

## Investigating the effects of customer-based brand equity on turnover intentions with mediating effect of customer citizenship behavior

Mohsin Raza<sup>a\*</sup>, Salniza Salleh<sup>a</sup>, Beenish Tariq<sup>b</sup>, Raed Saud Altayyar<sup>c</sup> and Hasnizam Shaari<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Universiti Utrara Malaysia, Malaysia

<sup>b</sup>National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan

<sup>c</sup>Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia

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### ABSTRACT

This study addresses the issue of rising turnover intention in Pakistan's aviation industry and provides a theoretical foundation for lowering the turnover intention with the help of consumer citizenship behavior (CCB) and consumer-based brand equity by using the S-O-R theory. The data is collected with the help of structured personally administered questions following the intercept approach. Three most frequently used international airports which are located at Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar are targeted for data collection and total of 388 Pakistani flyers who traveled to international destinations participate in the survey. In addition, this study uses SmartPLS 3.2.7 for data analysis with the help of a two-stage approach. The results state that CBBE had a significant effect on CCB and CCB had a significant impact on turnover intentions. Furthermore, CCB plays the role of an important mediator for the effect of customer based brand equity (CBBE) on turnover intention. These results enhance existing literature about lowering the turnover intention with the help of CCB and CBBE in aviation industry of Pakistan. The study also highlights that managers and practitioners should improve customer engagement for exhibiting CCB to reduce customer turnover intentions in the aviation industry.

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## 1. Introduction

The essence of a product and service brands' triumph lies in its customers. The brands which fail to put their fingers on the pulse of true customers' needs on right time ends up with loss of significant count of customers (Ali et al., 2015). Since customers are the lifeblood of running a business, the brands develop and promote customer-oriented strategies to reduce their customers' loss and their turnover intentions (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Intensive competition, the upsurge of airline industry challenges, significant changes in expectations, demands and behavior of the customer in services industry of Pakistan specifically aviation industry, urged the airlines to endeavor for lowering customers' turnover (Ali et al., 2015). According to Iqbal and Badshah (2016), the aviation industry of Pakistan is experiencing a tremendous growth rate of 5% each year and the number of customers raised from 8.5 million to 11.9 million over the period 2010-2015. On the other hand, Pakistan international airline (PIA) is facing unexpected customers turnover to foreign carriers. The local flying carrier of Pakistan lost their 13% of customer who switched to foreign flying carriers (Iqbal & Badshah, 2016). Such customers' turnover from local flying carriers to foreign carriers alerted the scholars and practitioners to look for a suitable solution (Ali et al., 2015). It is necessary to strengthen relationship of local aviation industry with customers and their participation for the betterment of brand. Therefore, local aviation brands understands customers as their core strength for competitive advantage (Ali et al., 2012). Marketing literature comprehends the worth of customers participation and argued customers as an inseparable part of services (Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2005). Specifically, volunteer participation or customer citizenship behavior (CCB) are crucial for the smooth functioning and long-term sustainability of a services brand (Chan et al., 2017). CCB is a prosocial behavior of customers for information sharing and well-being of brands and other customers (Wu et al., 2017). Developing citizenship behavior in customers helps brand for managing the customer-brand relationship, reducing turnover

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [mohsinraza006@gmail.com](mailto:mohsinraza006@gmail.com) (M. Raza)

intentions in customers and enhancing brands' sustainability (Tung et al., 2017). That is why the understudied phenomenon of CCB has got heated debates among practitioners (Nagy & Marzouk, 2018). Due to such richness of construct, marketing literature has highlighted the importance, applicability, and significances of CCB in the aviation industry (Lishan et al., 2014). In the aviation industry, services being delivered in a shared environment where customers share their time, space and equipment collectively. CCB foster customers to guide other customers to enhance their service experience (Kim & Choi, 2016). In addition, CCB encourage customers to support their fellow customers, providing feedback to brands to improve their services, being an advocate of brand and tolerating an undesirable situation which ultimately improve market share, sales and sustainability of brands and also lower the turnover intentions of customer (Revilla-Camacho et al., 2015). This prosocial support of customers also encourages other customers to adopt this behavior which is highly beneficial for brands (Zhu et al., 2016). Therefore, CCB is considered as the most suitable approach for local aviation industry of Pakistan to manage its customer-brand relationships and lowering turnover intentions of customers.

