
**PROMOTIONAL MIX, BRAND IMAGE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN
OPPORTUNITY BANK UGANDA LIMITED, SOROTI BRANCH**

**BY
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES,
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DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I, OKELLO FRANCIS XAVIER, hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge, this dissertation titled "*Promotional Mix, Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited Soroti Branch*" is my original work and it has never been submitted to any other institution for any academic award.

Signature: 

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APPROVAL

APPROVAL

We certify that Okello Francis Xavier has done this work entitled "*Promotional Mix, Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited Soroti Branch*" under our supervision as authorized university supervisors.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my loving family that has been a great source of inspiration and joy in my daily endeavors, their love and support could never be valued. Profound gratitude goes to all my friends and colleagues; I love you all and will continually hold you close and cherished in my life. Thank you very much for being there for me and the immense emotional and kind support you offered me wholeheartedly.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
APPROVAL.....	ii
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	3
1.3 Objectives of the study.....	4
1.3.1 General Objective	4
1.3.2 Specific Objectives	4
1.4 Hypotheses.....	5
1.5 Scope of the Study	5
1.5.1 Geographical Scope	5
1.5.2 Content Scope.....	6
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	6
1.7 Conceptual Framework.....	7
1.7.1 Description of the conceptual framework.....	8

CHAPTER TWO	9
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.0 Introduction.....	9
2.1 Conceptual Literature.....	9
2.1.1 Promotional Mix.....	9
2.1.2 Brand Image.....	10
2.1.3 Customer satisfaction.....	11
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	12
2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)	12
2.3 Empirical Review.....	14
2.3.1 Promotional Mix and Customer Satisfaction.....	14
2.3.2 Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction.....	15
2.3.3 Promotional Mix and Brand Image.....	17
2.3.4 The Mediating Effect of Brand Image in the Relationship between Promotional Mix and Customer Satisfaction.....	19
2.4 Summary of Literature Review.....	20
CHAPTER THREE	22
METHODOLOGY	22
3.0 Introduction.....	22
3.1 Research Design.....	22
3.2 Target Population	23
3.3 Sampling Technique.....	23
3.4 Sample Size.....	23
3.5 Data Collection Tools.....	23
3.5.1 Questionnaire	24

3.6	Reliability and Validity	24
3.6.1	Reliability.....	24
3.7	Reliability Test Results	25
3.7.1	Validity.....	25
3.8	Data Collection Procedures.....	26
3.9	Data Presentation and Analysis.....	26
3.10	Ethical Considerations	26
CHAPTER FOUR.....		27
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS.....		27
4.0	Introduction.....	27
4.1	Response Rate.....	27
4.2	General Information.....	28
4.2.1	Respondents' Gender	28
4.2.2	Age Bracket	28
4.2.3	Length of Banking Relationship	29
4.2.4	Type of Account.....	29
4.3	Descriptive Statistics.....	30
4.4	Correlation Analysis.....	31
4.5	Direct Hypothesis Testing.....	32
4.5.1	Effect of Promotional Mix on Customer Satisfaction.....	32
4.5.2	Effect of Promotional Mix on Brand Image	33
4.6	Mediating Effect of Brand Image on the Relationship between Promotional Mix and Customer Satisfaction.....	34
4.7	Summary of Hypothesis Testing.....	36

CHAPTER FIVE	37
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	37
5.0 Introduction.....	37
5.1 Discussion of Findings.....	37
5.1.1 Effect of Promotional Mix on Customer Satisfaction.....	37
5.1.2 Effect of Promotional Mix on Brand Image	38
5.1.3 Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction.....	40
5.1.4 Promotional Mix, Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction	42
5.2 Conclusion	44
5.2.1 Effect of Promotional Mix on Customer Satisfaction.....	44
5.2.2 Effect of Promotional Mix on Brand Image	45
5.2.3 Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction.....	45
5.2.4 Promotional Mix, Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction	46
5.3 Recommendations.....	46
5.4 Limitations of the Study.....	48
5.5 Areas for Further Research	48
References.....	50
Appendix I: Questionnaire for Respondents.....	60
Appendix II: Introduction Letter from the Faculty and Acceptance.....	66

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Reliability Test Results	25
Table 4.1: Response Rate	27
Table 4.2: Respondents' Gender	28
Table 4.3: Age Bracket.....	29
Table 4.4: Length of Banking Relationship	29
Table 4.5: Type of Account	30
Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics.....	30
Table 4.7: Correlation Analysis.....	31
Table 4.8. Effect of Promotional Mix on Customer Satisfaction.....	33
Table 4.9: Effect of Promotional Mix on Brand Image	33
Table 4.10:Mediating Effect of Brand Image on the Relationship between Promotional Mix and Customer Satisfaction.....	35
Table 4.11: Hypotheses Tested.....	36

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework	7
Figure 2: Mediation Model, X-Y-M Paths	35

ABSTRACT

The study explored the mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch. The study was guided by the following specific objectives; to establish the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch; to determine the relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch; to analyse the effect of promotional mix on brand image in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch; and to examine the mediating effect of brand image in the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch. The study considered a descriptive research design. The study population of 39,825 comprised clients of Opportunity Bank in Soroti Branch. The sample used was 379 respondents obtained by use of the Krejcie & Morgan's table out of whom 254 returned completed and usable questionnaires. Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages was used to obtain specific findings, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analyses were used to obtain major findings. Regression results revealed that a) there is a significant effect of promotional mix on customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch [$\beta = .423$, $t = 1.853$, $p=0.000$]; b) there is a significant effect of promotional mix on the brand image of Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch [$\beta = .529$, $t = 2.231$, $p=0.000$]; c) brand image partially mediates the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch. The study concludes that brand image plays a critical intermediary role. The promotional mix—comprising sales promotions, direct selling, and public relations directly influences customer perceptions, but its full impact on customer satisfaction is significantly enhanced through the bank's brand image. A well-crafted promotional mix creates awareness, engagement, and positive associations with the bank, which strengthens its brand image. The study recommends that the bank should increase its focus on targeted digital marketing efforts through social media platforms, mobile banking apps, and email campaigns. By personalizing advertisements based on customer demographics and preferences, the bank can improve engagement, enhance customer awareness, and better meet the specific needs of its diverse clientele, leading to increased satisfaction.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter covers information on background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, scope, significance, and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the Study

The banking sector stands as a cornerstone of the global economy, providing essential services to individuals, businesses, and governments (Udin, et al., 2021). At the heart of banking operations lies the imperative of ensuring customer satisfaction (Islam, Ahmed, Rahman, & Ahmed, 2021). Customer satisfaction reflects the extent to which a bank meets or exceeds customer expectations regarding the quality, reliability, and responsiveness of its products and services (Hussein, 2024). In an industry characterized by intense competition and heightened customer expectations, maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction emerges as a strategic imperative for banks to retain existing customers and attract new ones (Sathiyavany & Shivany, 2018).

Globally, banks are facing growing challenges in keeping customers satisfied with the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) recording a decline from 80% in 2018 to 75% in 2022, reflecting dissatisfaction with service quality, hidden fees, and inadequate security of digital platforms (Detert, 2023).

On a regional scale, African banks also struggle with customer satisfaction where customer complaints about illegal deductions, hidden fees, and poor service delivery increased by 117% in 2023 alone (Oluwakemi, 2023). A KPMG survey in 2022 revealed that 70% of customers in banks

were dissatisfied with service quality. Meanwhile, in Uganda, the banking sector, which serves approximately 7.4 million account holders, has seen a steady rise in customer dissatisfaction. A 2022 report by Nakaweesi and Oketch highlighted a 30% increase in complaints related to hidden fees and inefficiency in customer service, signaling a need for significant improvements in how banks deliver services.

Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited (OBUL), a Tier II financial institution operating in Soroti and other regions, has made strides in implementing technology-based services, such as mobile banking and ATMs, to improve customer experience (Opportunity Bank, 2024). However, reports of dissatisfaction persist, with complaints focusing on slow service and a lack of transparency in fees and charges (Winnie v. Opportunity Bank (U) Limited, 2016).

The promotional mix is a critical element of the marketing strategy, comprising various tools and techniques used by organizations to communicate with their target audience and achieve their marketing objectives (Maulani, 2017). In the banking sector, an effective promotional mix can significantly influence customer perceptions, satisfaction, and loyalty (Ellitan, 2021). As financial institutions strive to differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace, effective marketing strategies, particularly the promotional mix, play a crucial role in influencing customer perceptions and behaviors (Ofunya, 2015). According to Kotler & Keller (2016), brand image, defined as the perception of a brand in the minds of customers, plays a pivotal role in influencing customer behavior and satisfaction. In the banking sector, where trust and reliability are paramount, a strong brand image can significantly enhance the effectiveness of promotional activities (Rohmad, et al., 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, the theory of planned behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen in 1991, provides a valuable framework for examining the mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between the promotional mix and customer satisfaction at Opportunity Bank Uganda. TPB posits that individual behavior is driven by behavioral intentions, which are influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (AL-Majali & Mat, 2018).

