The Impact of University Reputation on Brand Awareness/ Association in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions

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INTRODUCTION:

Global HEIs sectors have been witnessing:-

1. Major transformations, enormous challenges, competitiveness, business ventures and increasing number of students to pursue their higher education at higher institutions across the globe (Erisher, Obert & frank, 2014; Kasmae, Nadi & Shahtalebi 2016)

2. It was estimated that by year 2020, the estimated enrollment population of students traveling to another country will raising up to 21 millions (British Council 2012, Moyle, 2015; Robin, 2016)

3. Thus, principles of brand for university is imperative in securing position with their competitors (Denis, Papagiannidis, Alamanos & Bourlakis, 2016)

INTRODUCTION:
Malaysian HEIs sectors have been witnessing:

4. Malaysian HEIs market is still small compared to develop countries (MOE 2015). Therefore, educational reforms are taking place in Malaysia which involves government initiatives to embark on a plan to brand Malaysia as the world's Centre of educational excellence and to designate Malaysia as regional "Education Hub"(Hasnizam, 2014; MOE, 2015).

5. Thus, branding marketing activities were employed to create and build awareness among students (Amini, Darani, Afshani & Amini, 2012). Therefore, branding is becoming one of the strategies preferred by the HEIs (Ghelichkhan & Saeednia, 2015, Vukasovic, 2016).

OBJECTIVE

- To examine whether university reputation has a significant impact on brand awareness /association and to what extent it effect students in selecting MHEIs

SIGNIFICANT OF STUDY

➡ Theoretical perspective –

This study contributes substantially on how university reputation contributed to BAA that influence students' perception toward MHEIs.

➡ Practical perspective –

This study will provide MHEIs administrator to optimize limited recourses and capabilities of the same to maximize it services.

➡ Empirical study –

This study will help government and HEIs to revise and improve education system in Malaysia and ultimately will contribute to growth of Malaysia economy

LITERATURE REVIEW
Brand Awareness /Association (BAA)

➡ BAA is the ability of consumers to recognize and recall the brand and these association linked in memory to a brand attributes (Yoo et al. (2000).

➡ Yoo, Donthu & Lee (2001) through their studies treated the two constructs (Brand Awareness & Association) as one measurement.

➡ BAA can assess the value of the University, play as a risk relief, giving the target student in selection and increase the trust & confidence (Erdeem & Swait, 1998; Vukasovic, 2015)

➡ However, HEIs in Malaysia took brand for granted and understood the least on BAA (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015; Mourad, Maha, Ennew, Christine and Kortam, Wael, 2018) .

➡ Thus, it is the aimed of this study to focus on the effect of BAA on HEI perspective

LITERATURE REVIEW
University Reputation (UR)

- University Reputation (UR) is marketing effort dimension towards BAA indicated the influence relationship between their variables (Yoo et al., 2000)

- University Reputation is important in gauging the credibility of a university, students expectations with the quality served, and consumer choice (Mourad, Ennew & Kortam, 2010; Perkin & Will, 2011; Erisher, Obert & Frank, 2014;Ghelichkhan & Saeednia, 2015)

- Thus, this study is to investigate on how UR able to influence BAA in context of HEI

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Awareness/ Association & University Reputation

- University Reputation has been closely associated with the credibility of an organization (Herbig & Milewicz, 1993; Zuzana, 2017)

- University reputation can affect enrolment, monies for research, funding and reputation (Mallette, 1995; Nina & Sienaert, 2016)

- Students' perception about the reputation and image of an institution could affect BAA (Ivy, 2001; Chen, 2016)

- Thus, this study is to investigate on how UR able to influence BAA in context of HEI

