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ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE RELATION BETWEEN BRAND STRENGTH AND WORD OF MOUTH IN THE
MEDIATING EFFECT OF SATISFACTION, LOYALTY AND BRAND IMAGE: AN
EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF TURKEY'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

THESIS

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March, 2021

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study "The Relation Between Brand Strength and Word of Mouth in the Mediating Effect of Satisfaction, Loyalty and Brand Image: An Empirical Examination of Turkey's Higher Education System", which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the Bibliography.

Sadık Adem ŞAHİN

This thesis is dedicated to:
My beloved parents Abdulrahman and Lama
&
My dear siblings Obada and Zeina

FOREWORD

First of all, I would like to express my endless gratitude to Allah, the almighty for giving me patience and strength to be who I am today.

To the woman that always had my back My best friend, the one who, gave me unconditional love and support. To the person who gave me everything and never asked for anything back, the reason I'm alive My dear mother thank you for the unmatched support and encouragement. My father the man who i hold his name, the reason I challenge myself every day and thought me that success self-made. My family who always supported and encouraged me to keep pushing forward with my academic field, my source of inspiration and a touch of support thank you.

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I would like to take this chance to thanks to all of professors of Department of Business Administration, at Istanbul Aydin University for the information they provided, and the chances given to me to meet new people and discover broader horizons.

<u>**March, 2021**</u>   **Sadık Adem ŞAHİN**

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI	: Adjusted Goodness Of Fit Index
AMOS	: Analysis of a Moment Structures
BWOM	: Bad Word of Mouth
CFA	: Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	: Comparative Fit Index
EFA	: Exploratory Factor Analysis
GFI	: Goodness-Of-Fit Index
HTMT	: The Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations
RMSEA	: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	: Structural Equation Modeling
SMC	: Squared Multiple Correlations
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRMR	: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
WOM	: Word of Mouth
WOMM	: Word of Mouth Marketing

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine the effect that brand strength with the three main components, have on positive word of mouth (WOM) in higher education institutional market, with turkey having almost 90 million residence and over 7.5 million current students in over 175 universities, the Higher education market has become a very competitive and fast growing market , especially with a 300% increase of number of foreigner students in the past couple of years. Word of mouth is one of the main sources to get info about a higher education institute and thus the research Within the framework of this study quantitative research methods were applied. The primary data were collected of 385 respondents via self-administered, anonymous, online form. Research model was evaluated and analyzed using Exploratory Factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equational model (SEM) using SPSS and AMOS. Finding of this research suggest that Brand strength alone does not demonstrate a direct impact on word of mouth (WOM), Nonetheless it was proved that brand strength demonstrate a significant indirect effect on word of mouth (WOM) when mediated by satisfaction, loyalty, and University brand image. The results of this study should reignite the thought of university branding as a tool to be used to attract and retain students under a well-developed profile and satisfaction umbrella.

Keywords: *WOM, word of mouth , university , branding, Brand strength, satisfaction, Loyalty, Brand image,*

MEMNUNİYET, BAĞLILIK VE MARKA İMAJININ ARACILIK ETKİSİNDE MARKA GÜCÜ İLE WORD OF MOUTH ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ: TÜRKİYE YÜKSEK ÖĞRETİM SİSTEMİNİN AMPİRİK BİR İNCELEMESİ

ÖZET

Bu tezin temel amacı, üç ana bileşenle marka gücünün yüksek öğretim kurumsal pazarında word of mouth (WOM) etkisini incelemektir. Yaklaşık 90 milyon ikametgah ve 175'ten fazla üniversitede 7,5 milyonun üzerinde mevcut öğrenciye sahip olan Yüksek öğretim pazarı, özellikle son birkaç yılda yabancı öğrenci sayısının %300 artmasıyla çok rekabetçi ve hızla büyüyen bir pazar haline geldi. Word of mouth bir yüksek öğretim kurumu hakkında bilgi edinmenin ana kaynaklarından biri olduğu için araştırmada kantitatif araştırma yöntemleri uygulanmıştır.

Birincil veriler, kendi kendine yönetilen, anonim, çevrimiçi form aracılığıyla 385 yanıtlayandan toplanmıştır. Araştırma modeli, SPSS ve AMOS kullanılarak Açımlayıcı Faktör analizi (EFA), doğrulayıcı faktör analizi (CFA) ve yapısal eşitlik modeli (SEM) kullanılarak değerlendirilmiş ve analiz edilmiştir. Bu araştırmanın bulgusu, Marka gücünün tek başına Word of Mouth (WOM) doğrudan bir etki göstermediğini göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, marka gücünün, memnuniyet, sadakat ve Üniversite marka imajı.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, öğrencileri iyi gelişmiş bir profil ve memnuniyet şemsiyesi altında çekmek ve elde tutmak için kullanılacak bir araç olarak üniversite markalaşma düşüncesini yeniden ateşlemelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *WOM, ağızdan ağıza, üniversite, markalaşma, Marka gücü, memnuniyet, Bağlılık, Marka imajı*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Overview

Since human existed, the urge to learn started to form, matter of fact learning is a process that everyone does on regular bases, it started very simple, evolved bit by bit to reach science and complex issues, after science becoming more and more complex, the need for higher educational institutions appeared, well as the first university was established in 1088 "University of Bologna in Italy". since then, higher education sector remained static as an individual special sector.

Then during the 1890s a wide spread of higher education institutions began to appear in its modern form , and the arrival of higher education to the mass started, then after world II ended education vastly increased in scale especially public universities after that many more privet institutions came to play, profit generation took place then the higher education sector has become a market as every other sector of capitalism moderated lifestyle, with the uprising request of scientists. The education field became rather large and profitable.

Now in the 21th century with the marketization of the higher education sector, privet and public education faculties started looking for new tactics and strategic leverages to attract students and appear through the crowd of many competing universities, by that a financial profit could be established, in which might approve the quality of education, fund research as well as making profit for stockholders , it also meant to be treated as an industry income.

These competing forces of educational institutions led reserchers to investigate more in branding and marketing, which eventually gave birth to university brand, well branding in marketing is not a new tool to be used, nonetheless applying the power of branding into the market of higher education is rather new , because educational market is little different, and has specific rules and regulations that needed to be followed and minimum requirements to be established that are different from other regular consumer goods markets.

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Furthermore and in general word of mouth (WOM) has grown with growth of human brains and conscience, as old human would advise and warn each other to or from potential outcome, word of mouth has gotten more complex and helpful as human grew knowledge, to reach the thing we are experiencing nowadays.

Additionally, in educational field, word of mouth (WOM) is considered to be one of the main channels to gather information about a higher education institute based on the general idea that people tend to give advices regarding general life things and this is done for mutual benefits. like relationships, good things to do, places to visit, and what to eat, enabling current and previous students to practice evaluation of their institute as a form of informal comments given for information seekers, when asked about their university, sometimes without being asked as a form of general chatting.

Marketing campaigns that are done by universes generally aim to convert perspective students attentions more than recruiting them, because as mentioned word of mouth (WOM) is consider a major channel to collect information , so a customer who is looking for information could be considered an "inducer" of word of mouth (WOM) as they tend to look around and ask others for information regarding the institution they intend to enroll in , increasing word of mouth frequency and likelihood.

While on the other hand, brand strength might play a big role in word of mouth (WOM) induction where a stronger university brand might lead their customers "students" to speak better, and more frequent about their institution.

1.2 Aim of the Research

This research aims to discover the effect that brand strength with the three main components, have on positive word of mouth (WOM) in higher education institutional market, in other meaning does a stronger higher educational institute brand have a stronger effect in inducing positive word of mouth (WOM) against bad word of mouth (BWOM) , and how frequent does it effect, this effect also is believed to be mediated by university brand image,

satisfaction and loyalty, the study corresponds on higher education institutes sector, studying the effect of UNI brand strength in specific.

Depending on the our background mentioned before, we were able to adapt the model used in the study of (Wymer and Casidy, 2015) as a base study model and simplifying it by styling the brand strength as one variable , then were able to introduce an extra mediating variable of University brand image which was found under the influence of research of (Sultan and Wong, 2012). Giving our final research model that is   visually represents the relation between brand strength as one dimension with its three components , with positive word of mouth (WOM) which is the dependent variable, then stating the relationship as it gets mediated by the mediation   variables: satisfaction, loyalty and brand image. as the figure 1.1 shows.
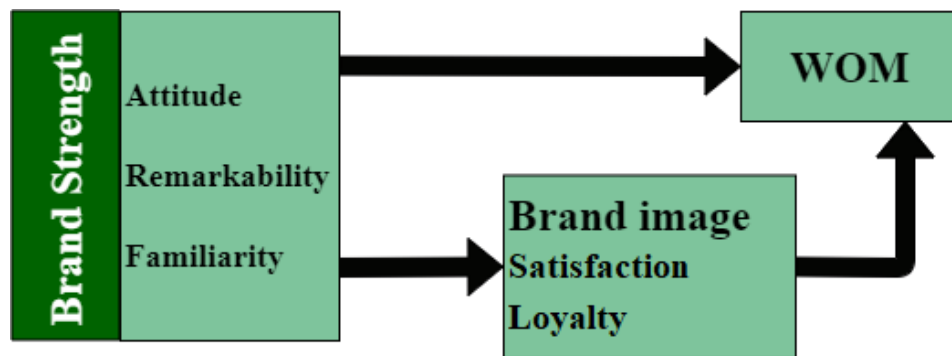
Figure 1.1: Research Model

1.3 Significance of Study

The importance of this study comes from the highly competitive nature that higher education market has become to, and the usage of word of mouth WOM to induce a customer base of students that leads to an effect of the socioeducational composition of societies, mostly of universities having leverage that effect the way people interact, specially within the structure of the society.

1.4 Purpose and Objective of the Study

This research aims to analyze and measure attributes as follows:

- Measure the behavior of customers towards spreading positive word of mouth (WOM), whatever graduated students, parents or current students.

- Analyzing how does the combine factors of brand strength are affecting the induction of positive word of mouth (WOM).

- Examine the effect of satisfaction, loyalty, and brand image of the university in mediating the relationship.

Questionnaire was adopted from previous reserchers and data were collected, leading into the ability to understand the Turkish population behavior towards their higher education institutions.

1.5 Research Hypothesis.

The research hypotheses of this study are in basically combined in 4 subgroups and it can be summarized as follows:

H_1: Brand strength has a positive influence on WOM.

H_2: The influence of brand strength on positive WOM is mediated by satisfaction.

H_3: The influence of brand strength on positive WOM is mediated by loyalty.

H_4: The influence of brand strength on positive WOM is mediated by unibrand image.

1.6 Thesis Outline.

This research paper is divided into five main chapters as following:

Chapter 1: this chapter, in which includes an introduction and a general overview of the research, thesis hypothesis and importance of research.

Chapter 2: presents the literature review about the variables, in which is selected from related articles, books and journals aimed to give an understanding of the subject.

Chapter 3: provides the research methodology, research model, questionnaire design, sampling and data collected.

Chapter 4: Includes the analyses part of this research.

Chapter 5: A discussion of the analysis, conclusion of the study and recommendation for future studies regarding the subject.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The study of relations between brands and customers is an interesting subject to be looked in and research about, as all the organization always on the looks for the best way to gain customers support and establish a bond with a customer for perceived service quality. Studies have been established in "brand equity" as a main component of today's market, a definition of brand equity is asserted in an article, as an attempt to reach for one simple unite definition of the relationship that is being established and lingering between customers and their corresponding favorite brands, which -well in general- might result in a value generation for the organization itself , also by that, a brand should be considered a long term investment for the future good of any organization (L. Wood, 2000).

On another hand brand strength as well as brand image effect brand equity in the market, witch in their role effect brand value and its profit generation. In market, with the overly competitive environment, brands often seek for the competitive advantages as a major influence for success, hence the importance of having a well-known defined brand and using it as a strategic advantage as it effects the brand considerations and buying behavior (Fleming, et al., 2004).

Now, branding is a new tool in education sector that is mainly used to attract new students as well-as retain them in the lately marketized sector and becoming very competitive section of privet higher education (Sultan and Wong, 2012). as this sector is contentiously growing in turkey it became important to investigate university brands and higher education branding as it's like mentioned before – a long term investment that can eventually leads into strategic advantage and a strong profit generation lever, universities market their courses and programs from a student point of view (POV) in order to attract top academics as well as students decide on their undergraduate or

postgraduate degree (Nguyen et al. 2016 ; Joseph et al. 2012) they may choose to continue their studies at the same university as their parents / relative studied in if the university performance is satisfying and has a good reputation in higher educational field and by that engaging in this educational system (Rutter et al. 2017).

In general word of mouth WOM is one of not the only sources of information about universities that uses the customer , as a person might see an advertisement of hear about an institutional brand and start questioning for information about this specific brand , as the information seekers are mainly the most people who induces word of mouth (WOM) to look for answers of their questions . From a management point of view , branded corporates have the ability to induce word of mouth (WOM) upon information seekers by doing promotional campaigns and marketing plays that is done to insert the brand projection into customers mined so they start seeking information about it , as the one can clearly see in streets of Istanbul where signs and advisement billboards are everywhere, mainly universities does that to cover the rising upkeeping and education fees as they act like branded corporates brand (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Allsop, Bassett and Hoskins, 2007).