Several studies have independently investigated the relationship between the promotional mix and customer satisfaction across various industries (e.g., Aliata, 2017; Tielung & Untu, 2021). However, despite the wealth of research on this aspect, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the mediating effect of brand image on this relationship. Specifically, no studies have comprehensively examined how brand image mediates the relationship between the promotional mix and customer satisfaction within the context of Opportunity Bank Uganda. This gap presents a valuable opportunity for further exploration, as understanding this mediating effect could provide deeper insights into how promotional strategies can be optimized to enhance customer satisfaction through brand perception.

This study set out to examine the mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between promotion mix and customer satisfaction at Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited, Soroti Branch.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the increasingly competitive Ugandan banking sector, customer satisfaction is paramount for Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited (OBUL) to retain its client base and achieve sustainable growth (Rane, Achari, & Choudhary, 2023). While OBUL utilizes a promotional mix encompassing advertising, public relations, and personal selling to attract customers (Opportunity Bank, 2024),

a critical question remains on how effective the current promotional mix is in driving customer satisfaction.

In fact, despite the growing adoption and use of the different promotion strategies by Opportunity Bank including public relations, complaints revealing customer dissatisfaction are still being received. For example, Opportunity Bank`s customers have on different occasions logged in complaints showing dissatisfaction with the bank and one of the clients even lodged in a legal case for various claims, including breach of her constitutional right to privacy, passing off, misrepresentation, and unauthorized use of her image (Winnie v. Opportunity Bank (U) Limited, 2016). In addition, between 2022 and 2023 customer deposits decreased by 29 billion (Opportunity Bank Audited Financial Statements for the year Ended 2023). Ultimately, effective July 2024, the Opportunity Bank was demoted to a Tier II credit institution by the Bank of Uganda (Opportunity Bank, 2024)

The study therefore sought to examine the mediating role of brand image on the relationship between promotion mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited, Soroti Branch.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

To examine the mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To establish the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.

2. To determine the relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.
3. To analyse the effect of promotional mix on brand image in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.
4. To examine the mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch.

1.4 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested;

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of promotional mix on customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.

H₀₃: There is no significant effect of promotional mix on brand image in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.

H₀₄: There is no mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.

1.5 Scope of the Study

1.5.1 Geographical Scope

The study utilized Opportunity Bank Uganda's Soroti Branch due to its strategic importance and representative nature within the bank's operations. Soroti Branch serves a diverse customer base, providing a comprehensive snapshot of customer behaviors, preferences, and satisfaction levels

across different demographics. This diversity made it an ideal setting to explore the impact of the promotional mix and the mediating role of brand image on customer satisfaction. By focusing on this branch, the study yielded actionable insights that are applicable not only to Opportunity Bank Uganda but also to other financial institutions operating in similar contexts.

1.5.2 Content Scope

The study was delimited to the concepts of promotional mix, brand image and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Uganda's Soroti Branch.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study offers great benefits to various stakeholders in the banking sector including; the government, regulators, management, and scholars.

To Government, the findings of this study provide insights into the banking sector's dynamics, particularly how promotional strategies and brand image affect customer satisfaction. Understanding these relationships informs policy development aimed at enhancing consumer protection and fostering a competitive banking environment.

To Regulators i.e., Bank of Uganda, the findings offer valuable information on the effectiveness of various promotional practices in the banking sector. Regulators use these insights to develop guidelines and standards that ensure fair and ethical marketing practices, protecting consumers from misleading advertisements.

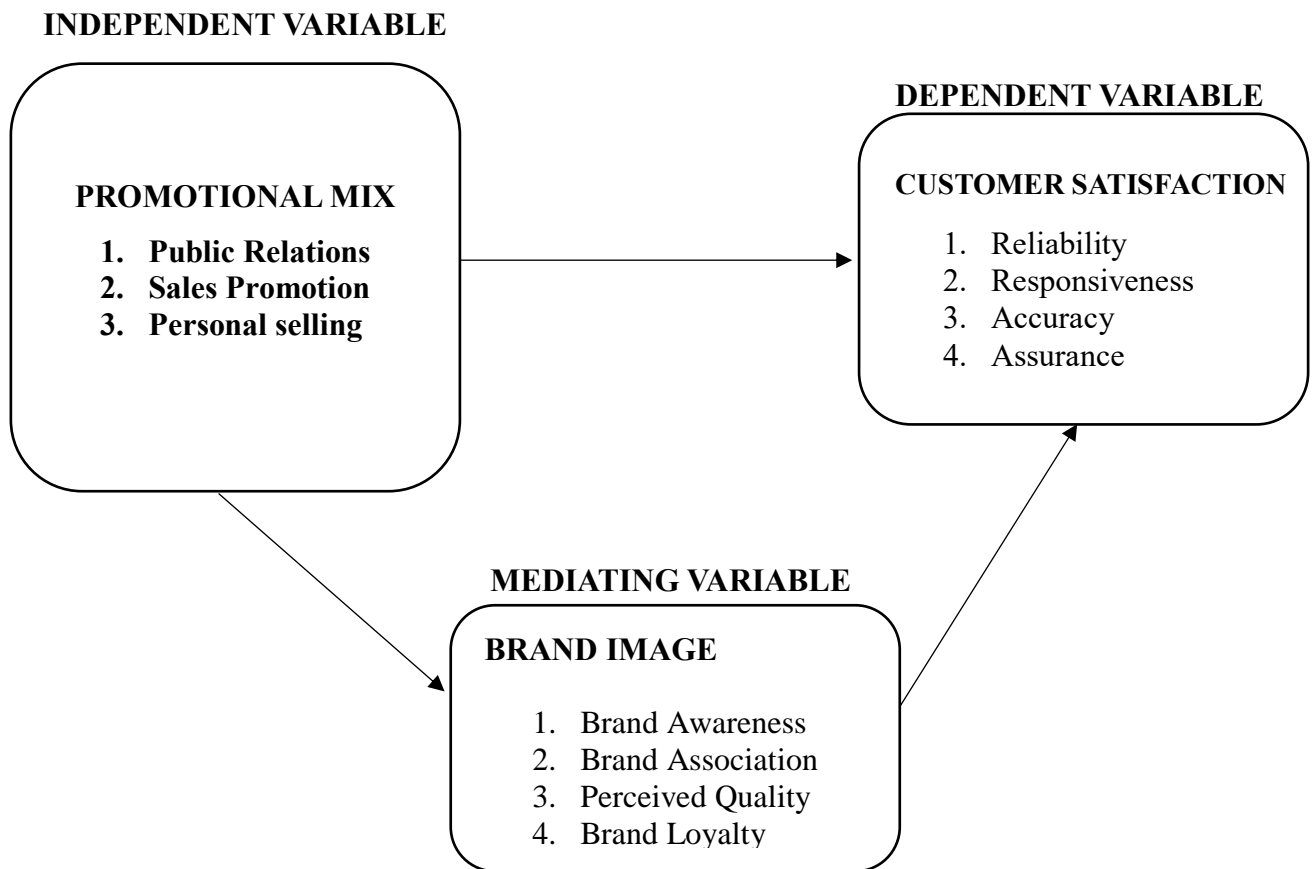
For Management, the study provides actionable insights into how their promotional mix impacts customer satisfaction through brand image. This knowledge helps in refining marketing strategies to enhance brand perception and customer loyalty. By understanding the mediating role of brand

image, management could allocate resources more effectively, focusing on activities that strengthen their brand and improve customer satisfaction.

To scholars, the study serves as a reference point for scholars examining similar contexts, facilitating cross-regional comparisons and contributing to the development of more generalizable theories on promotional mix and customer satisfaction.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Source: Adapted from *Mugarura (2019)* and modified by the researcher

1.7.1 Description of the conceptual framework

The theoretical progression of the study's principles is depicted in the conceptual framework (Figure 1). According to this concept, promotional mix has a direct impact on brand image and customer satisfaction through sales promotion, public relations and personal selling. In addition, the model further indicates that brand image in terms of awareness, association, perceived quality and brand loyalty also directly influences customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the model indicates that promotional mix can be mediated by brand image to influence customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to review literature based on the objectives and research questions. For easy referencing, this literature is reviewed under the following sub-headings. The first section explores the theoretical models underpinning the study while the second section focuses on empirical literature on promotional mix and customer satisfaction.