HYPOTHESES

- Based on the arguments discussed in the literature review, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H1: There will be a significant impact on university reputation and brand awareness/association.
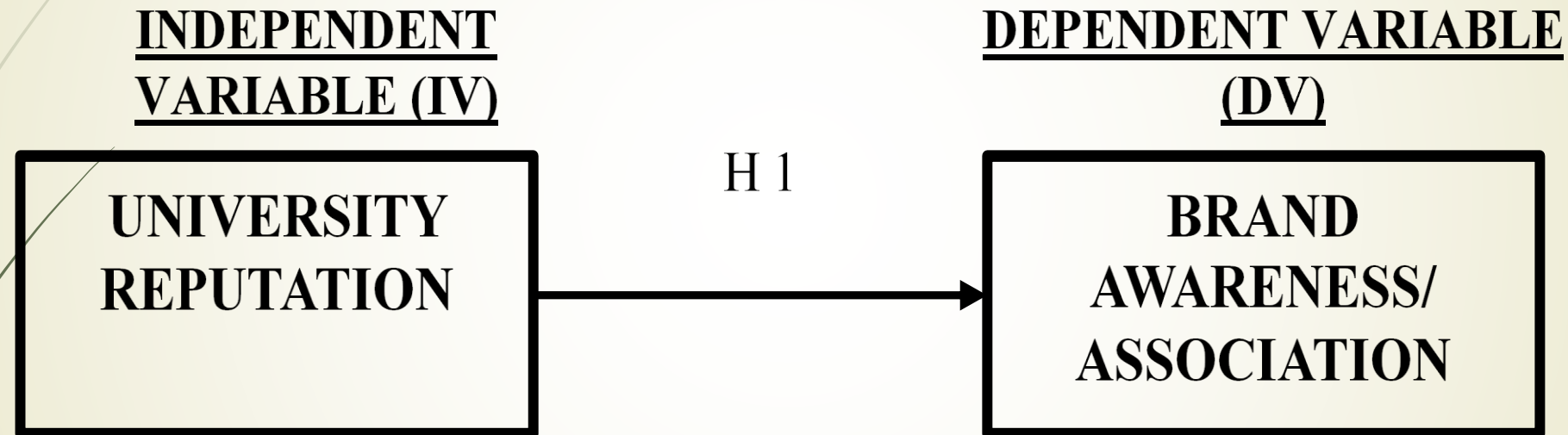
THEORY BASED
Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE)

➤ CBBE occurs when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and holds some strong, favorable, and unique brand associations in memory (Keller, 2013; Vukasovic, 2015)

➤ CBBE is a set of perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors on the part of consumers that results in increased utility and allows a brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it could without the brand name. It has been used to explore through empirical research how they influence HEIs (Keller, 2008; Clarke, 2009; Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010; Yusuff, 2017)

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE (IV)

DEPENDENT VARIABLE (DV)

H 1

UNIVERSITY REPUTATION	BRAND AWARENESS/ ASSOCIATION

The above research framework underpinned by Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) theory

METHODOLOGY – POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Table 1: Population, Proportionate and Disproportionate Stratified Random Sampling, and Analysis of data treatment (Deduction of missing data and outliers)

Public University	Population	Number of Questionnaire distributed Proportionate Sampling	Sample Received (Disproportionate Sampling)	After Omitting of Missing Data	After Assessment of outliers
UM	27,091	263	66	61	59
UPM	32,092	311	76	71	62
IIUM	25,092	243	96	91	65
UKM	30,041	291	58	53	49
UiTM	80,000	786	135	130	106
UPNM	2,783	26	13	10	10
	197,099	**1,920**	**444**	**416**	**351**

METHODOLOGY – RESEARCH MEASURMENTS

Table 2: Description of Questionnaires

Variables	No of items	Cronbach Alpha Value	Sources
University Reputation	8	0.836	Merchant, Moody and Methews (2015)
Brand Awareness/ Association	6	0.923	Yoo et al (2000)