Marketing literature has been elaborated brand relationship as a vital predictor to generate citizenship behavior in customers of aviation industry (Lishan et al., 2014). Brand relationships and more specifically brand equity is positively related to CCB (Balaji, 2014). Customer based brand equity (CBBE) includes awareness/association, brand loyalty and perceived quality (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Prior studies have been highlighted that brand awareness/association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality influence encourage customers to adopt citizenship behavior (Abolfathi et al., 2013; Anaza & Zhao, 2013; Zhang & Chen, 2017). The mentioned substantial evidence supports the role of CBBE in predicting CCB. In addition, marketing literature indicates that customer citizenship lower the tendency of customers' turnover and argued CCB as a key predictor to influence turnover intentions of customers (Revilla-Camacho et al., 2015). Therefore, this study posits CCB as mediator between CBBE and customer turnover intention.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Turnover intentions*

Customers are key resources and inseparable part of the services brand (Vargo & Lusch, 2005). When customers' associations with a brand decreases then they switch to competing brands (Mosavi et al., 2018). Customer turnover intentions bring adverse effects on brands' survival, decrease sales, lower profitability and sustainability in long run (Han & Sean, 2015). Customer turnover in local aviation industry resulting in inadequate profits, loss of market share, harming competitive abilities and increasing challenges for local flying carrier's survival (Ali et al., 2015). Therefore, brands prefer to adopt customer-oriented approaches and engage customers in citizenship behavior to lower the turnover intentions of customers (Revilla-Camacho et al., 2015).

### *2.2. Customer Citizenship Behavior*

Customer citizenship behavior (CCB) is customers' volunteer actions to assist other customers and support the brands (Nagy & Marzouk, 2018). Whereas, customers' engagement in citizenship behavior is not obligatory but it is being adopted by customers to assist brand and fellow customers (Kim & Choi, 2016). According to Yi and Gong (2013), CCB consists of four indicators that are helping behavior, advocacy, feedback, and tolerance. Helping behavior referred as customers' help to brand and fellow customers in service delivery. Advocacy refers to spreading positive word of mouth and protecting the brand from negative comments. Feedback refers to customers' response to brands for their services. Tolerance is referred as the capacity of the customers to bear unwanted situation while service delivery. Marketing literature highlights CCB as crucial for brands to maintain their relationship with customers (Tung et al., 2017). CCB develop positive behavior in customers, improve market share, profits, sales and lower the customer turnover intentions (Revilla-Camacho et al., 2015). It helps the brand retain customers for long time and enhance brand performance (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). Consequently, CCB has become a hot topic of this era among scholars and practitioners (Nagy & Marzouk, 2018).

### *2.3. Customer based brand equity*

Customer based brand equity (CBBE) is one of the key concerns of brands. Brand equity is set of assets associated with the brand and provides value to the customer (Aaker, 1991). According to Yoo and Donthu (2001), CBBE consists of brand loyalty, brand association, and perceived quality. Brand loyalty is explained as the level of customers' attachment towards the brand (Aaker, 1991). Brand association is explained as customers' associations with services (Severi & Ling, 2013). In addition, It is also referred to customers' awareness to recognize a brand in presence of competitive brands (Seo & Park, 2018). Perceived Quality is explained as the influence of customers on brand either negative or positive (Aaker, 1991). Prior studies have highlighted brand loyalty, brand awareness and perceived quality as predictors of CCB. Brand loyalty encourages customers to adopt CCB to assist brand and customer to smoothening the functions of brand (Anaza & Zhao, 2013). Brand awareness encourages customers to adopt citizenship behavior for the brand with whom they are associated (Zhang & Chen, 2017). Perceived quality of a brand also foster customers to involve in citizenship behavior (Abolfathi et al., 2013). In addition, literature indicated CBBE as important predictor to develop CCB in aviation industry and important strategy to strengthen relationships among brands and customers over the period of time (Lishan et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2017).

