Examining the influence of corporate website identity on corporate reputation, e-loyalty and identification in the context of banking industry in the United Kingdom.

Purpose of the paper
This research is primarily concerned with extending the current knowledge of corporate website identity within the discipline of marketing by developing a comprehensive conceptual model of its influence on corporate reputation, e-loyalty and identification.

Theoretical background
The interest in corporate website has increased at a phenomenal rate (Gardner, 2008; Hendricks, 2007; Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002; Scheffelmaier & Vinsonhaler, 2002; Shchiglik & Barnes, 1998). Corporate website, is a primary vehicle for corporate visual identity (CVI) and plays an important role in the way that an organisation portrays itself to internal and external stakeholders (Chen & Wells 1999; Melewar & Karaoesmanoglu, 2006). Corporate identity is transformed into corporate image and in time to corporate reputation through corporate communication activities (Abdullah et al., 2013; Dowling, 2001). A solid reputation can be constructed by aligning unique corporation’s identity and consistent set of corporate images to the public (Melewar, 2003; Fombrun, 1996; Leitch & Davenport, 2011). To transmit a positive image can help to recover stakeholders’ confidence and trust in the banking entities especially in the times of financial crisis (Bravo et al., 2011). Trust can be gained by using the website features correctly and it can lead to enhancing consumers’ loyalty (Alhudaithy & Kitchen, 2009). Thus, now it is particularly important to research the company’s corporate identities in the banking sector by using information communicated by entities through their website.

Methodology
This study adopts a mixed-method research design. The first stage uses a qualitative method as the more appropriate, because of the present lack of understanding of ‘corporate website identity’ and its relationship to favourable corporate image, corporate reputation, favourable e-loyalty and identification; these require defining in more depth (Saunders et al., 2007). For this reason, this study adopts Churchill’s qualitative paradigm (1979) to collect this kind of information. In the second phase, this conceptual model will be used to examine consumers’ perceptions of the influence of corporate reputation, e-loyalty and identification in the context of a banking industry in the UK.

Findings
The proposed research framework has not yet been empirically tested. However, the potential findings will be of managerial relevance, in that they are useful in the development of corporate websites, which enhance corporate reputation perceptions, e-loyalty and identification.

Practical implications
The hypotheses and the conceptual framework will present an approach with which a corporation can design and manage a favourable corporate website. It is hoped that this investigation will make a considerable managerial contribution to the understanding of decision-makers and graphic designers about the whole relationship between favourable website identity, its antecedents and its main consequences.

Contribution of paper
This thesis makes a number of contributions, it contributes to the literature on corporate websites by clarifying the concept of corporate website identity, in addition to specifying its antecedents and consequences. As well as this study concerns with the examination of a corporate website construct within the banking context.
References