Now by having extra local and international students enroll into their programs these costs could be covered and profit could be made, but on the other hand higher education institutes need to use some the income to fund researches, fulfil their promises, provide at least the perceived quality of education and institution ambiance under the prestige the was promised. As well as funding marketing campaigns and advertisement or for targeting a more students while strengthen its brand name, targeting is a very powerful tool to be used in this field (Dailey *et al.*, 2006; Heslop and Nadeau, 2010). A good profile and strong brand that is projected towards customers "students "might in some cases lead into the assumption of 'better' education capability of the institute.

Now the present study investigates if university students and graduates and their relatives who is in contact in some way or form with the institute have the ability of spreading the "word" about their institute as a good/bad experience as they involve in the society and spread their point in view and express word of mouth which in its role could be either Bad or good word of mouth, now there is

a common agreement upon marketers that bad word of mouth BWOM is stronger effective due to the nature of human being of spreading bad experiences (Kensinger, 2007), now customers who are the main source and primary spreader of word of mouth WOM especially if not induced by a firm would and will be effected by the brand strength that will be discussed on this research , this strength is controlled by the firm itself and strongly affect customer-brand relationship, and might if not already alter customer behavioral interaction with others and the sharing of their experience and expressing opinion (Fleming, et al., 2004; Wymer, 2013)., that's why institutes should focus on inducing positive word of mouth (WOM).

Now brand strength as uses in this research "university brand strength" is agreed among researchers that it is represented by its three components brand attitude, familiarity , and remarkability (Wymer, 2013) , then adding the exploration and the exploitation of brand image effect to induce positive word of mouth (WOM) regarding educational institute branding as treating educational institutes as branded corporates with student as customers, education as product and tuition fees as price. This approach might result in changes of customer behavior towards universities and hence making a movement towards higher customer attraction levels and increasing in student attraction. (Sultan and Wong , 2012) .This approach is known as Higher education branding and its singular is a university brand.

2.2 The Brand

Starting with doing a simple unveils that – as many other English words- the word "Brand" has multiple definitions.

Looking at the word as a verb (like branding) it means "to give a product a particular name or label in order to sell it" (Cambridge English dictionary) , as it meets the definition of the American Marketing Association of giving a thing a character and identity (place, person, idea, an item, service, property, and the list goes on), or it's the point of view in which the customer sees a product or a service, even an organization it's a " commercial reputation" IE giving the product marketable features for it to be distinguished from other competitors in order to sell it under the competitive circumstances of the market (Drori et al.,

2013;). This explains why companies engage in branding – which usually makes the entire organization a brand- because it gives a name that can be used by the customer's side to indicate a special brand, they are familiar with, well to be straight Branding has been there for a long time before in many forms and formulas , and will be used for long time to go, branding evolves from being familiar of what this company represents of their products and hence being able to differentiate it between others, as well as giving the organization the benefit that their brand being known between general public (Keller, 2002 ; Heslop and Nadeau, 2010).

Hence might or might not be favorable between the potential customers which in our point of view gives a strong perspective strategy to the organizations that uses this in a wise responsible way.

As a noun, another dictionary search will unveil that it's also defined as: "a type of product made by a particular company" (Cambridge English dictionary) , it's a product and an identity, that which at the same time describes the way of which the customer is able to comprehend specific "products" or "services" and/or things as being part of a particular production or service institute.

In order to comprehend brand in general, it could be defined as the mental link between customer and their target branded corporate or company, and branding in a nutshell is the act of establishing these links that are kept in the customers minds and subconscious as images, names, thoughts and even voices of that profile for that type of industry (Keller and Lehmann, 2006 ; Sultan and Wong, 2019).

Now this informal mind links formed between the customer and organization has a managerial and academic importance in which that organizations can benefit from , by subjecting the institutional brand for a trials and performance development, which act as an incubation for a wholistic brand management approach that could be established, where these links and company profile projections can be put to use strategically in exploiting customer thoughts and input a specific mental links. It's a key for any organization that is seeking for a competitive advantage among others, as literature mentioned, Brand value is co-related and co-sustained trough organization-customer interactions, which are

generally happens as a brand interaction (Rindova and Fombrun, 1999; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000).

Now as the configuration of brand viewpoint is influenced by the pull factor that is created by the increasing managerial interest in this field, as well as the push factor of growing higher education sector and more upcoming students, leading into rapidly changing market, these effects must be faced with reassessment and change in strategy to trigger new era performance level.

This recognition of brand's strategic importance and leverage in performance is pushed by the increasing differentiation of trends that is linked to the incremental work that has been done to set a banding landscape (Louro and Cunha, 2001).

Furthermore, a famous brand is approved to be a major sales point for any organization and for adding value into the corporate, as brand increases sales by adding customer knowledge into account, promoting better corporate income and higher market equity. we would say becoming brand oriented organization, and acting as branded corporate would, and insist that might be key in which benefits the organization in advertisement, promotions and helps customer retention in educational industry supported by results of (Casidy and Wymer, 2015).

Higher education market is our field of study, you see this concept of branding has been stretched to cover any type of good and service, no matter where, when, or what is the type of it. It's an intercorrelated network of everything that remotely close to the company, an entire profile that being built around an image and projected to customer to interact with, as a brand. we believe that this concept has become more and more competitive in every industry one could think of, especially in higher education field where -frankly- it has been considered safe and taken for granted, not anymore as universities are rising and taking the rout of branding facing other organization in a market brand equity competition , it's a mayhem of competitive forces (Richardson, Nwankwo, & Richardson, 1995) Quoted by (Khanna, Jacob and Yadav, 2014). Furthermore, a corporate brand generally needs to be projected onto customers for them to have hand on experience, adding the need to be well known and be experienced by

customer, and thus increasing the possibility of higher market share and better profit margins.

Brand in result, a well-defined and managed brand in specific , has become a key part of market research due to the fact of its earth-shaking importance in the modern life of organizations , brand actually has achieved to be a certain dimension that effect the organization portfolio providing an underlying acts and plots that lingers and effect the formulation of strategies and building of marking approaches to gain a leverage of influence adding strategic value for the whole organization enabling the capitalization on the brand that provide a leverage to be used as a market share tactic. Now this gets translated by organizations switching into corporate-like mined set and the adoption of brand changing the strategies and emerges with new ways to advertise the product.

Enabling us to hypothesize about brand related management and the technical changes that comes with the adopting of brand related management and empowering our targeted brand in higher education institutional market with its new tactics of hoarding market share and acquiring customers retention, inducing positive word of mouth (WOM) if possible (Casidy and Wymer, 2015).

Whatever it is, in a retail business or in a big organization branding has shown an astonishing effect on customers, customer behavior and organizations tactics itself, as higher education institutions are becoming more interested of branding the organization as the (best University) for example and spreading the branded corporate mined set it has been inevitable for researchers to involve in this act (Sultan and Wong, 2019) .

As branding has become such a popular tactic and it has taken over like a tide wave, no matter is it for profit generating or nonprofit generating goals brand is the new face for product, having a tsunami of brands that are working to get the recognition upon others consequential of brand being the new face for organizations of all types , resulting in spending in this field becoming all time highest,   especially higher education market that's been static for ages as believed it was mature , recently the market got swarm by higher institutions brands that looking for prestige and being distinguished (Heslop and Nadeau, 2010).

It could be stated that expansions in branding still undergoing, while all the new tactics based on shifting of educational institutes and many others into corporate thinking methods starting to give result back or might not , a distinguished move in markets is observed especially with the new strategic formation of UNI brand based on corporate branding tactics, this market now subject-oriented to reflect the real approach and target of said institutions (Jevons, 2006).

2.2.1 UNI brand

Marketing in higher education has grown significantly into a field of accumulative communication network that is now designed to attract and retain students the same way other manufactured goods companies uses marketing to attract customers from different sectors, with some minor differences, universities now market education for student with a gratification routes that could be sustained, because well, education cannot be consumed as a produced good, and it's not the typical type of service.

University branding as we are concerned is defiantly a new concept this market has been taken for granted and treated like a granted market for several decades now and , I would say it's a mature market that was in need for entry of privet institutes that are managed as branded organization and the new corporate thinking method , and now with the new brand redefinition , higher education field institutes are focusing on marketing and promotion, and it has been questioned by many researchers, especially the value of branding in the higher education field (Jevons, 2006). The reality of the transaction to corporate thinking that this market is fairly matured and is decaying unless made into a brand-dominated market , others argues that Universities as brands tends to have the ability to invoke comparisons, feelings, and project a images on students to indicate that one of the function of university is marketing, which is develop a leverage that can be used as a competitive advantage by the usage of their heritage (Bulotaite, 2003).

With the new century, education system is becoming very widespread nations wide. Especially in Turkey our field of study, where recently it has become one of the most populated countries university wise where it has around 180 universities, Istanbul as a measure , alone has around 51 universities in which

40 privet institutions, that almost 79%, that they all compete to attract foreigner and local students, furthermore , some of the literature debated it if a university brand counts the same is the university reputation, and, we think that a university can be defined and communicated as an organization or a corporate - with some differences- , in higher education field, a customer is a student, the product is academic programs and education, while pricing and income are tuition fees and student education charges, you see the output of such a corporate isn't a service/product. Institutes outputs well educated students that might, more specifically will effect social, political, and economic behavior of their community (Sultan and Wong, 2019).

Marketing in this case uses word of mouth, public relations and school advertisements that are focused to induce questioning and word of mouth (WOM). Universities can be defined as branded corporates and also can be thought of as a brand , but maintaining a reputation is hard due to the different situation of universities that already have to deal with views and behavior of current and graduated students (Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004), but appears to be in a certain argument that there is a level of overlapping between the concepts of brand and reputation (Chapleo, 2007) which and might be a key for understanding higher institute as a corporate brand.

University branding could be slightly different than conventional branding, although many would agree that university should be managed as a "conventional" corporate brand , but due to the exceptional nature of universities as organizations with multiple stakeholders where they have different aims, products to be served and targeted customers, with special standards to be maintained with lots and lots of rules and regulations to be followed (Roper and Davies, 2007; Wæraas and Solbakk, 2009), furthermore university branding tend do have a little bit different new format of branding, according to researchers, in the shape of subliminal logos, pictures and more specifically ideograms that are statistically tested and targeted to promote recognition in the general public ideograms are the type of graphic symbols that are used apart from any particular language to represent an idea, or a concept , these kinds of emblems are much seen in modern promoting for universities like merch, billboards, and every part of the University that can be branded to give

current students feel of ambient and belonging (Drori, Delmestri and Oberg, 2013). Universities often gives promises to incoming students of diversity, great location and employability after graduation, further more others might focus on academic performance and ambient of the institute, as in facilities, libraries and classrooms (Menon, Saiti and Socratous, 2007).

Nonetheless incoming prospective student won't be expecting anything less than promised from an institute that might shape their future, hence having a prejudgment about any institute that comes to mind in general, especially when universities uses the caching expressions of 'excellent', 'high quality' and other wide brand promises. Now it's important for universities to keep these promises regarding current and incoming student by working efficiently for achieving the best of their promises, which I could say if these promises are kept and fulfilled on the best possible way, it might give the university brand legitimacy and straighten their position between others.

Now at the early days some of researchers were not happy that universities are flowing branding strategy and even didn't get the point on spending rescores for advertising a university , someone else had to say and I quote "Despite the unclear purpose vast quantities of money are spent on promoting whatever it is that universities are, do, and how they do it, without publicly available research on the efficiency or the outcomes of these investments" (Jevons, 2006. p476.)

through the years more and more universities started following the path of branding and this started to become its own category which gave the researchers Inspiration to research this field and we can say that the competition among universities is not a new concept actually it has been the phenomena since the start of universities until the market got matured , nonetheless branding is the recent tool of marketing that has gave itself a place in University and higher education field that has been evident in all types of universities even small very localized ones (Sultan and Wong , 2012; Drori, Delmestri and Oberg, 2013).

As everyone who into university education field could recognize universities has been expanding enormously , and marketers have been spending lot of resources to give their institutes names and brand that is distinguishable upon others (Rolfe, 2003) (Rolfe, 2003) Although the research is in literature doesn't go back very long time in history but it's pretty rich in resources because of the

new era of universities turning into branded Institutes, truth to be told, branding has become a common practice that used by universities when aiming for specialization or excellence, in a small local market or in a big global multi-national market (Drori et al., 2013) excellence in higher educational field involve perceived quality, perception and persistence, in order to create a valuable equity for the institute, as customer tend to remember excellent institutes that offers high quality as promised , this reflected as quality of education, courses and curriculum, and the prestige of degree awarded after graduation.

 In order to have an upper arm and a good leverage to be used as a strategic advantage a customer "student" retention is required by creating positive thoughts and supportive attitude towards the institute by working to achieve excellence in the field and fulfil any promises that might be given. As a result, it might be logical that mainly universities does that to cover the rising upkeeping and education fees by having extra local and international students enroll into their programs by being brand focused(Sultan and Wong, 2019), and using the income to fund researches and advertisement or for targeting a more students while strengthen its brand name by following corporate profile and working to achieve excellence in their field ,   which gets the university -as an organizational brand- into the loop of branding . With no doubt targeting is a very powerful tool to be used in this field and university brand is definitely a good investment says researchers (Dailey *et al.*, 2006; Heslop and Nadeau, 2010) ,and could have an impact of word of mouth WOM if used properly where higher education corporates will target range of students by marketing campaigns inducing the willing to participate in word of mouth WOM to look for the most prestigious university to enroll in, and if worked as untended the brand will be the result of this word of mouth WOM research.