2.1 Conceptual Literature

2.1.1 Promotional Mix

Promotional mix is a critical component of a company's marketing strategy, encompassing various tools and techniques used to communicate with target audiences and achieve marketing objectives. It includes elements such as advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing. Each element serves a unique purpose and can be tailored to meet specific goals, such as raising awareness, generating interest, or driving sales (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). By integrating these elements effectively, companies can create a cohesive and persuasive promotional campaign that resonates with consumers and strengthens brand positioning (Belch & Belch, 2021).

Advertising, as a primary element of the promotional mix, involves paid, non-personal communication through various media channels, including television, radio, print, and digital platforms. It aims to reach a broad audience, build brand awareness, and influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. Sales promotion, on the other hand, includes short-term incentives like discounts, coupons, and contests designed to stimulate immediate sales and encourage product trial (Shimp & Andrews, 2021). Personal selling involves direct interaction between sales

representatives and potential buyers, allowing for personalized communication and relationship-building, which is especially important in B2B markets (Johnston & Marshall, 2021).

Public relations (PR) and direct marketing are also vital components of the promotional mix. PR focuses on managing a company's image and reputation through media relations, events, and community involvement, aiming to build goodwill and trust with stakeholders. Direct marketing involves direct communication with consumers through mail, email, or telemarketing, enabling companies to deliver personalized messages and measure response rates (Clow & Baack, 2021). By strategically combining these elements, businesses can effectively reach and engage their target audiences, ultimately driving growth and achieving marketing objectives.

2.1.2 Brand Image

Brand image is a critical aspect of a company's identity and plays a significant role in influencing consumer perceptions and behavior. It is the set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a consumer holds regarding a brand. A positive brand image can lead to increased customer loyalty, higher perceived value, and a stronger competitive advantage (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Building and maintaining a strong brand image involves consistent messaging, quality products, and exceptional customer service, all of which contribute to the overall perception of the brand in the marketplace (Keller, 2021).

A well-crafted brand image not only differentiates a company from its competitors but also fosters an emotional connection with consumers. This emotional connection can drive customer preference and loyalty, as consumers are more likely to choose brands that they associate with positive attributes and experiences (Solomon, 2021). Elements such as logo design, color schemes, and brand personality all play a part in shaping brand image. Additionally, the alignment of brand

values with consumer values can enhance the brand image, making it more relatable and trustworthy to the target audience (Aaker & Biel, 2021).

Moreover, brand image is influenced by both direct interactions with the brand and indirect factors such as word-of-mouth, social media, and third-party endorsements. Companies must actively manage their brand image through strategic marketing and communication efforts to ensure that the desired perception aligns with consumer experiences and expectations (Keller, 2021). This includes monitoring and responding to consumer feedback, managing online reputation, and engaging in corporate social responsibility initiatives. By effectively managing brand image, companies can create a lasting impression that drives customer satisfaction and long-term success (Kotler & Keller, 2021).

2.1.3 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a crucial indicator of a company's success, reflecting how well a company's products or services meet or exceed customer expectations. High levels of customer satisfaction can lead to increased customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and repeat business. Companies strive to understand and measure customer satisfaction through surveys, feedback, and direct interactions to identify areas for improvement and enhance the overall customer experience (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Ensuring customer satisfaction involves delivering consistent quality, value, and service, which in turn fosters a positive relationship between the brand and its customers (Zeithaml et al., 2021).

Several factors contribute to customer satisfaction, including product quality, service quality, price, and the overall customer experience. Product quality pertains to the functionality and durability of a product, while service quality relates to the efficiency, responsiveness, and empathy shown by

service providers (Parasuraman et al., 2021). Additionally, competitive pricing and value for money are significant considerations for customers when evaluating their satisfaction with a purchase. Companies that can balance these factors effectively are more likely to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction and sustain a competitive advantage in the market (Homburg et al., 2021).

Customer satisfaction is also closely linked to customer expectations and perceptions. Expectations are shaped by previous experiences, marketing communications, and word-of-mouth, while perceptions are formed during the actual consumption or use of the product or service (Oliver, 2021). Managing these expectations through transparent communication, consistent branding, and reliable service delivery is essential for maintaining customer satisfaction. Moreover, addressing customer complaints and feedback promptly and effectively can enhance customer satisfaction and turn dissatisfied customers into loyal advocates (Kotler & Keller, 2021). By prioritizing customer satisfaction, companies can build strong customer relationships and ensure long-term business success.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical models are a body of knowledge that seeks to observe, understand and explain concepts. This study will consider the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen in 1991, offers a robust framework for examining the complex dynamics between promotional activities, brand image, and customer satisfaction within the context of Opportunity Bank Uganda. It is a psychological framework designed to predict and understand motivational influences on behavior that is not

entirely under volitional control (Rozenkowska, 2023). According to TPB, an individual's behavior is influenced by their attitude towards the behavior, which reflects their favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the outcomes associated with it, and by subjective norms, which involve perceived social pressure from important people in their life and their motivation to comply with these expectations (Ajzen, 2020).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) can be effectively applied to understand and influence consumer behavior in the context of the promotional mix, brand image, and customer satisfaction (Farid, et al., 2023). According to TPB, promotional efforts can influence consumer behavior by shaping attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Rozenkowska, 2023). For example, promotional activities can create positive attitudes toward a product by highlighting its benefits, leveraging social proof to influence subjective norms, and addressing perceived behavioral control by reducing perceived barriers, such as offering easy payment options.

Regarding the critiques, first, some academicians describe TPB as being too narrow and rational (Barber, 2011), and lacking the inclusion of variables related to people's moral values (Manstead, 1999) or emotions (Sniehotta et al., 2014). Importantly, Barber (2011) remarks that not all behaviors can be planned and that the willingness to behave in a certain manner could be socially reactive or spontaneous. This might be especially evident in illegal behavior, wherein perpetrators take advantage of situations and opportunities to act.

By applying the theory, the researcher can better understand and address the complex relationship between promotional mix, brand image and customer satisfaction.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Promotional Mix and Customer Satisfaction

The study by Frimpong et al. (2023) investigated the influence of the marketing communication mix on customer satisfaction within the financial industry. The research, conducted across three business regions in Ghana, involved 372 marketing and sales managers from various financial institutions. Utilizing Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling for data analysis, the study found that public relations plays a pivotal role in shaping customer perceptions and experiences, thereby impacting satisfaction levels. The findings suggest that firms should leverage their marketing communication strategies, including public relations, to align with customer preferences and enhance satisfaction. While the study uses Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis, it does not elaborate on the specific measurement tools used to assess marketing communication mix, service quality, and customer satisfaction.

Qomariah et al. (2021) investigate the impact of promotion and service quality on consumer satisfaction and loyalty in pawnshops. The study reveals that effective promotion is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction, which subsequently fosters loyalty. This research was conducted at the pawnshop PT. Pegadaian (Persero) Bondowoso Branch Office. The research sample was determined by 100 respondents using purposive sampling technique. Data analysis to achieve research objectives using Structural Equation Modelling. Results revealed that promotions, such as discounts and special offers have positive effect on customer satisfaction and ultimately repeat business. However, while the study examines the direct impact of promotion on customer satisfaction, it would be interesting to investigate potential mediating factors such as brand image and customer trust, which this study seeks to explore.

The study by Tielung and Untu (2021) investigated how the marketing mix influences customer satisfaction in the tourism sector of Tomohon City. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews and a list of questions given to consumers or guests on the object under study. Using multiple linear regression analysis, the study found that the marketing mix significantly affects customer satisfaction. The correlation coefficient also suggested a very strong positive relationship between the marketing mix and customer satisfaction. The results of the research, through partial hypothesis testing, proved that the promotion variable has a strong relationship and a positive influence with the consumer satisfaction variable. However, the authors of this study did not utilize one of the most effective data collection methods i.e., questionnaire.

2.3.2 Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction

The relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction has been a significant focus in marketing research, particularly in recent years. Brand image, defined as the perception of a brand in the minds of customers, has been found to play a crucial role in influencing customer satisfaction (Abbas, et al., 2021).

Susanto, et al. (2022) studied the effect of brand image on customer satisfaction in a Telecom company in Indonesia. The authors used quantitative research with 99 respondents. Analysis of the data used was multiple linear regression analysis. Results revealed that brand image, which includes customers' perceptions and associations with the brand, also plays a crucial role in customer satisfaction. A positive brand image can enhance customer satisfaction by aligning with their expectations and values, thereby creating a favorable impression. The research highlights the symbiotic relationship between these factors, suggesting that businesses aiming for higher customer satisfaction should focus on cultivating a positive brand image. This comprehensive

approach can lead to more satisfied and loyal customers, ultimately benefiting the brand's long-term success.