5 Likert scales: 1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3- uncertain, 4- agree and 5- strongly agree
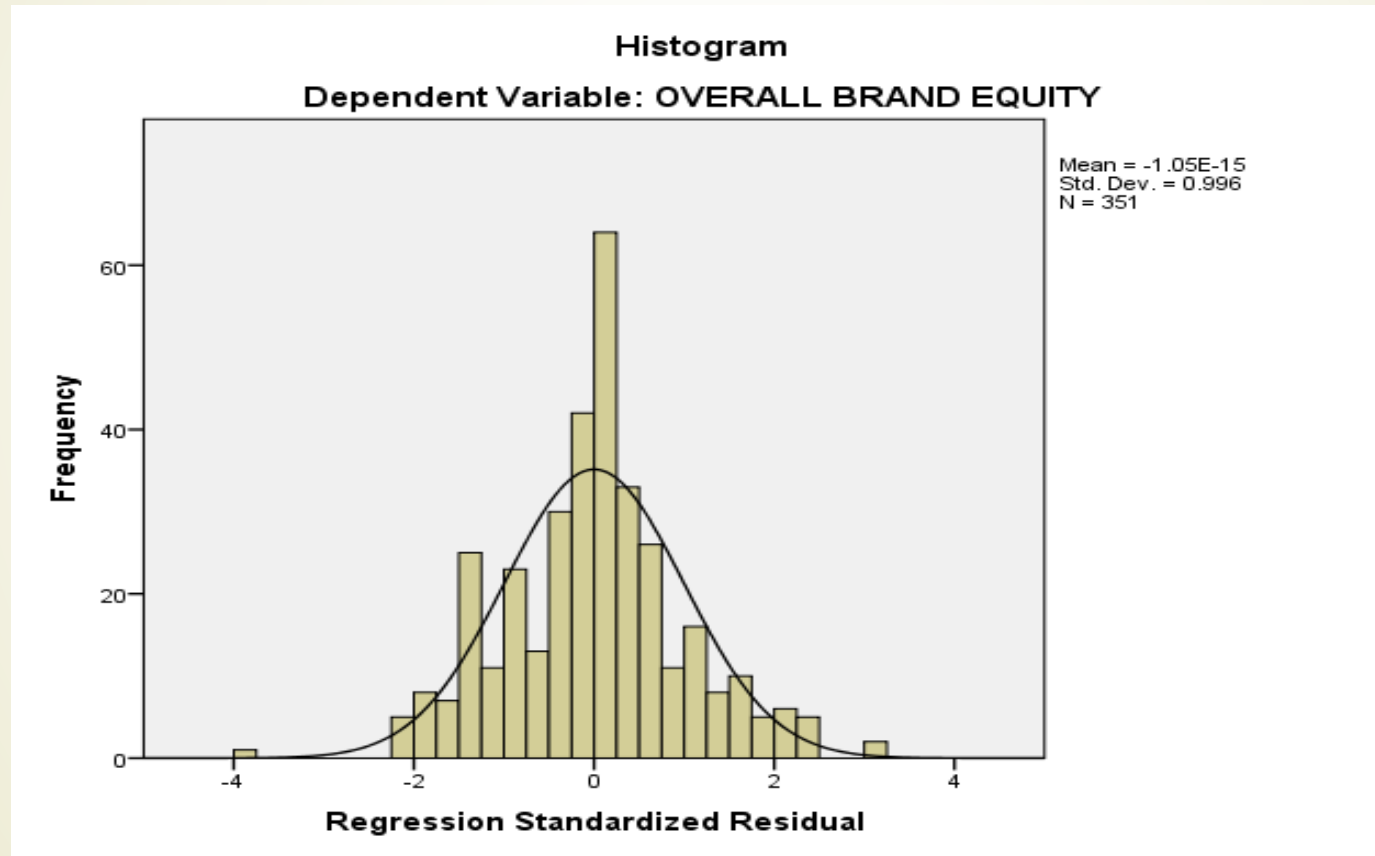
RESULTS

- SMART PLS SEM

- PLS-SEM ALGORITHM TO CALCULATE THE PATH MODEL ESTIMATE

- ASSESSMENT OF MEASUREMENT MODELS

  - COMPOSITE RELIABILITY

  - INDIVIDUAL INDICATOR RELIABILITY

  - AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE)