2.3 Importance of Brand Management

After establishing the meaning of a brand now comes into the brand management, as institutions of higher educations are transiting into branded corporates, and privet institutions are looking for profit and self-sustaining financial income , it has become crucial to have a clear sight and specific

horizon, as well as an obvious profile in order to have a competitive advantage in this market especially corporate performance wise.

Now brand management in general is the act of managing every aspect of a brand, from tangible aspects like looks, feels, colors, logos, and Packages, into the intangible aspects as if customer emotions and experience when dealing with the brand's product or service. Historically Brand management dates back to the 19th century and before , where it was mainly under control of companies owners and/or general managers, Actually before the late 19th century and even early 20th century, back then every marketing campaign was related to disreputable firms and it was known to spread lies so branding and advertisement was very despicable , and even early 20th century, not very shockingly but in the 1930s tobacco companies used to advertise smoking as good for health, as in an article by American Journal of Public Health (AJPH), (Martha N. Gardner, Allan M. Brandt, 2006) companies used to twist facts and manipulate information to make unhealthy bad effective products to appeal to customers and even more of spreading lies that is disguised in scientific facts and many more of ungrateful deeds that made this field not trustable at all , "So framing it that way seems like it'll help appeal to people" they said .

One of the first attempts of managing a brand as an effective true category was in late 19th century where couple of company business owners tried to compile a new way to publicly recognize their Organization (Low, 1994). (Low and Fullerton, 1994) , company brands would follow the vision of the managers and owner, there would be no organization structure for the management, but managed with influence and intuitive.

During the time in early mid-20th century, brand management started to get switched from general and executive manages into more specialized managers, and brands started taking different shapes and profile-approaches.

However, brand management was first strategically used by the Procter & Gamble company in the 1940s as specialized brand management, where the company took advertisement and marketing to brand department, and each department well have its own team. After world war II, brand management discerption changed from vague general definition into a standard well-known description and branding became a standard for marketing purposes. As time

goes and in the late 20 century brand has become associated with high-quality products and very repeatable firms and vendors, especially with the lack of quality and consistency back then, brands that are known for quality and consistency was believed to have unlimited trust. In today's market with the highly spread of Internet and social media brand has become more and more important to deal with and thus raising the importance of strategical aimed brand management(Low and Fullerton, 1994).

The following timeline Figure 2.1 shows the increasing of brand management importance and evolution with time.

In modern market brand has become a valid dimension that reflects itself on the firm's strategic decisions, with organizations becoming more and more "brand oriented" and the shifting of perspective into branded corporate point of view branded organizations started gaining complexity and becoming more intricate, resulting brand management gaining a lot of interest of firms, deployed in order to have the needed management power and expertise to comprehend and define the firms branded identity, as a better way to fulfill the tactical and long term investments that shapes the firm's marketing approach, in which serves as a tool to develop a sustained brand identity, aiming to accomplish a lasting strategic advantages over competitors and a leverage in the market to obtain better share and higher influence over time, brand management actually have become more focused and have different point of views depending on the way its discussed to be, researchers have agreed on brand management having multiple perspectives and view point, also its discussed to have two main categories , management style and approach wise (Louro and Cunha, 2001).

Before 19th century
associated with disreputable vendors and bad quality

Late 19th century
some companies started working for nantion-wide recognision

Early 20th century
customers began to associate brand with quality and consistency

1915 -1930
Brand managment tranfromation from Chief manager to specialized managers

Mid19th century
Procter & Gambel adopted new better way for brand managment

1980-NOW
Brand managment become very vital for the future of companies and being corporated in variaty of ways

Figure 2.1: historical review

2.3.1 Perspectives of Brand

Nowadays as branding became vital for the future of companies for better perspective and fully defined future, under the demanding competition in every field a person could name, as the chairman of Unilever Mr. Niall Fitzgerald, stated the organization perspective shift with the statement "We're not a

manufacturing company anymore, we're a brand marketing group that happens to make some of its products" (Willman 2000). Quoted by (Louro and Cunha, 2001) Which indicates how important is brand management as companies gets bigger and stronger , as tactics start to be effected by company strategic formula, brand-oriented approach is the needed phenomena, that firms adopt a brand start thinking as a big organized corporates ,hence the shift of prospective towards branding, making organizations act like branded corporate as it includes increasing part of market share and more sales equity.

Recently lots of overlapping approaches have appeared for brand management although they have some different ideas on how the brand should be managed Which broadly can be categorized into two segments depending on the scope of management and approaches taking in consecration for brad management : brand as trademark (High, 2004 ; Felgner, 2007) and holistic brand management (Louro and Cunha, 2001; Keller and Richey, 2006)While marketing at its core tend to be dependent on brand , brand management tend to focus on items that could be added together as a mix forming a company profile such as logos, names, symbols, charisma, packaging and others and might extend to many more.

Well, the idea of the categorizing followed, here that some researches define the brand as logos in appearance and colors and so on of visual effects, and might extend to packaging and advertisement, While others believe that brand is the entire property of the company making a specific appearance for the organization as an entire profile that has dos and don'ts, and end up projecting an entire custom-made organizational brand frame that suits the brand directions and needs, help serving organizational orientations and emphasize its tactics , following "a whole greater than the sum of its parts," method which helps customer to define the brand from another competing brands in every aspect of the market, having the effect of customer retention to specific brand which it its tern result in a higher market share and better equity and adding to customer and market segmentation (Keller and Richey, 2006).

2.3.1.1 Company perspective

Well, brand management is particularly important for companies due to the fact that in current time and days brands now are linked to consistent and quality

appropriate and even more it can be used as a marketing tool As stated in our literature and it's going to be discussed later, brand management has become a tool for attracting customers and retaining current customers by using the Marketing gadget to have their brand image upkept with result in increasing their satisfaction and gaining customer loyalty and by result of that might or might not encourage a good word of mouth that might help inducing more and more customers into the company. Also researcher might describe the brand management as an attempt to manage the customer branch relationship which result in a value generation for the organization itself, this relationship management can be used as a short term and long term investment and it's usually for the good of any organization a good brand management may increase the brand equity in the market which in next role of work, will have an effect of increasing the brand value overtime, (Keller, 2002 ; Heslop and Nadeau, 2010;Wood. , 2000).

In management point of view having advertisement and marketing is a key, mainly companies look for income and financial gains, education industry is no foreigner to this where many and many universities uses their brand to do campaigns and marketing acts to attract more students which provide 'hopefully' the uprising keeping and uprunning costs of running a facility this size as universities tend to be great sized facilities ,additionally companies of this size "universities" after having the minimum number of students or customers required to run this facility at a normal rate start using targeting brand management , while targeting is very powerful in attracting new customers companies "universities" enters a loop of using targeted brand management to generate income for upcoming and more stronger brand building, this income also used target more and more international and local students , making a stronger brand and providing image of high quality education, As brand names now are related to high quality and consistency which in their turn might increase brand value, adding layers and layers of complexity and income multiplication(Low and Fullerton, 1994; Dailey *et al.*, 2006; Heslop and Nadeau, 2010).

a good brand management have the power to reshape customer commitment at a shape of post purchase faithfulness which can use it as a powerful instrument to

induce positive word of mouth in the search of organizational growth. (Allsop et al., 2007 p. 410.).

Brand management as a trademark

Now brand can be managed in two ways A trademark or a whole brand management as we have spoken before difference between these 2 types of management that is the point of view of managers towards their brand because in a trademark management system the brand is considered as logos, and symbols, etc. And it serves two main purposes which are this trade name and symbol and the other is to have the legal ownership to the product, and to protect their invention and ideas from illegally copied or used by others (High, 2004) like some random biscuit brand that is purpose is just to distinguished and make sales   In this type of management success might be measured on the market performance of product that's marketed as a part of this brand managers of this type believes that customers are more likely show loyalty if competitors enters the market with the new product that similar to the product this brand has made first (Louro and Cunha, 2001).

Holistic brand management

 Second is the holistic brand management point of view in which a brand is shown as a package of everything related to the company which effects its perception and brand personality , we should note this type brand management is way more complex because they believe that a whole greater than the sum most of its parts, besides this way of managing have to manage every way of marketing and marketplace products and services that has the brand name because everything is related to the personality of the company or organization , which carries the name of this brand on furthermore, brand management becomes more of an entire cultural management, because managers are trying to manage the entire ecosystem of the organization based on their brands. (Louro and Cunha, 2001; Keller and Richey, 2006). Such a brand management offers several new things to the brand names because it's include every intangible bits of identity or personality, like for example Red Bull who offer a power hype and a different lifestyle which involves a lot of sports and activities, as well as social events, now is not just a logo or in brand name but , Redbull have successfully managed to make this brand a lifestyle and include every

intangible identity and personality into it , by sponsoring athletes or doing their own sports event, and having a social media post that encouraged everyone to do it the "Red Bull style". Well, the culture here says "if it's not aligned with our brand personality then we cannot be involved with it" as you go back to Red bull example, You can see them involving with some stay at home moms or let's sleep or something because it's not compatible with their brand personality becoming "culture management" (Hulberg, 2006 p. 64) . This type of brand management have several advantages over the product oriented system because it focused on the entire corporate personality and it's a way of reducing costs by associating brand personality and brand management in one solid form which will induct the customers as an emotional relationship with their brands having a higher customer retention and one more loyalty , however it might or might not be associated with troubled customers which my effect the entire brand (Louro and Cunha, 2001; Hulberg, 2006).

2.3.1.2 Customer perspective

Early in the past customers are well thought of that they are not incorporated in the process of management, Prior approach of management in every organization was to keep aiming to the benefit of stockholder which changed dramatically during the 1980's, when R.Erward freeman issued *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* 1984 that changed the rules of the game defining the stakeholders as "anyone that can be affected or affect by the organization" starting the era of stakeholders instead of shareholders and was the amber of start of research on customer intents integration in branding and management as whole, changing a lot of the rules that were being casted on organizations .

Nowadays the thing is every professional organization manager knows that branding and brand management should be thought by the mind of customers, as customers are stake holders too, as mentioned before according to the stakeholder theory a stakeholder is anyone who effected by the corporate or get affected by it, investors , employees, customers and suppliers are included, and the key of organizational success is to get the objective of all effected parties into one common objective or combine them into a common goal that end up with benefit of all parties.

Many-sided viewpoints agrees on the interdependent nature of value created for any firm where customers are considered as a scores of developing a competitive advantages and an active value creation contributor (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000) which means, generally speaking customers tend to have an impact on the brand they are following by means of engaging with it, talking about it word of mouth WOM and expanding its market share and popularity , we also could capsulize that students are consumers and co-producers in higher education institution, i.e. stakeholders. as students engage in value generating for their university by paying their tuition fees and talking about their university, causing more people to enroll (Sultan and Wong, 2012) , also University graduates have a great impact on popularity of their Institute by integrating in the society and spreading word of mouth (WOM) about their preferred brand, however prospective customers prefer a brand that satisfy their needs, that is well spoken about which also might as well have a good repetition , here comes the role of customer engagement into brand management , by satisfying their needs to gain a "good" repetition .

It's also suggested that an institute with the intense word spread and spoken about and have a repetition as a transfer institute tend to have a higher percentage of disengagement and negatively influence customer commitment of students, in other words, when students gather the knowledge about their higher education institute and figure that it's not worth completing the studies in , they tend to transfer and embrace the fact of being transfer institute (Angulo-Ruiz and Pergelova, 2013, p. 347.)

In general customers that engage in a specific brand definitely has a perspective and prior assumptions about what are they expecting from this higher education institute , and thus if their expectations were met -and it should be met-, brand strength might increase and resulting attracting and retaining more customers by inducing positive word of mouth (WOM) , not to mention the increase in satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, if brand management were given a customer point of view POV look as the customer will decide to enroll with this brand or not.

When students decide to look for a post-graduate or pre-graduate degrees they may or may not choose to continue their study in the same University of their

parents or relatives or the people who advised them to as higher education system market is based of advices and word of mouth (WOM) (Sultan and Wong, 2019), so basically brand performance is closely related to the customers attributes and segments, where the prestige of any brand is becoming pretty important. Its argued that universities with a higher prestige between other institutes will result in higher retention and thus better brand image relative to others in higher education market (Sung and Yang, 2008) and vice versa a lower prestigious institutions can be assumed as is not strong enough and have prior assumption of poor quality education resulting in it not be able to attract or retain its current customers and project the information to them that's needed to prove otherwise.

2.4 The Concept of Brand as An Output

2.4.1 Brand Strength

In an influence of our literature, brand strength is a fairly compounded variable to be talked about as a whole, although the difference between the brands strength variables can be very ambiguous to distinguish , Brand strength could be described by defining its dimensions, namely: Brand attitude, Brand remarkability and Brand familiarity these dimensions are known to be one of the most important -and mostly described- dimensions of brand strength (Wymer, 2013; Casidy and Wymer, 2015), although it function together as one compounded variable.