The study by Rusmahafi and Wulandari (2020) examined the impact of brand image, service quality, and customer value on customer satisfaction at Bank Muamalat Indonesia. Data obtained using survey instruments with a questionnaire. Data analysis was quantitative in order to test the hypothesis of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. Using multiple linear regression analysis on data from 150 customers, the research found that brand image did not have a significant effect on customer satisfaction. The study thereafter suggested that while a strong brand image is important, focusing on improving service quality and delivering high customer value is crucial for increasing customer satisfaction in the banking sector.

Neupane (2015) also examined the effect of brand image on customer satisfaction in a retail super market chain in the United Kingdom. The hypotheses were formed on the basis of existing literatures and data was collected to test the hypotheses so it was deductive research. The survey strategy was used to collect information from the customers of the main six retailers based in London through structured closed ended questionnaires at a point of time and so it was cross-sectional research. A sample of 120 customers was selected through convenience sampling technique. The author used statistical tools especially correlation and regression analysis for data analysis through SPSS 20. The study revealed that brand image has significant effect on customer satisfaction. However, this study used a small sample size of just 120 customers from just six stores of the main retailers which may not represent the vision of all retail customers. Thus, it is recommended that large-scale research with large sample size is necessary.

Lahap, Ramli, and Noraslinda, et al. (2016) studied the significance of brand image in influencing customer satisfaction in the Malaysian Hotel Industry. A total of 300 questionnaires were

distributed out of which 225 returned completed and usable questionnaires, achieving a 75% response rate. In this, the researchers employed factor analysis in examining factor loading, reliability and validity (Cronbach's Alpha) for consistency, mean, standard deviation and multiple regressions as a means to find the relationship between variables. The researcher used survey questionnaire to collect the required data and 5-point Likert's Scale were employed. The questionnaires were sent to respondents all through email. In this study, stratified sampling technique was employed. Results revealed that brand image does influence customer satisfaction in the Malaysian hotel industry context. However, the authors' sample size, while adequate, is limited to a specific geographic region and context may not fully represent the diverse customer base of the banking industry.

2.3.3 Promotional Mix and Brand Image

A large-scale study conducted by Kim, Lim, and Brymer (2020) across 12 countries demonstrated that consistent and culturally relevant advertising campaigns significantly enhance brand image across diverse markets. The study, involving over 2,000 respondents, found that companies that adapt their advertising strategies to local cultural values achieve higher brand credibility and positive consumer perception. This macro-level empirical evidence supports the argument that advertising plays a pivotal role in creating a favorable brand image, especially when localized and contextually relevant.

A comprehensive meta-analysis by Mittal and Gera (2021), involving data from over 15 international markets, concluded that while sales promotions can increase consumer awareness and short-term sales, frequent promotions may harm brand image by devaluing the perceived quality of the product. This phenomenon, often referred to as "promotion fatigue," suggests that

companies must balance their sales promotion strategies to maintain a strong and premium brand image over time.

A study by Johansson and Larsson (2019) explored the role of PR in shaping brand image in multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in Europe, Asia, and North America. Their findings, based on qualitative interviews with marketing executives, revealed that successful PR campaigns that focus on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and crisis management significantly improved public perceptions of the brand. The study highlighted that PR efforts that demonstrate transparency and ethical practices across different markets help to build a positive, trustworthy brand image on a global scale.

A global study conducted by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2020), which surveyed companies in Europe, the United States, and Asia-Pacific, found that personalized direct marketing campaigns positively influence brand image, particularly in industries where customer relationships are key. The study highlighted that direct email campaigns, personalized offers, and SMS marketing help brands establish a more intimate and engaging relationship with consumers, enhancing brand loyalty and perception. However, overuse of direct marketing, especially in regions with strict data privacy laws, may result in negative perceptions, suggesting a need for careful and regulated use of this tool at a macro level.

study by Shah and Banerjee (2021), which analyzed the banking and insurance sectors across South Asia, Europe, and the United States, found that personal selling helps humanize brands by establishing trust through direct customer interaction. The empirical results demonstrated that companies that invest in training their sales personnel to embody the brand's values and principles tend to have a more favorable brand image. This highlights the macro-level importance of

maintaining a consistent brand message through personal interactions, contributing to long-term customer trust and satisfaction.

Empirical research by Huang et al. (2022) involving 300 multinational companies operating in Asia, Europe, and the Americas demonstrated that firms that successfully integrate their promotional tools—advertising, PR, sales promotions, direct marketing, and personal selling—create a more unified and consistent brand image. The study emphasized that a fragmented promotional strategy leads to mixed brand perceptions, particularly in global markets where cultural and consumer expectations differ. This suggests that a well-coordinated promotional mix is key to building a strong, positive brand image across diverse macro environments.

2.3.4 The Mediating Effect of Brand Image in the Relationship between Promotional Mix and Customer Satisfaction

Recent literature has increasingly highlighted the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between promotional mix elements and customer satisfaction. For instance, Cuong and Khoi (2021) found that brand image mediates the relationship between brand awareness and brand loyalty, suggesting that a well-established brand image can enhance the effectiveness of promotional efforts.

Moreover, Chen and Wu (2022) demonstrated that brand image and customer satisfaction jointly mediate the relationship between experiential marketing and customer loyalty. Their study highlighted that experiential marketing efforts are more successful when they contribute to a positive brand image, which in turn boosts customer satisfaction and loyalty. This finding underscores the importance of integrating brand image considerations into promotional strategies to achieve better customer outcomes. By focusing on creating memorable and positive brand experiences, companies can enhance their promotional mix's effectiveness.

Pratama (2021) further emphasized the significant impact of brand image on customer satisfaction. His research indicated that a positive brand image not only directly influences customer satisfaction but also strengthens the relationship between promotional activities and customer loyalty. This suggests that companies should invest in building and maintaining a strong brand image to maximize the benefits of their promotional efforts. A strong brand image can serve as a competitive advantage, making promotional activities more effective and leading to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Additionally, recent studies have explored the dynamic interplay between brand image, promotional mix, and customer satisfaction in various industries. For example, in the hospitality industry, a study by Lee and Kim (2023) found that brand image significantly mediates the relationship between promotional activities and customer satisfaction. Their findings suggest that hotels and resorts can enhance customer satisfaction by focusing on building a strong brand image through consistent and high-quality promotional efforts. This approach not only attracts new customers but also retains existing ones by reinforcing positive perceptions of the brand

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

The existing literature on promotional mix extensively explores the relationships between promotional mix and customer satisfaction (Mohamed, 2021), as well as between brand image and customer satisfaction (Martin, 2015). However, a notable gap in the literature is the limited exploration of how different dimensions of brand image specifically mediate the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction. Additionally, there is a need for more empirical studies across diverse industries and cultural contexts to validate the generalizability of these findings. Addressing these gaps could provide deeper insights into the nuanced ways brand

image influences the promotional mix and customer satisfaction relationship, offering more tailored strategies for marketers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The research methodology adumbrates the blue print used in the practical field study towards gathering evidence to test the research hypothesis. It focuses on the research design, study population, sample size and sampling procedures, data collection tool, quality control, procedure for data presentation and analysis as well as ethical consideration are described.

3.1 Research Design

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) defines a research design as the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. The study employed a descriptive correlational research design. Descriptive survey design according to Kothari (2003) is a powerful form of quantitative analysis. This design was preferred to enable the researcher describe the area of research and explain the collected data in order to investigate the differences and similarities with our frame of reference within a given period of time. In addition, the method permitted gathering of data from the respondents in natural settings resulting in a description of the data, whether in words, pictures, charts, or tables. This design gave the researcher a comprehensive picture of the promotion mix strategies. In the study, the design was used to answer question pertaining influence of promotion mix on customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited.

3.2 Target Population

The population is the totality of entities in which the researcher is interested in i.e., the collection of individuals, objects or events about which the researcher want to make inference (Kothari, 2004). The target population of this research were clients of Opportunity Bank in Soroti Branch. According to Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited (2023) Soroti Branch Client Data Report, the target population were 39,825 clients.