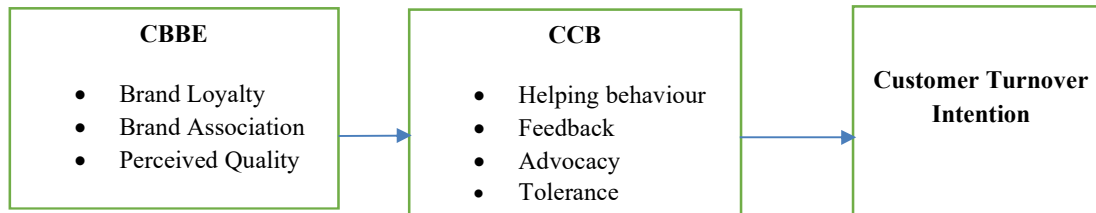
## **3. Research Objective**

The objective of the current study is threefold. The first objective is managing the customer-brand relationships, more precisely customer-based brand equity (CBBE). The second objective is observing the effect of CCB on customers' turnover

intentions. The third objective is to operationalize CBBE and CCB as first order reflective and second-order formative construct. Moreover, current study makes two major contributions. First, this study tests the effect of CBBE on customers' turnover intentions through the mediation of consumer citizenship behavior. Secondly, the research model tests the effect of CCB on customers' turnover intentions in Pakistan's aviation industry.

### 3.1. Conceptual Framework

This study incorporates CBBE as an independent variable, CCB as mediator and turnover intentions as the dependent variable. Furthermore, this study investigates how CCB mediates the relationship between CBBE and customers turnover intentions using Preacher and Hayes (2004) mediation approach. This framework is supported by stimulus-organism response theory which explains that when an organism triggered by stimuli, it generates a response (Russell & Mehrabian, 1977). In this study, CBBE act as a stimulus, CCB as an organism and turnover intentions as a response. In addition, this study addressed the lack of empirical research in the aviation industry to enhance the literature on lowering turnover intention with the help of CCB and CBBE.



Hypothesis 1 (H1). CBBE has a significant effect on CCB.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). CCB has a significant effect on customer turnover intention.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). CCB mediates the effect of CBBE on customer turnover intention.

### 3.2. Research Methodology

This study uses a multi-stage clustered sampling technique for determination of sample size. The population inside the cluster is heterogeneous and among clusters is homogenous. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the multi-stage clustered sampling technique is considered appropriate for this study. Subsequently, the airport intercept approach is used to target customers. There are twelve major international airports in Pakistan which are in four provinces of Pakistan and cover the customer traffic from all over the world. That is why, each of the provinces is considered a cluster. In addition, according to Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (2017), 14,485,950 customers take international flights through these airports. However, the customer traffic from these airports is as followed. i.e. 63% of these customers traveled from airports located in province Punjab, 27% customers traveled via airports located in province Sindh, 10% customers traveled via province KPK and around 1% customers from province Baluchistan. Since most of the customers travel through airports in Punjab, Sindh, and KPK so data is collected from Lahore (Punjab), Karachi (Sindh), and Peshawar (KPK) due to the highest customer walk in based on CIA report (Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority, 2017). Table 1 shows the proportions calculated for 500 questionnaires based on CIA report.

**Table 1**  
Determination of Sample Size for each cluster

Province	Customer Traffic	Percentage (%)	Sample Size
Punjab	9,175,797	63	315
Sindh	3,891,704	27	135
KPK	1,418,449	10	50
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>14,485,950</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>500</b>

Source: (Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority, 2017)

### 3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Keeping in consideration the objectives of this study, survey technique has been used for data collection. For this purpose, the data was collected from the customers who traveled through international airports as mentioned earlier (Table 1) from Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar by distributing 315, 135 and 50 questionnaires respectively. Most of the respondents were frequent flyers who flew regularly. Before conducting the survey, permission was granted from the airport authorities. The survey forms were distributed to the customers in the waiting lounges via face to face requests using the intercept approach. Two enumerators were hired and trained for data collection. The researchers collected data from Lahore, however, enumerators collected data from Karachi and Peshawar. The researchers and enumerators visited airports based on international flight schedules. The data was gathered from every third customer who entered the waiting lounge. The researchers contacted the customer and requested to participate in the survey. The questionnaire is given to the customers who were willing to fill out the questionnaire and requested to return the questionnaire while leaving the waiting lounge. To improve the participation and reduce the rate of refusal the respondents were offered a keychain upon returning the filled questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was personal-administered and consists of three sections.

Section (A) consists of filter questions including the question about the frequency of the flights and the reason for traveling abroad.

Section (B) consists of questions related to the customer's understudy which are customer based brand equity, customer citizenship behavior, and turnover intentions

Section (C) consists of respondents' profile which includes the questions related to age, education, marital status, income, and gender.

A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed whereby 387 questionnaires were returned recording a response rate of 77.4% which is consistent with the past studies in Pakistani airline (Saleem et al., 2017).