Brand strength (or uni brand strength is this context) is indicates how much is the brand perceived favorable, perceived remarkable, and well known from the target group, hence brand strength being a direct variable that effect brand value as well as it has a significant impact on market equity of a brand (Wymer, 2013).

Brand attachment has been associated with higher consumption and positive consideration towards a selected brand, researches has concluded that brand strength have an effect on inducing word of mouth WOM and its complete predictor of word of mouth WOM (Wymer and Casidy, 2015), also as brand

strength increases, the willingness of customers to engage in a brand related discussions increases, hence increasing word of mouth (WOM) probability.

Moreover higher education institutional branding has become a norm for universities, with the growing competitive environment, and perhaps could be explained in an example, if a university was fairly berried or unknown by a vast majority of perspective students and could not be familiar upon competitor, this will evoke its familiarity and resulting in low brand strength, it might be known for being worse than other, also evoking its brand strength, and might not be considered favorite by its current student population .

As established a strong brand should be favorable, remarkable, and well known between a target group, what if this brand Is not considered favorable, remarkable, and it is not well familiar between its target customer's / segment of the market , most likely that this higher institution brand won't be mentioned in regular occurrence hence less frequency and likelihood of word of mouth (WOM) , and even when it gets subjected to be spoken about between said community, the discussions are most likely not to favor this institute comparing it to better, more known and perceived to be superior higher education institution brands. (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Allsop, Bassett and Hoskins, 2007).

The main idea here that human nature indicates that if one has no information about the thing or consider this thing not very "important" will mostly not use it, talk about it , or consider it in their daily lives, not to mention favor it upon others.

 The researchers argue that branded institutes as a prestigious Institute have a higher percentage of engagement and customer retention actually, Strong branded institution is: that institution that manages their name or brand as a whole entire ecosystem or a profile as the knowledge must be shared with customer, the way the organization wanted it to be shared argues (Louro and Cunha, 2001)

In holistic brand management the organization will offer an entire projection of the brand wanted image and profile on their targeted customers, in a way that the more the brand observed preferred and known by their targeted audience for a specific profile in a particular field, the more the brand perceived as stronger,

of course , the brand should be preferred upon other brands by the standard the organization has set, no others. And yes indeed university field is no exception, if a branded Institute was branded as a high prestigious Institute , it will likely have a lower percentage of disengagement and definitely have a positive influence on customer "student " commitment, that an Institute that is branded or perceived as a transfer Institute, (Angulo-Ruiz and Pergelova, 2013)where this same brand of university be perceived known to be bad for example, hence perceived not favorable or remarkable among others in which case will reduce its brand strength. A brand is perceived strong if their customers have a high degree of confidence in the named brand, and thus interacting with it on an extended period of time (Dacin and Smith, 1994).

Now in general customers that engage in a specific brand most of the times has a perspective expectation of what are they getting from the brand , and thus if their expectations were not met as it should, their attitude will change towards the brand reducing its strength and resulting failing of attracting and retaining customers, not to mention the reduction and effect it has on word of mouth WOM, which might end up flipping form a positive word of mouth WOM into negative form very quick, as it known that a customer with unmet expectations tend to tell twice the number of people about their bad experiences than people who had their expectations met or had a good experience.
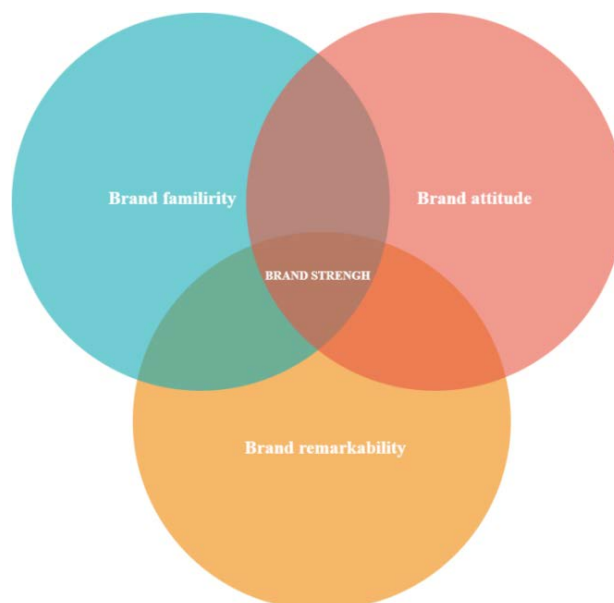
Figure 2.2: Brand strength

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2.4.1.1 Brand attitude

brand attitude describes how much is the brand is perceived as acceptable and describes how much is the brand is favored by customers among other competitors (Wymer, 2013; Casidy and Wymer, 2015)Is the behavior explaining that aspect of brand strength which relays on the way customers behave towards a brand in acceptance or rejection, we would explain it as the opinion of the said customer of a brand they're being subjected to.

Now attitude in general could be defined as the way someone or something feels towards curtain thing ,and thus behave towards someone or something (Cambridge English dictionary), and generally speaking a good attitude towards something means that the person "customer" likes and accepts the thing of interest and hence feeling of supportive the target thing , which lead into the customer behaving positively towards the thing of interest , in this case this explains the mentioned definition of brand attitude of accepting and favoriting a brand or a company.

In real life situations human nature occurs , a normal customer won't be able to favor something and have a specific attitude towards it unless spend the time to gather information about the item of interest, a brand a product or a person maybe , and getting familiar with it as developing an attitude require thoughts and perhaps some pre assumptions, well familiarity is another aspect of brand strength that will discuss next, this case is not strange in higher education field, where welling students tend to ask for advices from graduated students -who already- experienced the faculty, formulated an attitude, and willing to share information about their experience. This importance of attitude of students towards their higher education institutes comes from the fact that the students awareness play a big role in socio-economic development of their countries, and help distributing the knowledge they carry to others, a good attitude will reflect to the society in it being knowledge driven, increasing the percentage of willing to get educated citizens, with the increasing popularity of the internet and the easy access to vast number of people on social media, it's now gotten very easy for perspective students to reach out and look for institutions to learn at, look for reviews and more advices though word of mouth (WOM), especially from

university graduates (alumni) who have attended the institution of interest (Nagar and Sharma, 2013)(Shields and Peruta, 2019).

A customers who favor something among competitors is most likely to be more subjected to be confident that the brand or "thing" is better than competitors and thus acquiring the will to defend it , that's why brand attitude can be   related to the way perceived customers are feeling confident with their choice of brand and expressing that trust by favoring it, A customer with a favorite brand will be very confident in using the brand or speaking about it in a public manner hence increasing frequency and likelihood of word of mouth (WOM), a university graduate that is confident of their choice tend to advice others to enroll in it is a good example of a good brand attitude.

 In fact some literature actually mentioned that a brand being favorable by its targeted customers could have , and might be one of the reasons supporting brand strength and straightening its projection , literature also advises that although attitude   is one of the very basic customer related instincts to favor a brand and have a nice attitude towards it , it could be a significant effector on brand strength (Dacin and Smith, 1994) others furthermore believed that good brand attitude might be a precursor of strong brand equity in the market and increasing market share and thus, being a part of strong brand, which means the more favorable the brand is, the likely for it to have bigger market share resulting in a stronger equity(Faircloth, 2005), additionally, its believed that brand attitude is linked to increasing in satisfaction where in general customer's favorite brand tend to satisfy customer needs more often , as a part of them being favorite, keeping promises and sticking to projected brand profile too , resulting in greater faith in this specific brand, also great brand image resulting in being able to convince the customers with profile and clams that is projected through the management, enabling customers to engage in the act of believing their favorite brand, hence spreading the word of mouth – wanted by the organization– enabling the company of growing stronger and retaining more customers(Casidy and Wymer, 2015; Wymer, 2013).

Now due to the marketization of higher education field, it has become a big market with many educational alternatives branding and marketing tactics are being taken seriously to achieve a good customer effective leverage , a

university need to ensure of its brand tactics, and satisfy students' needs for them to be confident that they did the right choice selecting this institution, by feeling that, an institution could induce more positive word of mouth (WOM), ensuring better brand value which will generate more profit income, and customer retention, and when combined with the other components of brand strength better brand performance and greater tactical abilities (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Allsop, Bassett and Hoskins, 2007).

2.4.1.2 Brand remarkability

Brand remarkability is the measure of how much the branded object is perceived as exquisite, extraordinary or even 'special' compared to other brands (Casidy and Wymer, 2015; Wymer, 2013) and as a result the brand might be perceived as better and be favorite among others.

In general in being remarkable is defined as: something is remarkable if its unusual, special and therefore deserve to be mentioned among many other rivals that might offer the same service Cambridge English dictionary), , well , in marketing remarkability measures the excellence that is given out of brand as driven from prior experiences of customers in comparison to other brand that gives the same services (education in our case) , Hence being better than others.

Forthrightly a thing can be remarkably horrible, which in this case worth talking about how bad it is and mentioning its horrible experience. And it should be noted that it's unlikely for brand remarkability to increase without increasing in familiarity first, which means a brand that's unfamiliar to the customer cannot be perceived as remarkable because they didn't spend the time to know the brand, see the profile projected by the brand and getting to figure that this profile of life style is suitable for the customer and thus deciding if this brand is something special and more remarkable than others, and here's the thing, brand can be known and remarkable to be disliked or disputed , as an example "For example, an actor might be well-known and excellent at acting. Yet, for variety of reasons, such as involvement in a scandal, the actor may be disliked, weakening his/her brand strength" (Wymer and Casidy, 2019. p. 12.) Which means if some brand for example is known to be good and also have an excellence in comparison other brands that gives the same product or service but it's also known as being bad in some cases, in our case as an educational

field a University could be known to have an excellent academic performance , and very popular among researchers with great research output, but it could have some ethical problems in research sources for example or it might be very expensive and doesn't give discounts and scholarships for students who are likely not able to pay their tuition fees and thus losing an entire section of the market , Hence having the brand of being remarkable of being worse than others, as being bad, resulting in inducing bad word of mouth (WOM) then consequential of weakening its brand and reducing its branded institution power of effecting (Elliott and Healy, 2001) . well, due to the fact that being known and remarkable isn't enough for brand strength, a brand definitely needs to be liked, favored or perceived better than others, in some way or another, because depending on Cambridge definition of remarkable things ,   having a remarkable brand in some way will increase the likelihood of word or mouth (WOM) in some way or another, a bad word of mouth or a good positive word of mouth , leaving the stage for good attitude of customers that should be induced by the institutions, to decide the way the word would be spread about the said institute, and I mean that the expectations and profile of institute that makes it favorable to customers must be met as any customer have a pre assumptions and perspective that might lead to a specific expectations of the brand , these expectation will help shape the influence of brand strength and apply the engagement levels .

2.4.1.3 Brand familiarity

Brand familiarity gives the baseline of acknowledgement on how much our target customers 'students' are familiar with their university, how much information do the know about the 'branded object' as a whole And I would say that being familiar with brand is to know the bare minimum basic information about it (Casidy and Wymer, 2015; Wymer, 2013)

Also familiarity is defined as the good knowledge of something, or to know it very well (Cambridge English dictionary) thus I could describe it as the knowledge gathered by customers and the frequency of brand related experience combined to achieve a confidence towards a specific targeted brand (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987; Baker et al. 1986)

Following the definition of knowledge of something, and one of the main takeouts to have when describing being familiar with something in particular, that it takes time to gather information about the brand and to process this information , Regardless what are the information known or the time spent processing this information which gives the customer "receiver" a better image about the branded object. Baker et al. (1986). And a better understanding of the company profile and the projection its podcasting towards customers to comprehend. This gathering and processing won't be possible unless the customer spent a time with the brand which means having an experience with the brand in any means of spending time, it differs from a brand to other in the way that time must be taken to collect information , but no matter the way of using, a data must be gathered and experience must be handed (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987). As one of the goals of familiarity is to address the differentiation ability between the brand related product and other competitors in a market, in such a way that customers who favor the brand might perceive it as superior to others increasing brand strength, that's why brand familiarity was considered an important effecting factor of customers behavior.

Because brand familiarity might influence the customer to buy/use the same brand again as the information gathered was enough to have an opinion and attitude about that institution.

Now an institute could be familiarized in many of ways of exposure, like advertisement and marketing campaigns which expose customers to many competing brands, helping them on making information-based decision on which brand to use, where customers are able to access the information needed from all the competitors (Muehling et al., 1993). Making –as my father like to call it- "An educated expanse" well it makes sense you see the more familiar the customer with the brand , the better they feel when they spend their money buying it because they did the decision based on knowledge, as the marketing and advertisement war has shown the differences between competing brands, and organizations uses this strategy to unveil the advantages of their brands upon others that their customers might used in the past.