3.3 Sampling Technique

With respect to sampling techniques, the primary data from the respondents was collected through probability sampling technique to give the chance of being respondents. The study adopted a simple random sampling technique. In simple random sampling the researchers or fieldworkers have the freedom to choose whomever they find (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.4 Sample Size

Based on the above information, the sample size was obtained from the target population of 39,825 and it was 379. Therefore, the study's sample size of 379 was considered to represent the population.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

To achieve the objective of the study the researcher used only questionnaire method in order to obtain opportunity to probe or ask questions, control the respondent response through designing the questions well properly, increase the reliability and credibility of the research data, and makes a judgment of what most people think through asking the sample respondent.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

For an easy understanding and reading, the questionnaires were designed in English language. The first part of the questionnaire took the consideration of demographic factor of the respondents and some general information. The second part of the questionnaire required the respondent to rate the satisfaction level of the bank. The questions were designed with 5 point likert scale for convenience.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

3.6.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the dependability of the research findings that they can be repeated either by the researcher or by other researchers using similar research methods or procedures (Cooper & Schindler (2014). Similarly, Creswell (2003) described the reliability of the instruments as the degree of consistency that the instruments or procedure establishes. Reliability test is conducted to know whether the data of the research is free of random, bias, and error data. The researcher pre-tested the research instrument before it was administered to the sampled respondents in the main study. The importance of the pilot study was to determine probable weaknesses (errors) in the research instrument so that measures of minimizing the identified errors could be affected. This was achieved by testing the reliability of the instrument using pilot testing in the study area. Moreover, the reliability of a standardized test is usually expressed as a correlation coefficient, which measures the strength of association between variables. Typically, a Cronbach's alpha value of above 0.7 is usually considered to offer reasonable reliability for research purposes.

3.7 Reliability Test Results

The reliability of the instrument is the ability to give clear and stable measurement. In this study research, the reliability was carried out using Cronbach's coefficient test alpha. Coefficient alpha is normally used during a scale development with items that have several items. A Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.7$ implies that the tool delivers a moderately decent measurement tool and therefore is consistent (Flick, 2015). The reliability results shown in Table 4.2 confirmed the reliability of the instrument with a least Cronbach's alpha of >0.7 .

Table 3.1: Reliability Test Results

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Promotional Mix	0.91	18
Brand Image	0.84	12
Customer Satisfaction	0.80	10

3.7.1 Validity

Validity refers to the degree of success for an instrument in measuring what it is set out to measure so that differences in individual scores can be taken as representing true references in the characteristics under study (Creswell, 2003). Whereas, Cooper and Schindler (2014) defined validity as the extent to which a test measures what we actually wish to measure. A pilot study was conducted to refine the methodology and test instrument such as a questionnaire before administering the final phase. Questionnaires was tested on potential respondents to make the data collecting instrument's objective, relevant, suitable to the problem and reliable. Issues that were raised by respondents was corrected and the questionnaires was refined. Besides, proper detection by an advisor was also taken to ensure validity of the instruments. Finally, the improved version of the questionnaire was printed, duplicated and dispatched.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher asked for an introduction letter from the Dean Faculty of Management Sciences, which introduced him to the relevant authorities at Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch for permission. Informed consent was sought from the respondents and the purpose of the information was clearly explained before administering the questionnaires. Data from questionnaire was sorted and arranged for presentation.

3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis

The raw data from the questionnaires was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics like frequency tables provided by SPSS version 20. Data was processed by editing, coding, entering and then presented in comprehensive tables showing the responses of each category of variables. At bivariate level, promotional mix was correlated with customer satisfaction using Pearson's product moment Linear Correlation Coefficient. Pearson's was selected because the study entailed determining correlations or describing the association between two or more variables (Oso & Onen, 2008).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, ethical issues were primarily considered. Before conducting the data collection all the necessary information about the study was provided to the sample respondents, i.e., who was conducting the study, for what purpose, and the like. This helped them to decide whether or not to participate in this study. They were notified that their participation in the study was voluntary; they would not be harmed as a result of their participation or non-participation in the study. They were aware that anonymity and confidentiality of their response was guaranteed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings from data analysis and the researcher's interpretation of the study results. This includes the response rate, demographic statistics, results of hypotheses testing and the mediation results of the study.

4.1 Response Rate

From Table 4.1 below, study findings indicate that 379 (three hundred seventy-nine) questionnaires were administered to the study participants (Unit of inquiry) of which 254 (two hundred fifty-four) questionnaires were filled and returned to the researcher implying a response rate of 67% which is beyond the 50% threshold as proposed by Saunders and Lewis (2009) that a response rate above 50% is acceptable with the fact that it adequately represents the study sample and yield valid results.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

	Frequency	Percentage Rate (%)
Unit of inquiry		
Questionnaires Administered	379	100
Questionnaires filled and returned	254	67
Questionnaires not returned	125	33

Source: Primary data (2024)

4.2 General Information

4.2.1 Respondents' Gender

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender and Table 4.2 shows that 52.4% were male while 47.6% were female. These results show that the study was gender sensitive and thus the results were not bias in terms of gender divide. This indicates that the study considered the responses of both genders and thus it caters for the opinion of both male and female clients of the bank.

Table 4.2: Respondents' Gender

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	133	52.4%
Female	121	47.6%
Total	254	100%

Source: Primary Data (2024)

4.2.2 Age Bracket

The respondents were asked to indicate their ages from a range that was given by the researcher and the results in table 4.3 showed that 26.3% were aged between 41-50 years; 23.2% were aged between 31-40 years; 21.2% were between 21-30 years; 12% were above 61 years; 13% were between 51-60 years; and 4.3% were below 20 years. These results showed that most of the customers at Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch were active youths with employment followed by mature adults that were above the age of 41 years.

Table 4.3: Age Bracket

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20yrs	11	4.3%
21 - 30yrs	54	21.2%
31 - 40yrs	59	23.2%
41 - 50yrs	67	26.3%
51 – 60yrs	33	13.0%
Above 60yrs	30	12.0%
Total	254	100%

Source: Primary Data 2024

4.2.3 Length of Banking Relationship

The respondents were asked to indicate the length they had been with the bank and their response showed that 36.6% had been with the bank for 2-5 years; 30.7% had been with the bank for 6-10 years; 24.4% had been with the bank for 1 year; and 8.3% had been with the bank for 10 years. These results show that most of the respondents had been with the organization for over six years which made them a viable population for the study due to their experience

Table 4.4: Length of Banking Relationship

	Frequency (n = 254)	Percentage (%)
Below 1 year	62	24.4%
2 – 5 years	93	36.6%
6 – 10 years	78	30.7%
Above 10 years	21	8.3%

Source: Primary data (2024)

4.2.4 Type of Account

The researcher wanted to determine the type of accounts that were held by the respondents and 54.3% had a personal current account; 19.4% had savings account; 15.3% had business current

account; 11.1% held more than one account with Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch. These results show that the personal current account was the most preferred by clients at the Bank.

Table 4.5: Type of Account

	Frequency (n = 254)	Percentage (%)
Savings Account	49	19.4%
Personal Current Account	138	54.3%
Business Current Account	39	15.3%
More than One Account	28	11.1%

Source: Primary data 2024

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

The study conducted the descriptive statistics of promotional mix, brand image and customer satisfaction to establish if the data was drawn from a normally distributed population using mean values and standard deviation. The results are indicated in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Promotional Mix	254	3.51	1.002
Brand Image	254	3.88	1.029
Customer Satisfaction	254	3.70	0.863

Source: primary data (2024)

From Table 4.6 above, study findings revealed that majority of the study participants seem to have agreed with the statements raised concerning the study variables as evidenced with the appropriate mean and standard deviation values that is to say promotional mix had a mean value of (3.51) and standard deviation value of (1.002); brand image had a mean value of (3.88) and standard deviation

value of (1.029) whereas customer satisfaction had a mean value of (3.70) and standard deviation value of (0.863).

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was done to determine the extent and direction of the relationship between study variables (Bhandari, 2020). In this regard, Pearson’s Correlation coefficient was used to ascertain the likely presence of linear relationship between promotional mix (independent variable), brand image (mediating variable) and customer satisfaction (dependent variable) as showed in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Correlation Analysis

	Promotional Mix	Brand Image	Customer Satisfaction
Promotional Mix	-		
Brand Image	.416**	-	
Customer Satisfaction	.448**	.413**	-

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table 4.7 above, study findings indicate that there was a significant correlation of .448** at a 1% level of significance between promotional mix and customer satisfaction, indicating that an improvement in promotional mix leads to an improvement in customer satisfaction. In simpler terms, better promotional efforts such as advertising, personal selling, or public relations are associated with higher customer satisfaction at Opportunity Bank. Conversely, if the promotional mix is weak or ineffective, customers are more likely to be dissatisfied.

The study findings also indicate that there was a significant correlation of .416** at a 1% level of significance between promotional mix and promotional mix, implying that as promotional mix increases, brand image tends to increase as well. Conversely, if promotional mix decreases, brand image tends to decrease.

In addition, results in table 4.7 also show that there was a significant correlation of .413** at a 1% level of significance between brand image and customer satisfaction indicating that as brand image increases, customer satisfaction tends to increase as well. Conversely, if brand image decreases, customer satisfaction tends to decrease.