### 3.4 Measures

This study adapted the customer based brand equity (CCBE) instrument from Yoo and Donthu (2001) who originally developed this scale with the help of three dimensions: brand loyalty (three items), perceived quality (two items) and brand awareness (five items). Most of the previous studies operationalized this scale as a reflective scale (Anselmsson et al., 2014; Salehzadeh et al., 2018). However, CBBE is a summative judgment based on three dimensions which dictate it to be a second-order formative construct. This operationalization gained the support of Jarvis et al. (2003) and Hair et al. (2017) according to which when the items/sub-dimensions cannot be interchanged and every item/sub-dimension captures a unique part of the construct, the construct is formative. Since brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand awareness are not interchangeable, this study operationalized this scale as first order reflective and second-order formative. The scale for CCB was adapted from Yi and Gong (2013) which consists of four dimensions: feedback (three items), advocacy (three items), helping behavior (four items) and tolerance (three items). Since CCB is composed of these four dimensions and the dimensions are non-interchangeable (Hair et al., 2017; Jarvis et al., 2003) hence to avoid model misspecification the scale is operationalized as first order reflective and second-order formative. The scale for turn over intention is adapted from Revilla-Camacho et al. (2015) which is a uni-dimensional scale with five items. It is operationalized as a reflective construct in this study. All the items were measured by using 7 Point Likert scale from 1 being strongly disagreed to 7 strongly agreeing. Before finalizing the questionnaire, a pre-test was conducted by using debriefing method to eliminate potential problems with questionnaire design, and the comprehensiveness of the instructions and statements (Bazera, 1996; Hunt et al., 1982). In addition, common method variance is considered not an issue because of the presence of both reflective and formative constructs in the instrument (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016; Hiram et al., 2015).

### 3.5 Respondents Profile

The demographic profile of respondents ranged from 15 to 55 years and more. The results show that most of the respondents belong to the age group of 26-35 years, 15 to 25 years and 36-45 years representing 34.4%, 25.3% and 23.5% of the total sample respectively. The remaining 10.9% and 5.9% represents an age group of 46-55 years and more than 55 years. In addition, the respondents' profile highlighted that respondents were well educated where 52.7% and 39.3% of the total sample holds master and bachelor's degrees respectively. In addition, more than 50% of respondents belong to income group ranging from PKR 31,000- more than PKR. 60,000. Subsequently, most of the respondents were married representing 59.2% of the sample. Moreover, there were 70.3% of males in the sample while the rest of the respondents were females and 60% of them were married. The respondents' profile is given in Fig. 1.

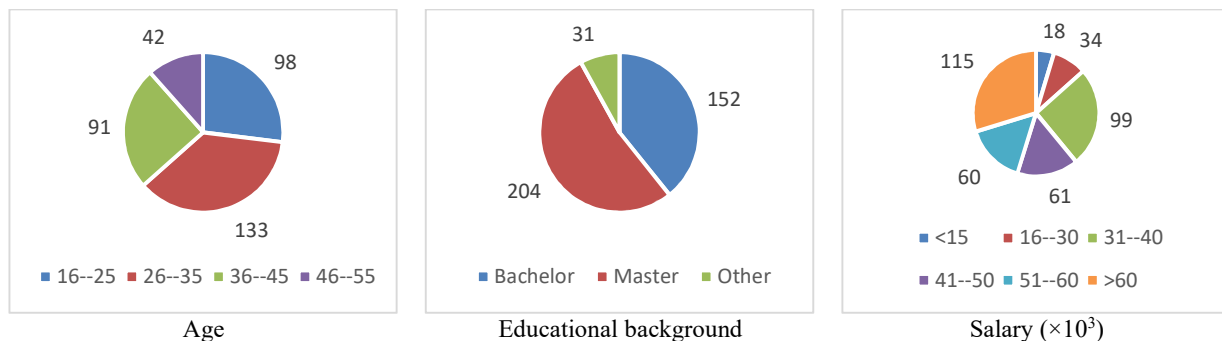


Fig. 1. Personal characteristics of the participants

### 3.6 Data Analysis

This study consists of both reflective and second-order formative constructs (higher order constructs), so based on the suggestion of Becker et al. (2012) sequential latent variable score method with the help of smart PLS 3.2.7 has been employed for data analysis. According to Hair Jr et al. (2016), it is necessary to specify the model operationalization to avoid the type I and type II errors (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; Edwards & Bagozzi, 2000). Hence, this study considered CBBE and CCB as reflective formative higher order constructs and TOI as reflective first order construct. Following the recommended two-stage analytical procedures by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), this study tested the measurement model (validity and reliability of the measures) followed by an examination of the structural model (testing the hypothesized relationships) (see

Hair et al. 2014; Ramayah et al. 2011, 2013). The measurement model evaluation criteria for reflective and formative constructs are different (Hair Jr et al., 2016). Hence to access the internal consistency and convergent validity of reflective constructs, outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR) are reported. In addition, discriminant validity (DV) is assessed using Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion. However, for formative constructs multi-collinearity with the help of variance inflation factor (VIF), outer weights significance after bootstrapping is reported. To test the significance of the path coefficients and the loadings, a bootstrapping method was used (Hair et al. 2014).