The special thing higher education institutes market is having a different way of customer exposer which is by involving, in other words students get involved

in their institute and sped time to get to know it, then formulate a point of reference to compare to other institutions , by this as student could have the ability to advice others, and involve in word of mouth (WOM), a better known institute has a better brand strength especially when its mixed with it being remarkable and had a well attitude, furthermore the example of University used previously   , if the University That's remarkable to have excellent academic performance and perceived that it's usually does not gives discounts or scholarships for unable to pay students as first comers , but in fact they have a program for a that part of their community's current students , in which that academically superior students and ones with better academic and research performance than others receive discounts and be subjected to scholarship, these type of information won't be gathered and known unless the student spend the time to familiarize with the higher education institute that they enrolled in, and it could be completely unnoticed unless the customer " student " gets familiarized with it , as student get familiar they conclude that in fact their institution have a discount and scholarship programs for students who comply with the rules. Getting extra remarkability points and having more friendly attitude towards their institution, resulting in strengthening the brand in the minds of customers who knows (Dahl, Manchanda and Argo, 2001), moreover this type of knowledge can stimulate good word of mouth (WOM) and increase the frequency this branded corporate is spoken about.

This also leads to the brand being perceived special upon other brands as information about the superior behavior and better performance is known to customers because of accumulated knowledge, you see the keyword here is known, because the more familiar the customer is with the brand , the less prompts they need to judge the brand , hence the brand must be known to customers familiar to them, and to be known to be better than others (Longwell, 1994), also a customer that is familiar to a brand is more likely to consider it when doing another purchase, in compared with a customer who is not (Nagar and Sharma, 2013) Resembling the tight relation between brand strength and familiarity in this field that lead to brand familiarity considered as a component of brand strength.

2.4.2 Brand Satisfaction

Coming forward towards the term 'satisfaction' which has many arguably correct definitions, In general and for the sake of this research to be clear, significantly consistent and exceptionally detailed satisfaction will be defined as: an effective response of the customers towards their brand offerings which normally is a positive response -hopefully-. in our case is the response of students to their university offerings which is represented in a form of classes, amenities, facilities, and general nature of the university (Giese and Cote, 2000). And is Also defined as the state of happiness as a result from the offerings of their favorite brand, in other words it's the feeling of happiness when the quality of services that being offered meets the expectations or even exceed the expected level, i.e. perceived quality resultant feeling that occur to customers flowing consumption (Elliott and Healy, 2001; Carlson and O'Cass, 2010). While researchers argued it's a process or an outcome, I considered it an outcome of many inputs, and a response for offerings, i.e. an evaluation that follows the consumption of product or a process.

Additionally, satisfaction is key towards customer's attraction/ retention, while keeping in mind that it might backfire if the said claims and presumptions that an organization made was not satisfied. Going back into Red Bull example as you see many of us remember the infamous slogan of Red Bull that is used many of their advertisements that it gives power which makes you go crazy Active , however they did a mistake they had the slogan of "Red Bull gives you wings" , it actually doesn't although any person with the right mind wouldn't believe that actually gives you a real wings , a person sued the entire company over 13 million dollar in the lawsuit claiming the lies of that organization, after claiming that he wasn't satisfied because he was promised of having wings but he didn't, As stated in an article in Telegraph newspaper, that why red bull stopped using the slogan and kept the hyper profile and moved into more -arguably- realistic claims, Maybe the guy was crazy to attempt this stunt because come on who would believe that human can have wings!. But the customer is always right -right?- , and as a customer you're expecting to have your minimum expectations to be met or else you wouldn't be satisfied, you wouldn't be happy, On the other hand If a customer expectations were met, the

feeling of happiness, or "satisfaction", -who wouldn't like having wings , right?-.

Now as a response a satisfied customer would express their satisfaction clearly with brand loyalty, positive word of mouth and repeated consumption of that brand, increasing value generation for the company, that's why satisfactions and brand claims need to be used properly and kept monitored.

Lots of researchers agreed on satisfaction being a very powerful tool in controlling word of mouth (WOM) where a satisfied customer usually does not hessite on giving tribute and complimenting the "Brand" as it generate a feeling of happiness and satisfaction of them doing the correct thing. (Wymer and Casidy, 2015).

As in higher education system students are the main type of customers – if not the only- thus student satisfaction in the facility they enrolled in is a vital role in measuring quality of education and giving a score of the university they educated in in multilevel score starting from education quality, ambiance and campus life. Now satisfaction might be accepted to be a short-term investment as student tend to be retained and attract more student by having students give advices about their institution and thus inducing word of mouth (WOM) more frequently , as student frequently get satisfied with many important factors that schools might more might not overlook (Mazzarol and Soutar, 1999).

Now this joins reasons advice to invest in satisfactory of students so universities need to not overlook variables that might lead to student leaving the university and/or advising against it , and unimportant factors that can act as an inconvenience for the student so a higher education institution should be given a customer point of view (POV) by the managing party (Elliott and Healy, 2001), by doing that will ensure the satisfaction of students and have a supportive community that effects brand's word of mouth (WOM)

Lastly student satisfaction is a way that students practice the evaluation for the quality of services which provided to them by their chosen higher education institute by means of reviews, loyalty and advise with or against the institutions they enrolled in , it comes as a response for the education given, ambient of the facility and general life in campus and it tend to be compared to rivals, it also

should be mentioned that in general universities with more prestigious profiles tend to have higher student capacity and better satisfaction scales   , and it might explain the Phenomena of which satisfaction can affect the relation of brand strength to word of mouth (WOM) in higher education market field.

2.4.3 Brand Image

The 'brand image' in general or (university brand image as will be used in this research) refers to the perceived values and beliefs of the customers (students in this case) about the branded object (university)(Yuan *et al.*, 2016), and it's a reflection of the identity of an organization In the eyes of the targeted customers on a shape of an organizational projection and profile , in which it explains how the brand is being seen from customer point of view (Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004), It could be also defined by the entire projection that is being comprehended by the customers, in which that the branded organization is working on spreading between its targeted customers .

Now brand image could be defined as what reflects or represent something/one and it's the set of features and ideas that customers connect in their mined to a brand or a product (Cambridge English dictionary)   , so it can be concluded, brand image is the point of view that a customer believe the brand to be as, or the idea that the organization that owns the brand is trying to convince their target audience , this goes under the scope of holistic brand management where the entire profile "image" of the company under the brand selected is managed and being projected to the customers in order for them to be immersed in this brand experience, this include everything that carries the brand name and can be extended to every act the brand does or needed to be spread publicly (Louro and Cunha, 2001).

And thus, brand image is consisted of tangible and intangible constrains, and floating ideas, hints and projection that are managed and controlled by a certain organization to obtain the perfect profile that is represented in customers mined which is different from a brand to another, in order to achieve differentiation among rivals , gaining strategic advantages by inducing positive word of mouth (WOM) upon customers.

Further into the case here that a University or a higher education institution brand image can be summed in number of standards , its measured in by innovativeness, ethical standards, and social responsibilities and many more like ambiance prestige and campus life (Sultan and Wong, 2012),   due to the fact of researching brand image of universities   and for the sake of research Brand image is used as an mediating variable that affects the relations towards word of mouth in educational field, university brand image is summed on the way are Universities are seen through the eyes off its potential students or current enrolled ones , or how does the university project their identity on their students, resulting in profile spreading publicly, providing a point of view (POV) reference to the institutional brand to be seen, as part of branded corporate thinking.

Moreover, it is possible to say, it is the way that universities comply with the standards of its field innovation, social responsibilities, and other standards that is being used to describe universities in that section of the world, and with the marketization of the higher education field lading to it having minimum needs for an institution to have a compiling image is that is distributed upon pubic. it's also worth the mention that external prestige and how the university is seen with an eye of a current of a graduated student have an effect on customer behavior and thus any respectful organization will tend to support its image increasing its prestige in the point of view (POV) of customers (Sung and Yang, 2008) .

Additionally it's believed that good brand image can lead into better perspective off of current student, with better image of their institutions comes a feeling of satisfaction the choice done, hence inducing positive reviews which increase the chance of speeding positive word of mouth (WOM) (Sultan and Wong, 2019) resulting in increasing the likelihood of word of mouth (WOM). Nonetheless image management is a critical when branding an institute where it effects the way customers spread their words about the institute, as its known now the better brand image in customers opinion, the more they tend to "showoff" what they enrolled in by talking about it, now brands that is established with more prestigious brand image could reflect itself on customer's behavior increasing positive word of mouth WOM in an exceptional manner

debated that a good represented brand, and high external pristine might lead to a higher assumption of better quality of current and future clients (Sung and Yang, 2008; Angulo-Ruiz and Pergelova, 2013), hence increasing the probability of these clients will tend more to talk about the brand in general and give advices in favor of the brand, giving the opportunity of positive word of mouth WOM to spread upon believing customers.

2.4.4 Brand Loyalty

Is satisfied customer usually turns to be a loyal customer, well most satisfied customers tend to feel a relationship to their brand and might have the urge to payback to it.

On the other hand, the term 'loyalty' as it used in this research will refers to the customers (students as in context of this research) being attached to the university and favor it among others.

As loyalty could be defined, being loyal means to feel the support and duty towards something or someone (Cambridge English dictionary)   , where according to our related definition, when using "brand loyalty" it does refers to the repeated brand support and repurchase in many cases and add it to count when thinking of advising someone or purchasing a product , which leads to the conclusion that the customer biases towards the brand they feel supportive to when making decisions and having the duty to do the brand good deeds and might induce positive word of mouth (WOM) (Wymer and Rundle-Thiele, 2015).

In matter of a fact Loyalty is discussed to have an indirect effect on word of mouth (WOM) as a loyal customer tend more frequently to talk to others about their favorite brand increasing the frequency of word of mouth (WOM) (Brown and Mazzarol, 2009) , same literature suggested about loyalty towards a university having a value for the brand and thus , its generally known that higher quality services are more likely to have a tangible effect on customer's experience increasing their loyalty as they tend to get more satisfied and get the feeling of doing the right thing when they support their brand . and thus, driving the effect of brand strength on word of mouth towards the positive way, it's like the difference relationship between choose this higher education institutional

brand and others who doesn't necessarily engage with it. For example a person who feels satisfied with their university education will have the feeling of helping the institute, especially when the brand fulfil, their promises and have a strong brand ,and this urge of returning the favor to the institute with advising others to enroll in it is describe being loyal to it, because human always feel the duty that this brand has gave them so I'm self-obligated to return the favor ,

Not surprisingly literature states that a loyal consumer tends to inform others about their favorite brand, spend more to buy it and use it more frequently, and even spend more time to inform others about features and upsides. (Garza Salgado and Royo Vela, 2019).

I'm sure some of us have heard "Oh no I like this brand more than others and I'm willing to discuss" which means they are loyal to this brand because customers are likely to form a relationships with brands that are favorite to them and because it satisfies their needs and meet their minimum expectations, and thus they will feel the urge to advise everyone about this brand and thus increasing the power of positive word of mouth (WOM)(Mazzarol and Soutar, 1999).

Now, management is convinced that as a brand, having a constant reliable relationship with their customers leads into higher customer satisfaction as a prerequisite for better commitment, Which in its turn means being loyal to the brand is and vice versa .

In today's current market the mass production and consumption of products has reached as limit that it's hard to distinguish between relation to competing brands by normal means, and hence companies seeking the customers who are consuming the said products preparing loyalty. As further of this matter, in higher education field the amount of service providers "universities" has increased dramatically over the years, resulting marketizing the field as any other, so tactics based on taking feedback from loyal customers leading to resetting the strategies and enhancing performance (Fleming,et al., 2004; Wymer, 2013).

Ultimately, loyalty might have a mediating effect between brand strength and positive inducing word of mouth. A low loyalty can mediate the relationship

negatively or even can affect the word of mouth from being positive impact into a negative form while strong loyalty would do the relationship in favor and strengthen the effect in reverse. Moreover, this research would give this effect a visit reviling its advantages/ disadvantages and suggest how might this variable can be tuned and used for the benefit of organizations.

2.5 Word of Mouth (WOM)

In British English Viva voce is another name of word of mouth (WOM) and is known to be the act of transferring information in oral form rather than written or Visual representation, it could be simple as telling what time it in the day is and could reach an intricate levels like history keeping and tradition transferring through generations.

Now word of mouth WOM in general is defined as people telling each other about something, and "by word of mouth "means because people tell each other about a person, product or a service (Cambridge English dictionary). Starting at the dawn of history, since human gained the ability to communicate using words, all manuscripts and researches has proven that humans way back before history used to give word of advices and talk to each other about everything and give informal directions and knowledge that helped the race of human to survive, thrive and even prosper , therefore we have lived and gotten more intricate during these years, not to mention that the more complex our life became the more complex advice we tend to give. So basically, word of mouth has been here since longtime ago, and will stay unless we stopped communicating to each other somehow -well it's not a possibility now, is it? -. In which case, (WOM) is any statement given by a customer – negative or positive- to another -future or current- customer in regard of specific brand or a subject in a form of informal comments, with any means of spreading the comment, without any relation to the mentioned brand (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004).

As we understand positive word of mouth (WOM), as an optimistic comments that are passed from customer to another is one of the most important -yet underrated- brand-customer relationship tool, as it is characterized to have high trust worthiness and its communities level widespread it can be considered as a

powerful instrument to reshape customers behavior, and help to present post consumption faithfulness as well as increase willingness to involve in a specific brand (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Allsop, Bassett and Hoskins, 2007). It is also argued to be a significant contributor of any firm's success an variety of ways, and a great strategy, if used to enter the market for the first time (Wangenheim and Bayón, 2007) A survey by Salesforce Research (FIG2.3) concluded that 40% of customers do tend to take WOM feedback and research advices from other people when selecting a product to buy, 40% is arguably a significant number itself , and giving other classifications includes online reviews, retailer website, brand website and in-person check. Which arguably does not apply to educational field, well mostly doesn't, as online university reviews tend to be rare, universities are not retail brands, and in person check won't be significant to tell the quality of an educational institute -I mean unless enrolled in it, it's impossible- It would be safe to say WOM would be a arguably significant source of information regarding educational field.