4.5 Direct Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the direct hypotheses to confirm or reject the stated hypotheses using regression analysis that aimed at establishing the predictive power of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

4.5.1 Effect of Promotional Mix on Customer Satisfaction

A regression analysis was conducted to establish the predictive power of promotional mix on customer satisfaction. The first null hypothesis (H_{01}) stated that there is no significant effect of promotional mix on customer satisfaction. Results of the regression analysis are indicated in table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Effect of Promotional Mix on Customer Satisfaction

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.650	.205		7.808	.000
	Promotional Mix	.423	.152	.379	1.853	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

The results from Table 4.8 indicate that the model specified can predict customer satisfaction at a 1% level of significance. Between promotional mix and customer satisfaction, there exists a significant causal effect of .423. This means that a unit change in promotional mix brings about a 0.423 change in customer satisfaction at a 1% level of significance. In this respect, the study rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis that “Promotional Mix has a significant effect on Customer Satisfaction”.

4.5.2 Effect of Promotional Mix on Brand Image

A regression analysis was conducted to establish the predictive power of promotional mix on brand image. The second null hypothesis (H_{02}) stated that there is no significant effect of promotional mix on brand image. Results of the regression analysis are indicated in table 4.9;

Table 4.9: Effect of Promotional Mix on Brand Image

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.2682	.211		6.724	.000
	Promotional Mix	.529	.249	.420	2.231	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image

The results in table 4.9 revealed that that there exists a positive effect of promotional mix on brand image of .529, which means that a unit change in promotional mix brings about a 0.529 change in

brand image at a 1% level of significance. In this respect, the study rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis that “Promotional mix has a significant effect on brand image”.

4.6 Mediating Effect of Brand Image on the Relationship between Promotional Mix and Customer Satisfaction

The study tested the mediating effect of brand image in the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) testing for mediation involves fulfilling four (4) major conditions. These conditions include; the independent variable must significantly predict the dependent variable, the independent variable must have a significant relationship with the mediating variable, the mediating variable must have a significant correlation with the dependent variable and lastly the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less upon introduction of the mediator variable in the third regression model.

Following four steps of Baron and Kenny (1986), regression analysis was tested to conclude the mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction.

In table 4.8 the regression analysis result indicates that promotional mix significantly predicts customer satisfaction with ($\beta = .423$, $t = 1.853$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, the first step of Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation analysis is tested and passed.

Regarding second step, regression results in table 4.9 indicates that promotional mix is significantly predicting the mediator variable brand image with ($\beta = .529$, $t = 2.231$, $p = 0.000$). So, the second step of Baron and Kenny (1986) was met.

Regarding the third step, correlation results in table 4.7 indicates that the brand image significantly correlates with the customer satisfaction with ($r = .413^{**}$, $p=0.000$). So, the third step of Baron and Kenny (1986) was met.

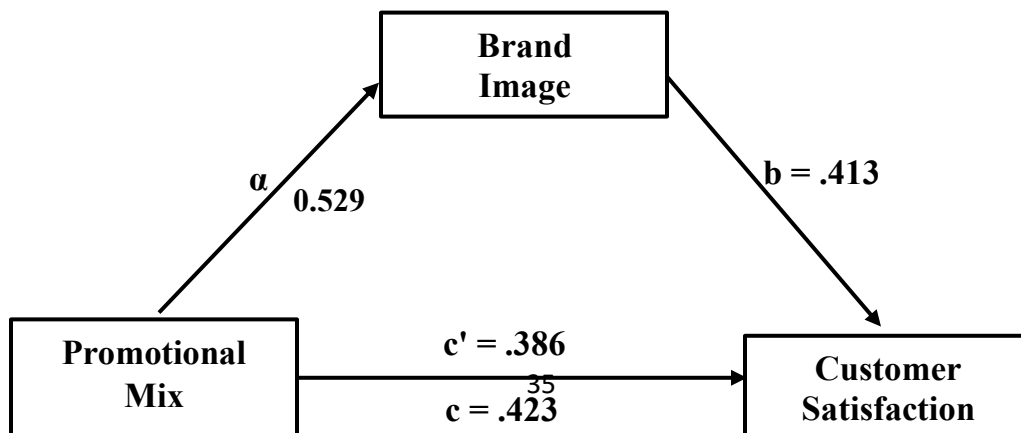
Table 4.10: Mediating Effect of Brand Image on the Relationship between Promotional Mix and Customer Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.740	.405		4.298	.000
1 Promotional Mix	.386	.139	.219	1.960	.000
Brand Image	.129	.066	.198	.938	.016

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

The fourth condition states that after the mediator is entered in the regression model, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables should either disappear (full mediation) or significantly diminish (partial mediation) Baron and Kenny (1986). In this research the regression coefficient shows a change and reduction by ($\beta = .37$) but not zero. Therefore, partial mediation is observed and the fourth condition of Baron and Kenny (1986) was met and supported the 4th hypothesis which says that the mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction is significant.

Figure 2: Mediation Model, X-Y-M Paths



4.7 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

The study was premised on four hypotheses which were statistically tested to establish whether the study findings supported or rejected the hypotheses as indicated in table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Hypotheses Tested

Hypothesis Code	Tested Hypothesis	Result
H₀₁:	There is no significant effect of promotional mix on customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.	Rejected
H₀₂:	There is no significant relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.	Rejected
H₀₃:	There is no significant effect of promotional mix on brand image in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.	Rejected
H₀₄:	There is no mediating effect of brand image in the relationship between promotional mix and customer satisfaction in Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch.	Rejected

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations based on the findings of the study as highlighted in the previous chapter. The chapter is arranged into five subsections: a) Discussions related to the research objectives; b) conclusion, c) recommendations; d) the limitations of the study, and e) areas for further study.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

Under this section, the findings of the study are discussed based on research objectives as observed below;

5.1.1 Effect of Promotional Mix on Customer Satisfaction

The results of this study indicate that the promotional mix has a significant effect on customer satisfaction at Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch, as demonstrated by the Beta value of 0.423, t-value of 1.853, and a p-value of 0.000. A. This implies that improvements in promotional strategies are likely to lead to a corresponding increase in customer satisfaction levels. A p-value of 0.000, which is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the findings suggest that the promotional mix is a critical driver of customer satisfaction at the bank.

The findings align with previous studies that have underscored the significance of the promotional mix in enhancing customer satisfaction. For example, studies conducted by Abimbola and Bamidele (2021) found that promotional strategies such as advertising, sales promotions, and direct marketing significantly enhance customer perception and satisfaction in the banking sector.

Similarly, Dushimimana (2022) emphasizes that tailored promotional activities play a key role in improving customers' experiences and satisfaction levels. This suggests that Opportunity Bank's promotional efforts in Soroti may have succeeded in creating positive customer experiences, thereby fostering higher satisfaction levels.

Moreover, the findings are also consistent with the work of Osei and Offei (2021), who argue that effective promotional strategies provide customers with relevant information and incentives, which enhance their satisfaction with banking services. By utilizing a balanced and customer-oriented promotional mix, banks can effectively communicate the value of their services, leading to better customer relationships and satisfaction. The findings therefore highlight the critical role of the promotional mix in enhancing customer satisfaction at Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch. The significant effect identified in the study reinforces the need for the bank to continuously invest in and refine its promotional strategies. As suggested by recent literature, a well-crafted promotional mix that is aligned with customer needs and preferences not only enhances satisfaction but also contributes to customer loyalty and retention (Brown & Green, 2023).

5.1.2 Effect of Promotional Mix on Brand Image

The results presented in Table 4.10 indicate a significant positive effect of the promotional mix on brand image at Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch, with a Beta value of 0.529, a t-value of 2.231, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding highlights the critical role that promotional efforts play in shaping and reinforcing a strong, positive brand image for the bank. The findings align with contemporary research that emphasizes the importance of a well-crafted promotional mix in building and sustaining a strong brand image. For example, Dushimimana (2022) argues that promotional strategies, such as advertising, sales promotions, and direct marketing, are instrumental in communicating a brand's value proposition to its target market, thereby enhancing

its overall image. Similarly, Osei and Offei (2021) found that consistent and targeted promotional activities significantly influence how customers perceive a brand's credibility and trustworthiness. In the case of Opportunity Bank, the results suggest that its promotional mix has been effective in reinforcing a positive image, possibly by highlighting the bank's reliability, service quality, and customer-centric approach.

Additionally, the findings of the study align with earlier findings by Hassan and Kamau (2023), who noted that promotional activities serve as a direct channel for brands to communicate with their customers, thereby shaping their perceptions and fostering positive brand associations. The moderately strong effect size indicates that Opportunity Bank's promotional efforts are a key factor in its overall branding strategy. These promotional efforts likely communicate important aspects of the bank, such as its values, products, and customer service, contributing to a more favorable brand image in the minds of its customers.

