with employees and customers to strengthen stakeholder confidence and improve organizational performance.

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