Where do you research products online prior to going into a store to purchase a product?

Category	Share of respondents
Online product reviews	69%
Retailer's website	55%
Brand website	52%
In-store/in-person	54%
Word-of-mouth	40%
News articles on the brand/product	21%
E-mail interactions with the brand	15%
Social media interactions with the brand	14%
Other	4%
NA/I never research a product before buying	4%

Sources
Harris Poll; Salesforce Research
© Statista 2018

Additional Information:
United States; Harris Poll; May 9 to 11, 2016; 1,988 respondents; 18 years and older; who have purchased consu... months

Figure 2.3: Research Before Buying A Product

As for an organizational brand that doesn't have a good representation in the market, WOM can do the trick of attracting customers, you see , because as generally known it's very hard to set off in a new competitive market unless

inducing (WOM) for new customer to try and engage (Naz, 2014) , numerous managerial studies has suggested ways to encourage positive (WOM) a lot of approaches were discussed that deserve a mention but it's not out field of study such as: buzz marketing introduced in the book of "The Anatomy of Buzz: How to Create Word of Mouth Marketing" (emmanwel Rosen 2000),   or viral marketing. Moreover in the case study paper of others argue that that online (WOM) or viral marketing isn't   always a sure bet, but it can " spark a firestorm" if well used and placed,(Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004; Ferguson Rick, 2008) which makes us come to ask : what if positive (WOM) used properly in higher education industry?, is it already giving a good affect ?, are we under the influence of word of mouth (WOM) in choosing our educational institutions ?, and importantly does universities really induces positive (WOM) when having a good brand strength ?.

Well some researchers argued out that (WOM) has an ground-shaking effect on customer decision and can distinctly affect any brand equity in the market, many statistical researches have proved the ability of positive (WOM) of increasing sales – registered students in our case- (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006), in addition of adding power and growth into sales performance (Eisingerich, Auh and Merlo, 2013) as an example, we all know that as a well-educated person university's alumni contribute to sociopolitical and economic behavior of their community and have trusted point of view in many cases, as a result they do a valuable reviews to their institutes (Sultan and Wong, 2019) , and thus we would agree that their comments about the institutional and educational environment of any selected university , and any advice they might give is coming from knowledge and experience and thus can affect all from social to economical outcome of the brand. As universities tend to be in a brand dominated field nowadays makes it inevitable for universities to engage in more and more focused, (WOM) managed strategies, which led to the consideration by many marketers that (WOM) is a particularly precious tool to be used to attract new customers "students" (Wangenheim and Bayón, 2007)

Now WOM can lead to a strong customer-brand relation As the customer-brand information asymmetry reduced to the minimum due to the exchange of information in an informal way, that's shown by displaying loyalty in which the

customer can would and might be identified by their favorite brand "university" in which would defiantly lead to a positive comments and reviews for this organization " university", now when an important decision needed to be decided as a university enrolment which might effect someone's future, its suggested that customers tend to rely on word of mouth WOM for "trustable" information as it might reduce risk, makes decision making easier and less complex (Berger, 2014) and frankly herd based decisions tend to be easier and less complex to be taken. including any giving advices going on or off record or for example, posting about it in social media. In general, the deeper overlap between the brand and its customer, the more likely they will give positive and reliable comments about it especially if the customer is satisfied and well informed about their experience (Brown *et al.*, 2005) .

well fortunately, considering universities as a brand, and its students as a targeted customer, without doubt is bound have the maximum interest overlap that possibly could happen in any given scenario which makes the comments from customers highly reliable. So basically universities can induce positive word of mouth by increasing brand strength and having the students affected by the profile marketers has made for the university, through informal ways of communication, which concluded that the most curtain way to attract new students to an education organization is through a word of mouth (WOM) promotion (Elliott and Healy, 2001) , in other words the manipulating word of mouth that's spread out of current or previous student to encourage more students to enroll ,and any school organization should offer what's important to the student in order to induce positive WOM .

Researches and results like these are enough to keeps the management of any respectful organization on their toes trying to keep up with its highly demanding, very competitive market that has become today , in the hunt of exploiting WOM in order to multiply brand popularity by driving the positive (WOM) out of customers that might be a key for university success (Wangenheim and Bayón, 2007) especially with this market's unique features and special field that has very different game rules.

2.5.1 Word of mouth marketing (WOMM)

As we talked about word of mouth is a very strong tool that could be used, and i could say again it could spark a firestorm if used properly, Will you see here word of mouth can come in two different ways either in negative form or in a positive form and they both can do a significant impact on the way your brand spreads, for example a lot of people have seen a movie or read a book because they heard about it from someone they know, or they read about it on the Internet generally, the person who's giving the information regarding the book or movie might have or might have not seen that movie, you see sometimes you hear from someone "oh I've heard that movie was great" and you might go watch it on your turn, or maybe a person you trust said "I've seen a trailer about the movie and it looks interesting" you definitely will be interested in that movie after they said that. it actually works both ways the same person you trust might say I've seen the trailer about the movie and it kind of looks boring you probably want watch that movie because you already have previous thought that the movie might not be interesting, so word of mouth can play two different roles as word of mouth being An effective way of evaluation of some product (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006) , which leads do word of mouth marketing being interested in the ability of driving The "Wanted" or " positive" advice about the targeted brand, which means the customers that have knowledge or experience about the product might share their information or point of view, especially if they're felt satisfied and well informed about their experience (Brown *et al.*, 2005). Having the customers giving good evaluation for our product results in lower dissymmetry of information making the customer stronger and given a chance for information change between customer and producer which might result in increasing speed of accepting of the product. Marketers are interested in driving a brand related content that customer could share with each other one of the most important question about word of mouth marketing is the shape of that particular information that needed to be driven out of the customers, (Louro and Cunha, 2001) as you see in a movie case the word that should be driven is that is interesting, that someone's like it, that you might like it . while on educational field the word has a slightly different meaning but still holds the concept that a wanted WOM should be manipulated to give the profile of ,that

the university has a good repetition or it might have a Great academic history, In a holistic manner brand management point of view a company profile should be established In a good fruitful away, and then shared among the customers so they can spread the word and talk about it, especially with our modern technology where Internet is widespread and people on social media can talk and share information about whatever subject they're thinking about , word of mouth marketing has become of the cheapest and most powerful form to reference universities, Just because you're using libraries of people for the advantage of your organization (Barber & Wallace, 2010). By going back to the definition of advertisement, it was defined as "any paid form of non-personal presentation of products, services or ideas placed in one or more of the commercially available media by an identified sponsor." (P. L.Tracey,1989, p. 230.) , Which means that word of mouth does not come under it, it's indeed a presentation of product or service but it's not paid form of it so some used to call it free advertisement, Because by definition advertisement is actually paid non-personal sponsored communicative activity that used to market a product or service, This characteristics word of mouth WOM has become shy off, word of mouth sometimes is a personal presentation of product or service and it counts on the customer's experience and knowledge about the product they're speaking about. Although even sometimes word of mouth can be produced electronically on Internet buy advertisement specialists, and It can be driven out of customers on any specific timing and characteristics wanted in other words, word of mouth can be manipulated as needed.

There is a relationship between customer satisfaction, trust, quality, and loyalty with the effect on word of mouth marketing communication which point us to believe that they would have an effect on relationship of word of mouth and brand strength (Gholipour et al., 2012) , Driving defective bands strength to be lower or higher depending on the mediated mediating effect of it, our effect of word of mouth and interest as it came due to the fact a person satisfied with their purchase may tell one or two person about their experience , maybe their family or at least family member, nowadays researchers are looking at more management practices to boost the numbers of good positive word of mouth and limit any potential factors that might lead to a bad word of mouth, now positive

word of mouth WOM and active referrals to a brand or a product is proven to be an effective way of effecting customers behavior and attributes (Bone, 1995). And thus WOMM can be a two sided blade while its very powerful on changing the customer behavior, organizations need to keep manipulating and encouraging positive word of mouth WOM Following the company profile or "brand" that was already established following the general rules of holistic management (Keller and Richey, 2006) resulting in reducing the number or eliminating the factor of negative effecting word of mouth NWOM.

2.5.2 Negative word of mouth (NWOM)

Now as mentioned in Word of mouth marketing, a person with a good experience might have the willingness to tell a friend or some of his family members or others if they got asked , but the person with bad experience tend to tell more people about their Unsatisfying experience, And advise and keep warning them not to be engaged with that brand or firm, because you see, bad experience usually tend to be the most memorable, and by thus customers tend to tell their bad experience to more people around them, As people are twice more willing to participate in a warning discussion about a brand , or bad word of mouth communication process a survey under the title of American Express Global Customer Service Barometer 2014 found out that people are willing to tell and average 17 people about bad experience while the number drops to 8 in positive experience case.
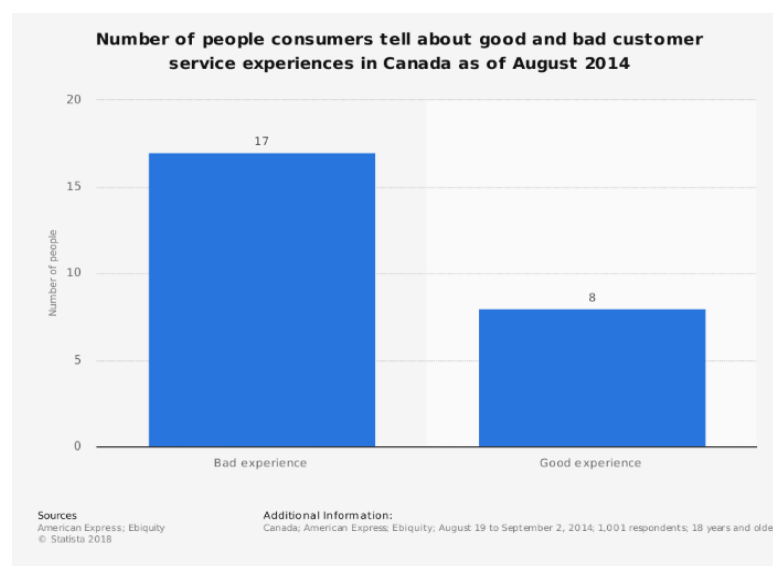
Figure 2.4: Bad WOM vs good WOM

Now negative word of mouth in general results from unsatisfaction of conception of a brand or service or negative consequences after conception of brand or services on the review is given by the customers,

Now it was medically proven that bad memories are easier to be remembered and harder to be forgetting, study says that bad experiences and unfortunate memories are most likely to be remembered quicker and in more details ,Even more studies show that bad experience enhances the memory accuracy if memorizing the exact details of the incident (Kensinger, 2007) , Researches related the ability to memorize negative incident as an evolutionary tactic to protect self against life-threatening negative future events, well this ability now is part of human's subconscious and is subliminally activated for all the negative memories a person has. Now adding this ability and the tendency of telling people and advise them not to do the same "mistake" it was done, hence giving bad word of mouth this strength , Studies shows that bad word of mouth WOM have at least equal effect if not stronger effect than positive WOM, (Bone, 1995) Resulting in a problem for any organization that is searching for profit, As many might be able to say negative for this mouse is the Ark nemesis of profit generation , and needed to be handled very carefully because as strong as this negative word of mouth, it can be very bad faith for any organization that's affected by this phenomena, let's say In the contents of this research an example about University brands, a student had a problem regarding their University , maybe a teaching problem or unprofessionalism of some of the teachers , this student is most likely to tell their close family and friends about the problem they had regarding this University brand, and will definitely advise people not to go and enroll in that University no it's human nature goes other friends and family that has been told about this problem regarding this University will probably never enroll in this University again and they might advise other people against dealing or enrolling with this University now on average 75% people who are told about and problem regarding a University or a brand in general will probably never deal with that brand again and its proven that this 75% of people will deliver this bad experience that they heard to another people especially if they're if they heard this problem from a person they know and trust (Keller and Fay, 2013).

Which refers to the higher or stronger effect of bad word of mouth on brands in general and University in specific, because it will have and earth shaking effect on universities where universities needs numbers of enrolled students to keep on giving the same level of academic service, And thus an organization should be able to control and discourage the rates of bad word of mouth WOM, causing it to go low levels or even to zero , because it's well known that bad word of mouth WOM would probably affect negatively on acquisition of newly recruited customers.

2.5.3 WOM likelihood vs. WOM frequency

Likelihood is defined as the chance of something happening or how likely something is to happen (Cambridge English dictionary), while Frequency is there A to something happens is to repeat or something happening more often (Cambridge English dictionary). Now when trying to study word of mouth the two main questions should be addressed, which are: Whether or not the word of mouth has been made, the second is how often word of mouth advices are given.