Moreover, the positive effect of the promotional mix on brand image highlights the interconnectedness of marketing communication strategies and brand equity. According to Munene et al. (2022), effective promotional strategies not only increase brand visibility but also enhance brand associations and customer loyalty. This suggests that Opportunity Bank's promotional mix likely influences how customers perceive the bank's attributes, such as its professionalism, trustworthiness, and commitment to providing high-quality financial services. This is essential in a competitive banking environment, where a strong brand image can serve as a differentiating factor, attracting and retaining customers.

The significance of the promotional mix's impact on brand image also underscores the need for Opportunity Bank to continuously refine its promotional strategies. As the banking industry becomes more competitive and customer expectations evolve, it is crucial for the bank to maintain

a dynamic and adaptable promotional mix that resonates with its target audience. A study by Brown and Green (2023) suggests that banks that regularly update their promotional strategies to reflect changes in market trends and customer preferences are more likely to sustain a strong and positive brand image over time. For Opportunity Bank, this may involve leveraging digital marketing channels, social media, and customer engagement platforms to enhance its promotional efforts.

All in all, the findings of the study highlight the vital role that well-executed promotional strategies play in enhancing a bank's brand image and shaping customer perceptions. Consistent with previous research, a strong promotional mix can lead to increased brand visibility, customer trust, and loyalty. Therefore, it is essential for Opportunity Bank to continue investing in its promotional activities to maintain and strengthen its brand image, which is crucial for achieving long-term success in the competitive banking industry. As noted by Amankwah and Yeboah (2021), a strong brand image not only drives customer satisfaction but also contributes to customer retention and business growth.

5.1.3 Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction

The analysis presented in Table 4.8 reveals a significant positive relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction at Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .413^{**}$ and a p-value of 0.000. This finding aligns with previous research that highlights the powerful influence of brand image on customer satisfaction in the banking sector. For example, Yeboah and Dadzie (2021) found that customers' emotional attachment and trust in a brand are key determinants of their satisfaction. When a brand's image communicates reliability, trustworthiness, and quality service, it directly enhances customer satisfaction. Munene et al. (2022) echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing that customers who perceive a bank's brand positively are more likely to have favorable interactions, which boosts their overall satisfaction. In

the case of Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch, the brand image likely represents key attributes such as trust, professionalism, and customer-centric services, all of which contribute to higher satisfaction levels.

Furthermore, the results indicate that a positive brand image does not only affect customer satisfaction but also plays a pivotal role in customer loyalty and long-term relationships. According to Amankwah and Yeboah (2021), a strong brand image fosters customer trust and emotional connections, leading to greater loyalty. Customers who associate a bank with a strong, reliable brand are more likely to continue using its services and recommend it to others. This finding is particularly important for Opportunity Bank, as it suggests that by enhancing its brand image, the bank can improve not only customer satisfaction but also customer retention and word-of-mouth referrals, key factors in sustaining competitive advantage.

Moreover, the significance of the correlation between brand image and customer satisfaction emphasizes the need for Opportunity Bank to continually invest in its brand-building strategies. As the banking industry becomes increasingly competitive, customers are more likely to choose a bank that presents a positive and consistent brand image. A study by Osei and Offei (2022) found that customers often evaluate a bank's reputation and image before deciding to engage with its services. Therefore, Opportunity Bank must focus on maintaining a brand image that resonates with its target customers, reflecting qualities such as integrity, innovation, and customer-focused solutions.

The results of this study therefore highlight the importance of brand image in influencing customer satisfaction at Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch. The significant correlation between these variables demonstrates that as the bank strengthens its brand image, customer satisfaction improves accordingly. This underscores the importance of brand-building efforts that focus on

fostering positive perceptions among customers. As supported by the findings of Abimbola and Bamidele (2021), a strong brand image not only enhances customer satisfaction but also contributes to loyalty, trust, and long-term relationships. To maintain its competitive edge, Opportunity Bank should continue to refine its brand image and ensure that it remains aligned with the evolving needs and expectations of its customers.

5.1.4 Promotional Mix, Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction

The findings reveal that brand image partially mediates the relationship between the promotional mix and customer satisfaction at Opportunity Bank, Soroti Branch, with a reduction in the Beta coefficient by $\beta = .37$. This indicates that while the promotional mix directly affects customer satisfaction, part of its effect is channeled through the brand image. The reduction in the Beta value signifies that brand image plays a critical role in explaining how promotional activities influence customer satisfaction. This partial mediation suggests that some of the positive effects of promotional strategies are not immediately realized in customer satisfaction, but are instead reflected in the bank's brand image, which then enhances customer satisfaction.

These findings are consistent with existing literature that underscores the role of brand image as a mediator between marketing efforts and customer outcomes. For instance, Munene et al. (2022) argue that while promotional activities can directly enhance customer satisfaction by providing information and incentives, their effectiveness is often amplified when they contribute to a positive brand image. A strong brand image creates positive associations and emotional connections with customers, leading to increased satisfaction. Therefore, in the case of Opportunity Bank, promotional activities likely enhance the bank's brand image, which in turn fosters higher customer satisfaction.

The partial mediation effect highlights the importance of brand image in the promotional mix-customer satisfaction relationship. While promotional activities such as advertising, sales promotions, and personal selling have a direct influence on customer satisfaction, a portion of their impact is realized through how customers perceive the bank's brand. According to Hassan and Kamau (2023), promotional strategies that effectively communicate a brand's values, reliability, and trustworthiness enhance the brand's image, which in turn improves customer satisfaction. In Opportunity Bank's context, this suggests that the promotional mix not only directly informs and engages customers but also strengthens their perception of the bank's brand, leading to higher satisfaction levels.

Moreover, the reduction in the Beta value ($\beta = .37$) after accounting for brand image indicates that while the promotional mix remains a significant driver of customer satisfaction, brand image serves as a crucial intermediary. This aligns with findings by Osei and Offei (2021), who posit that customers' perceptions of a brand play a vital role in determining their satisfaction with the products or services offered. A well-crafted promotional mix may draw customers in and communicate the bank's offerings, but it is the brand image that shapes their long-term satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, Opportunity Bank's success in enhancing customer satisfaction through promotional activities partly hinges on how effectively these activities contribute to building a strong and favorable brand image.

Furthermore, the role of brand image as a partial mediator emphasizes the need for Opportunity Bank to integrate brand-building efforts within its promotional strategies. As the findings suggest, enhancing the brand image through consistent and meaningful promotional activities is likely to have a compound effect on customer satisfaction. Studies by Brown and Green (2023) highlight the importance of aligning promotional content with the desired brand image to ensure that

marketing efforts are cohesive and reinforce the brand's key attributes. For Opportunity Bank, this could mean ensuring that all promotional activities reflect its core values, such as reliability, customer focus, and innovation, to maximize both brand image and customer satisfaction. Therefore, Opportunity Bank should prioritize maintaining a positive and consistent brand image as a key part of its overall marketing strategy to achieve sustained customer satisfaction and competitive advantage.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Effect of Promotional Mix on Customer Satisfaction

The study concludes that the promotional mix, including public relations, sales promotions, and direct selling plays a critical role in influencing customer satisfaction. The findings reveal that an effective promotional mix significantly enhances customer satisfaction. Sales promotions such as discounts, sponsoring local community events, and involving in other charitable causes attract customers by creating a sense of value, leading to a positive perception of the bank. These incentives not only drive short-term customer engagement but also help in retaining existing customers by rewarding loyalty. Direct selling was found to have the most influential aspect in the promotional mix. The one-on-one interactions between the bank's staff and customers allow for personalized service, addressing individual customer needs and concerns more effectively. Public relations efforts, including targeted messaging and community engagement initiatives, were also seen to contribute positively to customer satisfaction. However, some respondents expressed the need for more frequent and diverse promotional activities, especially in the areas of sales promotions and advertising. A more integrated promotional strategy combining traditional and digital platforms could further boost customer engagement and satisfaction.

5.2.2 Effect of Promotional Mix on Brand Image

The study concludes that the strategic use of promotional tools plays a crucial role in shaping and enhancing the bank's brand. Personal selling through direct interactions with customers builds lasting relationships, fostering trust and reliability. Public relations activities, including community outreach and positive media engagements, further strengthen the bank's reputation as socially responsible and customer-focused. Direct selling, personalized messages, and targeted campaigns also ensure that customers feel valued, reinforcing the brand's image as attentive and customer-friendly. Put another way, the promotional mix contributes to a cohesive and positive brand image by enhancing customer perceptions of trust, value, and service quality at Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch.