### 3.7 Assessment of Reflective Measurement Model

The results of Table 2 show that outer loadings of all the reflective constructs are above the minimum threshold of 0.50 as suggested by Hair et al. (2016) and achieved the internal consistency. Similarly, the results of composite reliability (CR) show that all the reflective constructs exhibit reliability with possessing the CR above .70 (Hair et al., 2016). Furthermore, the constructs demonstrate enough convergent validity which is well above the threshold of .50 and reveal that all the items explain more than 50% of the variance in each respective construct (Hair et al., 2013).

**Table 2**  
Internal consistency and Convergent Validity of Reflective Constructs

First Order Reflective Constructs	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR
Brand Loyalty (BL)	BL1	0.895	0.842	0.941
	BL2	0.937		
	BL3	0.921		
Perceived Quality (PQ)	PQ1	0.945	0.898	0.946
	PQ2	0.950		
Brand Awareness (BA)	BA1	0.827	0.716	0.926
	BA2	0.876		
	BA3	0.847		
	BA4	0.849		
	BA5	0.829		
Feedback (FB)	FB1	0.865	0.774	0.911
	FB2	0.889		
	FB3	0.886		
Advocacy (ADV)	ADV1	0.903	0.792	0.920
	ADV2	0.915		
	ADV3	0.851		
Helping Behavior (HB)	HB1	0.839	0.731	0.916
	HB2	0.881		
	HB3	0.879		
	HB4	0.820		
Tolerance (T)	T1	0.903	0.727	0.889
	T2	0.859		
	T3	0.792		
Turnover Intention (TOI)	TOI1	0.847	0.766	0.942
	TOI2	0.896		
	TOI3	0.907		
	TOI4	0.890		
	TOI5	0.833		

The discriminant validity is assessed is using Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion whereby the results in Table 3 show that all the square roots of AVE of each construct are larger than the correlation estimate of the constructs. Hence, discriminant validity is also established for all the reflective constructs.

**Table 3**  
Discriminant Validity: Fornell and Larcker Criterion (1981)

	HB	ADV	BA	BL	FB	PQ	T	TOI
HB	<b>0.855</b>							
ADV	0.769	<b>0.890</b>						
BA	0.794	0.808	<b>0.846</b>					
BL	0.754	0.773	0.776	<b>0.918</b>				
FB	0.744	0.786	0.755	0.721	<b>0.880</b>			
PQ	0.673	0.745	0.736	0.799	0.704	<b>0.948</b>		
T	0.798	0.756	0.777	0.714	0.713	0.655	<b>0.853</b>	
TOI	0.728	0.749	0.773	0.804	0.724	0.772	0.707	<b>0.875</b>

Note: Diagonal elements highlighted in bold represent the square root of AVE. Off-diagonal elements are bivariate correlations between the constructs.

### 3.8 Assessment of Formative Second Order Constructs

Table 4 exhibits the assessment of formative second-order constructs. All the VIF values for each of the formative constructs are well below the threshold of 5 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006), depicting that all the constructs are different from each other and cannot be interchanged. In addition, the significance of outer weights (after bootstrapping of 5000 samples) also

reveal that all the first order constructs are significant and relevant for their respective second-order formative constructs. Hence, second-order formative constructs also possess convergent validity.