Now imagine a group friends together and on a sudden one of their friends started talking about the university his son is studying in, how great facilities it has, how much the staff is professional, and how he thinks his son did a great job choosing this university, now another friend in this same group is also has a son studying in the same university, and might/might not have a different opinion or even a similar one , will they express an opinion ? how likely for them to express it Infront of others? .

Now let's say this same person who spoke about the university was somewhere else, will they speak again about it? doesn't matter if it was the same group or different, would this person be going to talk about this university frequently?

 As it's known there's two types of people in the world, one is who engage in discussion and express opinion, and the other who listens to experiences and options without sharing theirs. But no matter what type the customer are, they have the ability of engaging in word of mouth related natural encounters that might have different points-of-view, and thus if a different point of view human entered a discussion its likely for customer to express opinion and practice WOM more freely especially with larger group of people (Dahl, Manchanda and

Argo, 2001), thus increasing the likelihood of WOM, now a customer is more likely to discuss experience and practice word of mouth WOM when subjected to a group environment where in a group, the natural tendency to be social and help others of a person would float to the surface, especially in a mixed opinion group discussion, as a part of self-presentation, reviling truthful and correct information about their experiences (Wooten and Reed II, 2000) . I could run to a conclusion that no matter which type the customer is, likelihood of them participating in word of mouth WOM increases if subjected to a group discussion of different opinions. Now on the other hand as discussed in negative word of mouth WOM, customers are more willing to participate in a warning discussion or a bad trivia about a brand or a subject by double the stats, as people tend to remember bad situations more frequently, hence people with bad word of mouth tend to more frequently discuss it while good experiences tent to stay hidden, thus bad word of mouth WOM tend to be more frequent , however others may talk about their brand as a type of social show off hence positive word of mouth, higher and stronger brand with more prestigious brand image could reflect itself on customer's behavior increasing positive word of mouth WOM exponentially. Now a good represented brand, and high external pristine might lead to a higher assumption of better quality, hence increasing the frequency of practicing word of mouth WOM (Sung and Yang, 2008) . When any related subject is opened where these customers will tend to brag their university as the assumption of a good education taken, inducing more word of mouth WOM ahead, in general customers engage in word of mouth WOM for many reasons like emotional expression, information gathering, social bonding and others (Berger, 2014) , Hence more social interaction, the more word of mouth WOM engagement, and more advices and informal information is transmitted. Now the most frequent activator of word of mouth WOM are the receivers who tend to encourage others to engage in word of mouth WOM searching for information and advices regarding a brand or a product (Berger, 2014), increasing the frequency of word of mouth bay actively looking for reviews, advices, and bringing up the subject frequently. Furthermore customers who are faced with risky decision making – could be university- tend to actively seek for word of mouth WOM and this process can be defined as attaining message from multiple sources to reach the ultimate solution "in their opinion"

especially in service industry where information receiver's decision tend to be highly effected by word of mouth WOM (Bansal and Voyer, 2000).

3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher aim was to uncover the effect that brand strength has on positive word of mouth (WOM) in higher educational institutions market in turkey. Discovering if a stronger educational institute brand have a bigger effect in inducing positive word of mouth (WOM) and suppressing bad word of mouth (BWOM) , while discussing how frequent does this trend goes in prospective , it is also believe that this effect might be mediated by university brand image, satisfaction and loyalty, the study corresponds on higher education institutes sector, studying the effect of UNI brand strength in specific.

3.1 Research Tools for Data Collection

As this numerical study is focused on specific institutional area, and to answer certain research questions a quantitative method such as questionnaire and statistical process will be used in order of having the primary data collection the serving the purpose of analyzing the data.

After that, the qualitative methods will be used such as the use of books, scientific articles and other scientific resources, the reason of using qualitative method after the quantitative method is to be able to dive into a deeper look and unveil brighter results of the numerical data collected .

3.2 Sample Size

As the study is meant to be in the republic of turkey, with population of 90 million people Cochran formula is used, as Cochran formula is especially appropriate for large populations , with confidence level of 95% , margin of error of 5% and assuming at least 50% of the population have studied or with a relative who studied in a university.

Cochran formula:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Equation 1Cochran formula

- e is the desired level of precision (i.e. the margin of error),

- p is the (estimated) proportion of the population which has the attribute in question,

- q is 1 – p.

following the formula $n0 = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2}$ = 384.16, which we round to 385

The questionnaire distribution was decided to 385 random participants in the country. targeting the highest number of families that includes a higher educated person or more.

The selection was random based on convenient sampling and aimed to target all types of the community sections in order to do a generalizable measurement.

3.3 The Research Model and Hypotheses

The **figure 3.3.1** is made to demonstrate the model that believed to be in this study where brand strength is believed to be consisted of three sub dimensions that are argued to have a direct effect to positive word of mouth (WOM).

With all variables kept unchanged, stronger brand compared to a weaker brand will result in higher respect and endorsement of customer to their respective university brand, who in their behalf are believed to spread positive word of mouth (WOM) about this targeted Brand.

We believe that – as our topic is about university brands- that this effect is reasonable as word of mouth tend to be the main information rescore to evaluate higher educational institutions, taking into our account that the targeted group is equal in knowledge towards this type of institutes - well, generally in most societies higher education section is fairly common general topic to talk about-,

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and have formulated an attitude and made an opinion towards that targeted institute,

as in this context it is expected for the target group to be making positive comments and advices about one particular university that they believe that its more prestigious as an educational brand in general.

Its's believed that satisfaction increase in a customer "student" is expected to mediate the effect of brand strength, leading into better induction of positive word of mouth (WOM) with all variables of brand strength kept unchanged.

It's also realistic to believe that loyalty might have a similar effect to satisfaction of mediating the relationship, increasing loyalty will strengthen the relationship assuming constant brand image variables.

Finally, undeniably brand image "university brand image" might have the ability to mediate the relationship in a way which better image of an institution might lead into better induction of positive word of mouth (WOM) assuming constant variables.
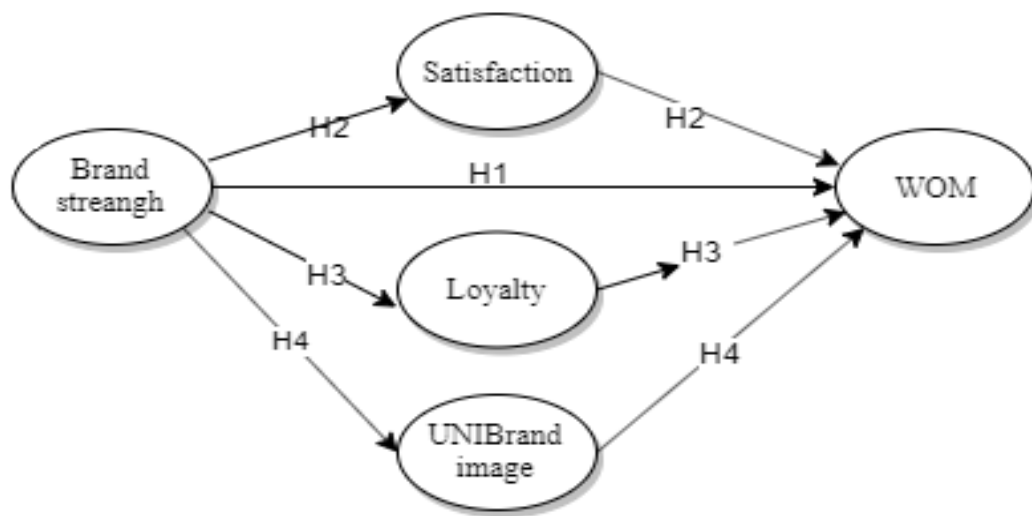
Figure 3.1: Proposed Research model

3.3.1 Research Hypotheses

Brand strength effect on (WOM)

A prior research debated about the highly underrated importance of word of mouth (WOM) upon relationship marketing where it has a potential great outcome if used properly (Brown *et al.*, 2005) where it's hard to imagen customers saying good words about a brand without them being familiar with the targeted brand and its attitude where in their a picture of a good brand will develop in their mined giving its potential remarkability compared to other brand suggest the following hypothesis:

Brand strength is argued to be a very broad variable to be discussed as a whole, so researchers has suggested to be measured by three main components, brand familiarity, brand remarkability and brand attitude, each on its own could be defined but all needed as a whole to be fully functional as brand strength that have effect on other variables.

Now its agreed that familiarity plays a major role in inducing positive word of mouth (WOM) as a customer who is well acknowledged with their respective brand, our literature emphasized that familiarity effects recurrent using and is an effective variable on customer behavior, leading to a theorize that better known brand is more likely to be mentioned in positive word of mouth than others (Longwell, 1994; Wymer, 2013).

Hypotheses 1: Brand strength has a positive influence on positive WOM.

A remarkable brand is mostly known to be better than other, unusual and exotic, this unusualness might result in inducing better brand strength and thus more word of mouth (WOM) especially when is brand is known to provide customer needs and have a good relationship with customers when compared with other rival brans that offers the same service hence we can theories (Angulo-Ruiz and Pergelova, 2013)

As part of our literature, brand attitude was defined as the acceptance of customer of their respective brand and favoring it among others, now it was mentioned that a good attitude from students towards their brand as a result of them experiencing it and being able to formulate an attitude leads into current and graduated students that favor their institution are more likely to engage in

word of mouth (WOM) and advice in favor of their respective brand, hence having a positive influence on positive word of mouth (WOM) (Shields and Peruta, 2019)

Now in order to be able to consider the brand, a customer must spend time with the brand to get the data thus I could describe it as the knowledge gathered by customers and the frequency of brand related experience combined to achieve a confidence towards a specific brand , a better stronger brand is the brand that is more familiar with a customer making it easier for them to engage in word of mouth (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987; Baker et al. 1986)

Satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined in our literature as the immediate positive response after a consumption or interaction with a product or a service or a response to brand offerings, happens when the perceived quality is met or exceeded, now satisfaction is arguably an effective variable in measuring quality of education, by the way students evaluate their higher education institutions offerings, and hence effecting the relationship of brand strength and positive word of mouth (WOM) (Wymer and Casidy, 2015).

The research by (Brown *et al.*, 2005) suggests that higher satisfaction in customer can have an effect on customers behavior and interaction giving them higher level of commitment, also higher satisfaction of customers towards their respective brand in respective to its rivals that can present the same exact services result of the advanced relation and interdependence between brand and its customer making the customer committed to this specific brand (Dwyer, Schurr and Oh, 1987), now having a supportive student community is a great way to induce positive word of mouth (WOM) adding extra layers of complexity to the relation between brand strength and word of mouth (WOM) generation.

As a result of these researches we assume that satisfaction might have mediating effect on the behavior of (WOM), basically indicates that satisfaction is an important mediator towards positive word of mouth (WOM) well in fact people with lower satisfaction levels might tend to talk bad about the brand reducing the effect of brand strength on positive word of mouth (WOM) in contrast with

customers with higher satisfaction levels who might not even be willing to accept good comments about other brands to begin with

Now we hypothesized that , a customer who is more familiar , have a good attitude and see the brand remarkable making a strong brand is most likely to engage in word of mouth (WOM) due to the accumulated knowledge and proven levels of acceptance that are accumulated through interaction with the brand, now a non-satisfied student won't be in the mined set to spread a good word of mouth about the target brand, even with knowing positive information about it and might in result even stop believing in it hence weakening the effect of brand strength on the possibility of positive word of mouth (WOM) spreading, and instead of the brand being "remarkably good" it becomes remarkably horrible inversing the effect of brand strength entirely.

Hypotheses 2: The influence of brand Strength on positive WOM is mediated by satisfaction

Loyalty

Customers who are loyal to their beloved Brand/university are more willing to show support to it , and by definition loyalty is the tendency to support someone or something(Cambridge English dictionary) , now it is convinced that having a better relationship with customers leads into better commitment and more loyalty, hence more trust in the targeted brand inducing more powerful effect on brand strength generated positive word of mouth (WOM) as a part of the trust resultant from this relationship **,**as feelings are effected by prior experiences it effects behavior adding a strong belief in corporate principles and gives the need to remain connected to the brand and have an indirect effect on the ways WOM generated (Brown and Mazzarol, 2009)

which in its order means customers have loyalty, attachment, and commitment to make these favorable comments about the institute (Sung and Yang, 2008), following this path it shows that loyal customer tend to advice toward the brand and give positive word of mouth (WOM) influencing , as the Loyalty is a personal treat , having a customer that already formulated a good behavior and knowledge about their university and will recognized with it and do believe it being remarkable and good, i.e. the components of a good brand strength, but

also doesn't believe in being loyal to a brand or institute, although they formulated a sharable opinion they don't engage in WOM which might affect the relationship between brand strength and positive word of mouth. And thus, weakening or strengthen the effect, mediating the relationship.

Hypotheses 3: The influence of brand Strength on positive WOM is mediated by Loyalty

Brand image

Studies suggest that in universities that retain a positive brand image as a choice for graduation tend to have higher retention of students in contrast with universities that their image is more as " transfer institution" that have decreasing student retaliation and low brand commitment (Sultan and Wong , 2012; Angulo-Ruiz and Pergelova, 2013), considering UNI-brand image an important mediating variable to introduce to the mix, as the internal university image variables such as instructional effectiveness or academic integration apply to it , other than that, a strong relationship between university image and the relationship of students to their strong brand to have supportive positive attitude towards the university in shape of word of mouth (Sung and Yang, 2008) which suggest that no matter how the university is familiar and exquisite and extraordinary with the attitude of the student, it having a different external image Infront of others than the brand strength in the student mined , might affect the engagement of the customer in word of mouth that includes it, in other word a student might get shy by talking about a university with bad history no matter how much they like it, and might engage in a good word of mouth about a prestigious university even if they don't like it very much.