5.2.3 Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction

The study concludes that a strong and positive brand image significantly influences customer satisfaction. A well-established brand image, built on trust, reliability, and service quality, enhances customer perceptions and confidence in the bank's offerings. When customers perceive the bank as professional, customer-centric, and socially responsible, they are more likely to feel satisfied with its services. This satisfaction is further reinforced by the consistency between the bank's brand promises and the actual customer experience, particularly in terms of service delivery, staff interactions, and the value of products. The positive brand image not only attracts new customers but also fosters loyalty among existing ones, as customers associate the bank with dependability and personalized care. Ultimately, the study highlights that a strong brand image creates an emotional connection with customers, driving higher levels of satisfaction and long-term loyalty at Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch.

5.2.4 Promotional Mix, Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction

The study concludes that brand image plays a critical intermediary role. The promotional mix—comprising sales promotions, direct selling, and public relations directly influences customer perceptions, but its full impact on customer satisfaction is significantly enhanced through the bank's brand image. A well-crafted promotional mix creates awareness, engagement, and positive associations with the bank, which strengthens its brand image. In turn, a strong brand image amplifies customer satisfaction by reinforcing positive customer experiences and perceptions. Customers who have a favorable view of the bank's brand are more likely to be satisfied with its services because the brand image aligns with their expectations. Thus, the study concludes that the promotional mix enhances customer satisfaction most effectively when it builds and reinforces a positive brand image, serving as a vital link between promotional efforts and overall customer contentment at Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch.

5.3 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations in line with the study.

- Opportunity Bank should increase its focus on targeted digital marketing efforts through social media platforms, mobile banking apps, and email campaigns. By personalizing advertisements based on customer demographics and preferences, the bank can improve engagement, enhance customer awareness, and better meet the specific needs of its diverse clientele, leading to increased satisfaction.
- The bank should offer more frequent and customized sales promotions, such as reduced loan processing fees, and referral bonuses. Tailoring these promotions to specific customer

segments, such as small business owners or rural farmers, would increase perceived value, attract new clients, and strengthen customer loyalty, ultimately boosting satisfaction levels.

- The bank should invest in the training of customer service and sales staff in a bid to improve personal selling efforts. Ensuring that frontline employees are well-equipped with communication, problem-solving, and product knowledge will enhance the overall customer experience. Personalized interactions build trust and strengthen relationships, which are key drivers of customer satisfaction.
- Opportunity Bank should develop consistent and well-coordinated advertising campaigns that reflect its core values of trust, reliability, and customer-centric services. By maintaining a uniform message across all media platforms—such as radio, billboards, social media, and print, customers will develop a stronger, clearer perception of the bank's brand identity, reinforcing its positive image in the market.
- Opportunity bank should enhance its public relations efforts by actively engaging in community events, corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, and partnerships with local organizations which can boost the bank's reputation. These activities portray the bank as socially responsible and deeply invested in the welfare of the community, improving its overall brand image and customer trust.
- The bank should implement more personalized communication strategies through direct marketing, such as SMS alerts, email newsletters, and mobile banking updates tailored to specific customer needs. By addressing customers individually and offering relevant financial products or promotions, the bank can create a more customer-friendly brand image, fostering stronger loyalty and positive perceptions.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

- The study is specific to Opportunity Bank Soroti Branch, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other branches or banks operating in different regions. The unique demographic, economic, and cultural factors influencing customer behavior in Soroti may not apply to other regions. The study compared results with findings from similar studies in other branches or regions, offering insights into how customer behavior might differ. Additionally, the researcher suggested conducting further studies in different locations to test whether the relationships observed in Soroti hold true in other settings, thereby enhancing generalizability.
- The study focused on a limited set of promotional mix elements i.e., public relations, sales promotions, direct selling. There is therefore need to bring in other elements such as digital marketing strategies or word-of-mouth, which could also significantly influence brand image and customer satisfaction. The researcher suggested that future studies incorporate additional elements such as digital marketing strategies and word-of-mouth marketing.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

- With the increasing importance of digital marketing, future studies could focus on the role of online advertising, social media marketing, and mobile banking applications in shaping brand image and customer satisfaction. This would provide a more holistic view of how modern promotional channels affect customer perceptions in the banking sector.
- To enhance generalizability, future research could conduct a comparative study across multiple banks in different regions. This would help determine if the effects of the promotional mix and brand image on customer satisfaction vary based on regional demographics, economic conditions, and cultural factors.

- Further research could investigate how different customer demographics (age, income level, education, etc.) mediate the relationship between the promotional mix and brand image.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESPONDENTS

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at Busitema University, pursuing a Master's degree in Public Administration. I am carrying out research on "*Promotional Mix, Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction in Commercial Banks in Uganda: A Case of Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited*". You have been selected as one of the respondents whose input will be of great value in this research process. You are therefore humbly requested to respond to the following questions. The information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used only for this study.

SECTION A: RESPONDENT'S PERSONAL DATA

Please provide the information required by ticking in the appropriate box.

1. Gender

Male Female

2. Age

21 – 30yrs 31 – 40yrs

41 – 50yrs 51 and above

3. Academic Qualification:

'O' Level 'A' Level Diploma

Degree Postgraduate

4. How long as a customer have you been using the services of Opportunity Bank?

Below 1yr 2 – 5yrs 6 – 10yrs

11 – 15yrs 16yrs and above

SECTION B: PROMOTIONAL MIX

For each question, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the box that best reflects your perception.

SD	D	NS	A	SA
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
	PUBLIC RELATIONS					
1.	The bank has a press relations' team					
2.	The bank's social media presence enhances my understanding of its offerings and activities.					
3.	The bank promptly addresses and resolves customer complaints.					
4.	The bank's community involvement initiatives positively influence my perception of the organization.					
5.	The bank maintains transparency in its communication regarding changes in policies or procedures.					
6.	The bank's response to inquiries or feedback submitted through its website or social media is timely.					
	SALES PROMOTION					
7.	The bank offers discounts as a way of promoting its services.					
8.	The bank's promotional events and campaigns provide valuable benefits to me as a customer.					
9.	Coupons have also been used by the bank to improve its performance					
10.	The bank sponsors local community events I care about.					

11.	The bank's initiatives on financial literacy workshops makes me view them as a more helpful resource.					
12.	The bank's involvement in charitable causes that align with my values make me view them more favorably.					
	DIRECT SELLING					
13.	The bank has adopted face-to-face selling to reach out to clients through agent banking.					
14.	The bank has embraced use of direct mails to customers and potential customers in a bid to bring them on board.					
15.	The bank uses electronic text messaging to market its product to existing and newly targeted customers.					
16.	The bank's representatives are proactive in understanding and addressing my needs.					
17.	The bank's representatives demonstrate professionalism and expertise in their interactions.					
18.	I feel comfortable with bank representatives contacting me directly to discuss their products and services.					

SECTION C: BRAND IMAGE

For each question, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the box that best reflects your perception.

SD	D	NS	A	SA
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Note sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
	BRAND AWARENESS					
1.	I am aware of Opportunity Bank Uganda and its services.					
2.	Opportunity Bank Uganda is a well-known bank in my community.					
3.	I often see advertisements or hear about Opportunity Bank Uganda.					
	BRAND ASSOCIATION					
4.	I associate Opportunity Bank Uganda with reliability.					
5.	Opportunity Bank Uganda is known for its customer-friendly services.					
6.	The bank has a positive reputation in the market.					
	PERCEIVED QUALITY					
7.	Opportunity Bank Uganda provides high-quality financial services.					
8.	The services offered by Opportunity Bank Uganda are dependable.					

9.	Opportunity Bank Uganda's services meet my expectations.					
	BRAND LOYALTY					
10.	I prefer Opportunity Bank Uganda over other banks.					
11.	I am likely to recommend Opportunity Bank Uganda to others.					
12.	I intend to continue using Opportunity Bank Uganda's services in the future.					

SECTION D: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

For each question, please indicate your level of agreement by checking the box that best reflects your perception.

SD	D	NS	A	SA
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Note sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
1.	I am satisfied with the overall quality of service I receive from this bank.					
2.	The bank's fees and charges are fair and transparent.					
3.	The bank offers a variety of products and services that meet my needs.					
4.	It is easy to access my bank accounts and information through online banking or mobile app.					
5.	The bank's customer service representatives are helpful and knowledgeable.					
6.	My issues and concerns are resolved by the bank in a timely manner.					
7.	The bank keeps me informed about important updates and changes to my accounts or services.					
8.	I feel confident that my money is safe and secure with this bank.					
9.	I would recommend this bank to my friends and family.					
10.	I am likely to continue using this bank for my financial needs in the future.					