RESULTS

Normality

Tabachnick and Fidel (2014), kurtosis >7, skewness ±2

RESULTS

Table 3: Reliability and Validity of Convergent

Construct	Items	Loading		Average Variance Extract		Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha	
		HM	GM	HM	GM		HM	GM
University Reputation	U1	0.863	0.862	0.729	0.729	0.914	0.874	0.874
	U2	0.901	0.899					
	U3	0.893	0.891					
	U4	0.750	0.759					
Brand Awareness/ Association	BA1	0.756	0.776	0.617	0.701	0.880	0.880	0.880
	BA2	0.748	0.770					
	BA3	0.812	0.832					
	BA4	0.770	0.757					
	BA5	0.814	0.795					
	BA6	0.813	0.801					

*Note**

HM= Hypothesized Model   GM =Generated Model

Table 4: Latent Variables Correlation and Correlation^2

	Latent Variables Correlation		Discriminant Validity	
	UP	BA	UP	BA
University Reputation (UP)	1.000		1.000	
Brand Awareness / Association (BA)	0.500 (0.250)	1.000	0.673	1.000

$$AVE = \frac{Ve_1 + Ve_2}{2}$$

AVE for Brand Awareness/ Association and University Reputation $= \dfrac{0.617 + 0.729}{2}$

$= \mathbf{0.673}$

Note: The Figure diagonally to represent square root of the diagonal AVE and figures representing the correlation.
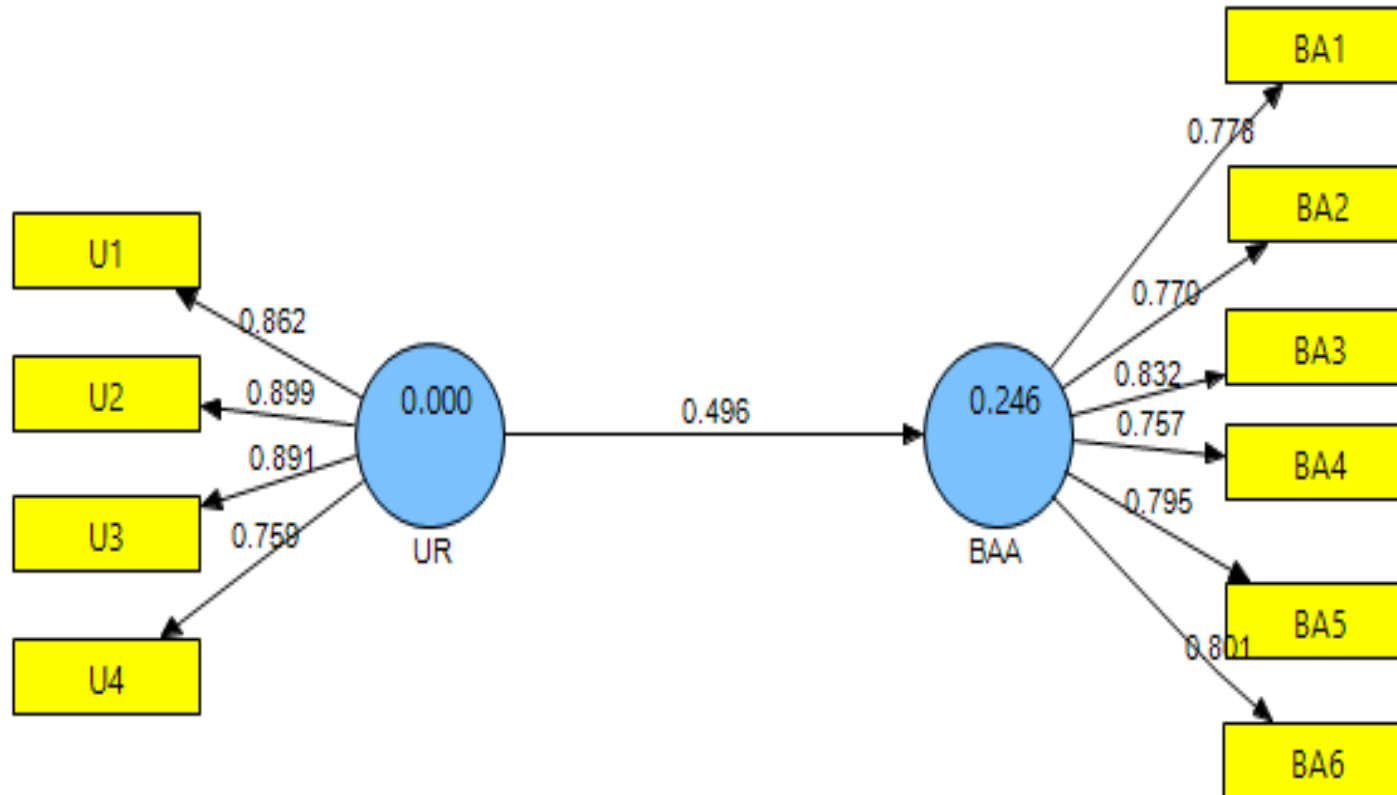
GENERATED MODEL