**Table 4**  
Outer Weights Path Significance and Multi-collinearity

Paths	$\beta$	SD	T Value	P Values	VIF
BL → CBBE	0.317	0.049	6.460	0.000	3.524
PQ → CBBE	0.168	0.048	3.490	0.000	3.052
BA → CBBE	0.591	0.044	13.509	0.000	2.775
FB → CCB	0.237	0.059	3.987	0.000	3.047
ADV → CCB	0.388	0.055	6.995	0.000	3.515
HB → CCB	0.275	0.062	4.422	0.000	3.555
T → CCB	0.201	0.056	3.614	0.000	3.249

### 3.9 Assessment of Structural Model

Before assessment of structural model, it is necessary to check the multi-collinearity of the inner model. Table 6 shows that VIF values of the inner model are well below the threshold of 5 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006). Table 6 also illustrates the results of the hypothesis by assessing the P values and path coefficients after bootstrapping procedure with 5000 subsamples. All the direct relations are found to be significant and positive ( $H_1$ : CBBE → CCB,  $\beta = 0.902$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ) and ( $H_2$ : CCB → TOI,  $\beta = -0.804$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and supported the hypotheses. In addition, Table 6 assessed the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), the effect size ( $f^2$ ) as well as the predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) of exogenous variables on an endogenous variable in this study. The results suggest that  $R^2$  value for CCB is 0.813 suggesting that CBBE explains 81.3% variance in CCB. Similarly, the  $R^2$  value for TOI is 0.646, suggesting that CCB explains 64.6% variance in TOI. Subsequently,  $Q^2$  values for CCB = 0.622 and TOI = 0.625 demonstrate that the CBBE had enough predictive capacity over CCB and CCB had enough predictive capacity for TOI as suggested by Hair et al. (2013). Likewise, the  $f^2$  values reveal that CBBE had a large effect on CCB ( $f^2 = 4.339$ ) and CCB also had a large effect on TOI ( $f^2 = 1.826$ ) (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 5**  
Direct Paths Assessment

Paths	$\beta$	SD	T Values	P Values	VIF	$R^2$	$Q^2$	$f^2$
CBBE → CCB	0.902	0.012	74.759	0.000	1.00	0.813	0.622	4.339
CCB → TOI	-0.804	0.023	35.406	0.000	1.00	0.646	0.625	1.826

### 3.10 Mediation Analysis

As suggested by Hair et al. (2016) and Hayes and Preacher (2010) this study has used a bootstrapping method for analyzing the mediation with a biased corrected confidence interval. According to the results given in Table 6, CCB plays the role of significant mediator between CBBE and TOI ( $H_3$ : CBBE → CCB → TOI,  $\beta = -0.725$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ), hence supported  $H_3$ .

**Table 6**  
Mediation Analysis

Mediation Path	$\beta$	SD	T Value	P Values	LLCI (2.5%)	ULCI (97.5%)
CBBE → CCB → TOI	-0.725	0.028	25.684	0.00	0.661	0.772

## 4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to provide a better understanding of CCB and its importance in the aviation industry. Moreover, this model helped in explaining the implications of branding elements to minimize customers turnover. This study fills the existing gap in the literature and provides a solution for customer turnover for the aviation industry. Furthermore, this study provides deep insights towards the mediation effect of CCB. Literature revealed that rare studies had dealt with CCB as a mediating variable, so it has been a worthy contribution towards the body of knowledge. Moreover, this study also linkages CBBE to the turnover intention with the mediation of CCB which is rarely tested by literature and proposed framework of study in hand. This study has chosen the aviation sector and data is collected from passengers in waiting lounges and study has been confirming the significant impact of all hypothesis.

### 4.1 Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, this study highlights the importance of customers participation in service delivery processes and the relationship of customers with brands. Customer volunteer participation helps the brand raise its market share, profitability, and sales. Therefore, brands should understand the vital role of customers for better performance. Moreover, brands should maintain good relationships with customers to lower their turnover rate. Simultaneously, the communication channel

should be clear between customers and employees to provide appropriate service. Brands should facilitate customer to customer communication which foster customers to adopt CCB because interaction requires a friendly environment where services are being provided. Furthermore, the aviation industry should focus on CCBE to keep their customers engaged with the brand. Such engagement of customer will foster them to show CCB. The study in hand suggested that CCB lesser the turnover intentions in the customers. CCB encourages the customer to stay loyal with aviation brands for a longer period which help brand towards sustainability.

#### 4.2. Limitation and future studies

This study is not free from certain limitations. In this study, customers have been asked about the adoption of CCB through the implication of branding elements. For future studies, safety practices and AIRQUAL also can be considered to develop CCB in the aviation sector. Other branding elements of relationship marketing e.g. brand loyalty, brand trust, and brand identification can be studied in the services sector as predictors of CCB. Moreover, this study can be applied in other services sectors to predict customers' behaviors. Marketer and scholars will be encouraged to develop other models to generate CCB in customers.

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