Table 5: Summary of Predictor

	Brand Awareness / Association
University Reputation	0.496

RESULTS

The university reputation has created a strong impact for brand awareness/association variable; (**H1, β=0.496**). Therefore, as a conclusion, university reputation can influence brand awareness /association and give a significant impact on brand awareness/ association.

This finding confirms the importance of the university reputation that has a strong impact to variables of brand awareness/ association as supporting factors presented in the entire university brand ecosystem proposed by Pinar et al. (2014).

THUS, H1 IS ACCEPTED.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- The findings of this study provide some empirical support to the research framework.

- The relationship between university reputation as one of marketing efforts and brand awareness / association was established.

- Therefore, it is essential to view university branding as a holistic approach by considering the BAA collectively. Because there have been no prior studies developing measurements by identifying and examining the BAA for specifically university branding, this study will help fill such a void

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- For the **HEIs owner**, the findings highlights the importance of putting efforts toward marketing and brand awareness for university management in HEIs.

- By building brand awareness / association, HEIs are able to achieve sustainable competitive advantage that leads to higher enrolment of students.

- From a **university's perspective**, this study offers valuable insight.

- This study revealed that university's marketing personnel should concentrate their efforts on sources that can build the brand awareness / association which would positively increase university services.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- Developing high brand awareness / association could lead to a better enrolment of students.

- **The policy makers** can help to educate the owner of the HEIs by informing them the importance of marketing efforts such as university reputation and brand awareness / association in generating higher enrolment.

- Furthermore, **the policy makers** should develop instruments of brand awareness / association by fostering marketing efforts in formulating favourable policies for HEIs for the long term growth.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

➡ **LIMITATION OF STUDIES**

➡ This research utilized a cross sectional sample of HEIs, consequently, it may be that there is a lagged effect on some of the relationships.

➡ Time dependent constructs such as public HEIs enrolment and the relationships between variables may be confounded by unknown factors.

➡ Cross sectional studies do not explain why correlations exist and limits the extent to which inferences can be made about the causal ordering of variables.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

LIMITATION OF STUDIES

- Focusing on the sample of public HEIs also limits the generalizability of the findings in similar conditions.

- Therefore, it is important for the university authority to understand holistic services provided and offer academic quality in students' enrolment of HEIs.

- The role of holistic services and offering academic quality can be more accurately identified when more studies in different public and private HEIs as well as country context are conducted.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- **SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

  - Causal implications could be reinforced by developing and utilizing a time series database in subsequent studies.

  - Future research studies may need to consider more longitudinal designs.

  - future researches should compare HEIs in other private HEIs, study on university ranking or to make cross-country comparisons on the variables being studied.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

▶ In conclusion, the overall findings strengthened the idea that the management of the higher education institutions should focus on marketing and branding efforts to maintain its competitiveness and its relevance. This study provides empirical evidence that serve as guidelines to encourage the HEIs industry on efforts to build equity acceptance through branding.

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