Hypotheses 4: The influence of brand Strength on positive WOM is mediated by Uni brand image.

3.4 The Type and Methodology of the Research

Flowing the baselines of modern researches on quotative type research techniques, before giving the research related question during the first part of the survey, participates were asked specific questions in order to obtain a review

about the demographics and customer profiles, these questions included information about age, education level, marital status, and level of income

In second part Likert scale Questions model in which were developed to satisfy the scales that was aimed to measure the variables needed to conduct the research , these variables developed during literature review Such as: brand strength, satisfaction, word of mouth, loyalty, and university brand image

Likert point 5 scale was used for measurement of research items as follows: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree). Survey questions were gathered and prepared based on previous studies that already validated our research items. The questionnaire is distributed in both of English and Turkish languages, and spread among students and non-students who live, study, and work in turkey

Another one of the targets of this questionnaire is to encourage the participations of family members that studied in universities, or the families that have a family member who are a student, because many families will mention and engage in WOM when a family member is a student

In the questionnaire, information is collected many types of people in the Turkish society according to our type of research, this way will be able to collect from families that have university students from all parts of the society.

3.4.1 Questionnaire design

Our survey (Table 3.1) participants were required to fill an online /or a paper-based survey that consisted of two parts which are the demographics and research related variables.

And before the questionnaire was distributed among participants necessary approvals were obtained from Istanbul Aydin University ethics committee. The participants were given information about the objectives of the survey in advance along with guidelines and no personal data was required nor collected.

Table 3.1: Questioner design

Variable	Question	Source
Brand strength	1. I am knowledgeable about the activities of my university. 2. I am able to describe my university to others. 3. I have a good understanding of what my university has done in the past. 4. No university is better than my university at doing what it does. 5. My university really stands apart as being exceptional. 6. My university stands out in comparison to others. 7. I have positive thoughts when I think of my university. 8. I like my university. 9. I have a positive impression about my university.	Wymer et al (2012
Satisfaction	1. I am quite pleased with the quality of education I have received at my university. 2. I am very satisfied with my experience at my university. 3. I think I did the right thing when I decided to enroll in my university	Athiyaman (1997)
word-of-mouth (WOM)	1. I offer favorable comments and information about my university to others without being asked. 2. When people outside of my university ask about the university, I make favorable comments. 3. When students at my university talk about the university, I make favorable Comments	Helgesen and Nesset (2007)
Loyalty	1. I feel a sense of belonging with my university. 2. I am devoted to my university. 3. My university values me. 4. My university trusts me. 5. I trust my university	Wymer and Rundle-Thiele (2015)
Brand Image	1. My university is reliable 2. My university is attractive 3. My university is pleasing 4. My university has a good reputation	Lien et al (2015)

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Respondent Profile

The sample for this study is made of 384 complete responses. 53.4% of the participants were male. and 46.6% were Female, 17.7% were married. And 82.3% reported single, the age of participations varied between 18-45, Majority of our sample holds a bachelor's degree 58.3% , with associate and postgraduate adding up to 90.1% of the sample of people who actually attended university , majority of the respondents (66.9) reported to be a student (higher education included), while income states were spread pretty expectance between 2020-7000 (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of respondents.

Demographics Profile		Frequencies	Percentage (%)
	Male	205	53.4%
Gender	Female	179	46.6%
Age			
	Less than 18	16	4.2%
	19-25	258	67.2%
	26-34	69	18%
	35-44	20	5.2%
	45 and above	21	5.5%
Education			
	Primary school	17	4.4%
	High school	21	5.5%
	Associate degree	61	15.9%
	Bachelor's degree	224	58.3%
	Postgraduate degree	61	15.9%
Income state			
	less than 2020 TL	107	27.9%
	2021-3500 TL	98	25.5%
	3501 TL - 5.000 TL	106	27.6%
	5.001 TL - 7.000 TL	40	10.4%
	7.000 TL and above	33	8.6%

Table 4.1: (con) Demographic profile of respondents.

Demographics Profile			Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Profession				
	Student		257	66.9%
	Public	sector	9	2.3%
	employee			
	Private	sector	72	18.8%
	employee			
	Retired		12	3.1%
	Self employed		11	2.9%
	Not working		23	6.0%
Marital status				
	Single		316	82.3%
	Married		68	17.7%

4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory Factor Analysis is generally used to check the grouping oh highly related variables, in order to extracted new components, so called factors (Hair et al., 2006), by reducing the data to reveal the hidden structure underlaying. First Exploratory Factor analysis was used to discover the multidimensional nature of Brand strength as we adapted the model by the study of (Wymer, Walter & Casidy, R. (2015), and thus adapting the same technique, by analyzing this independent variable and assuming it has 3 subdimensions we ended up resulting in the loadings (Table 4.2): Factor loadings. Two indicators were eliminated due to cross loading, and mostly these questions relate to the main variable of brand strength that is decided to be used as a whole, because our main aim is to measure the brand strength as one variable.

This Factor assessment was done using maximum likelihood Extraction and Promax rotation method resulting in (KMO=0.931), Bartlett's test (df=36, Approx. $\chi 2$= 2799.446, p=0.000) with no communalities < 0.4

Table 4.2: Factor loadings

	Attitude	Remarkability	Familiarity
I am knowledgeable about the activities of my university.			.696
I can describe my university to others.			.934
I have a good understanding of what my university has done in the past.	Eliminated		
No university is better than my university at doing what it does.	.837		
My university really stands apart as being exceptional.	.638		
My university stands out in comparison to others.	.631		
I have positive thoughts when I think of my university.	Eliminated		
I like my university.		.799	
I have a positive impression about my university.		.890	

Now (EFA) Exploratory Factor Analysis done in the independent and dependent variables of WOM and BRANDSTRINGTH results with very high clean and loading numbers (no loadings below 0.3),(Gaskin, J. and Lim, J., 2016) (Table 4.7) , mediating factors were not included in this EFA as they cannot be combined with the independent / dependent variables scale where independent and dependent variables should be considered separately (Hair, 2015, p. 411) . After proving the multidimensional nature of Brand strength, with KMO of 0.931 in the multidimensional study where two indicators were dropped, these factor loads very well towards our brand strength variable with no cross loadings. So, it was decided to include them in the analysis. It was possible to extract 2 factors as expected explaining 65.472753% variances which is acceptable.

In order to do EFA we have main assumptions to satisfy before we can interpret the results. (KMO) Keiser-Meyer-Olkin Sampling Adequacy value makes sure that the data is adequate to do factor analyses and have a minimum threshold of 0.5 (Durmuş, et al., 2011).

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is a hypothesis testing method that assume the correlation matrix to be an identity matrix and this implying no correlations

between variables. Other than that, in general with social sciences the p-value should be significant to accent Bartlett test **(Table 4.3)**

Table 4.3: KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.941
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3652.797
	df	66
	Sig.	.000

Communalities explains to which extend does the factors correlate with all factors together, and its suggested to be >0.4) (Gaskin, J. and Lim, J., 2016) (Table 4.4).

To assess the dimensions of all variables in this study an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) Using maximum likelihood Extraction and Promax rotation were conducted. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity tests done for testing the appropriateness of the data to have factor analysis (j. gaskin 2020). Result of the tests ((KMO=0.941), Bartlett's test (df=66, Approx. $\chi 2$= 3652.797, p=0.000) with no communalities < 0.4 which satisfies our assumptions.

Table 4.4: Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
I am knowledgeable about the activities of my university.	.572	.418
I can describe my university to others.	.667	.580
I have a good understanding of what my university has done in the past.	.614	.550
No university is better than my university at doing what it does.	.594	.576
My university really stands apart as being exceptional.	.589	.590
My university stands out in comparison to others.	.705	.740
I have positive thoughts when I think of my university.	.769	.788
I like my university.	.774	.771
I have a positive impression about my university.	.751	.749
I offer favorable comments and information about my university to others without being asked	.537	.714
When people outside of my university ask about the university, I make favorable comments.	.597	.654
When students at my university talk about the university, I make favorable Comments	.663	.727

4.2.1 Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach alpha test aims to measure and indicate the consistency and coherence of a research; most reserchers show great interest to the consistency and the built of their studies, because the coherent and consistent research have significant impact on results that will be unveiled.

The higher the degree of coherence and consistency of the results are, and more generalizable the research could be, in which means other reserchers will be able to depend on the study in future research.

The important thing in Cronbach alpha is that it has been able to give the researcher the ability to find the fault in their research in thus fixing it improving every bit co consistency of the research. Thought a comprehensive statistical model, helping the reserchers of designing more accurate tests and have a clear and understandable results.

With that said, the formula of Cronbach alpha is:

$$\alpha = \frac{N\bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N-1)\bar{c}}$$

N = the number of items.

$\bar{c}$ = average covariance between item-pairs.

$\bar{v}$ = average variance.

Table 4.5: Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha	Internal Consistency
a≥0.9	Excellent
0.9>a≥0.8	Good
0.8>a≥0.7	Acceptable
0.7>a≥0.6	Questionable
0.6>a≥0.5	Poor
0.5>a	Unacceptable

(M.Tavakol and R. Dennick, (2011))

Testing reliability is a major factor when conducting a EFA because it measures the internal consistency for item-level error within a single factor, the way we

can test the reliability in Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is by calculating Cronbach's alpha for each factor, which is typically should be >0.7 for the factor to be "reliable" with each factor having >2 variable to explain (Gaskin, J. and Lim, J., 2016) , our test shows adequate results for the factor to be reliable (Table 4.6)

Table 4.6: Cronbach's alpha Values

Factor	Cronbach's alpha	N. of items
BRANDSTRINGTH (brand strength)	0.940	9
WOM (Word of Mouth)	0.860	3
Satisfaction	0.899	3
Loyalty	0.901	4
Uni Brand image	0.922	4

Table 4.7: Factor loadings for dependent / independent factors

	Brand strength	WOM
I am knowledgeable about the activities of my university.	.572	
I can describe my university to others.	.663	
I have a good understanding of what my university has done in the past.	.691	
No university is better than my university at doing what it does.	.815	
My university really stands apart as being exceptional.	.754	
My university stands out in comparison to others.	.918	
I have positive thoughts when I think of my university.	.893	
I like my university.	.778	
I have a positive impression about my university.	.820	
I offer favorable comments and information about my university to others without being asked		.959
When people outside of my university ask about the university, I make favorable comments.		.637
When students at my university talk about the university, I make favorable Comments		.674

4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is used to test the relationship of the factors with the latent variable factors assigned to them. Giving the opportunity for the regression of the paths to be evaluated (Table 4.8) revealing that the relations within the hypothesized model are very significant

Table 4.8: CFA Factor Loadings (*** means to p < 0.001).

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
BS1	<---	Brandstringht	1.000			
BS2	<---	Brandstringht	1.208	.073	16.551	***
BS3	<---	Brandstringht	1.107	.075	14.861	***
BS4	<---	Brandstringht	1.146	.094	12.252	***
BS5	<---	Brandstringht	1.179	.095	12.407	***
BS6	<---	Brandstringht	1.239	.093	13.264	***
BS7	<---	Brandstringht	1.390	.101	13.740	***
BS8	<---	Brandstringht	1.386	.102	13.578	***
BS9	<---	Brandstringht	1.353	.101	13.416	***
S1	<---	satisfaction	1.000			
S2	<---	satisfaction	1.016	.049	20.712	***
S3	<---	satisfaction	1.069	.048	22.058	***
WOM1	<---	wordofmouth	1.000			
WOM2	<---	wordofmouth	1.148	.070	16.279	***
WOM3	<---	wordofmouth	1.107	.067	16.547	***
L1	<---	loyality	1.000			
L2	<---	loyality	.945	.043	21.848	***
L3	<---	loyality	1.138	.063	17.977	***
L4	<---	loyality	1.141	.061	18.651	***
BI1	<---	brandimage	1.000			
BI2	<---	brandimage	.961	.046	20.953	***
BI3	<---	brandimage	.987	.041	24.036	***
BI4	<---	brandimage	1.075	.046	23.475	***

Now in order to conduct a CFA. (Klein, R. B. 2011) has specified the need for at least two indicators for each factor and thus in or study we included minimum of three and maximum of nine indicators per variable, making it possible to measure the relationship of observed to latent variable, standardized regression weight are calculated, the estimates shows a strong contribution to the model . (Table 4.9)

65

Table 4.9: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
BS1	<---	Brandstringht	.614
BS2	<---	Brandstringht	.743
BS3	<---	Brandstringht	.719
BS4	<---	Brandstringht	.755
BS5	<---	Brandstringht	.768
BS6	<---	Brandstringht	.846
BS7	<---	Brandstringht	.893
BS8	<---	Brandstringht	.878
BS9	<---	Brandstringht	.862
S1	<---	satisfaction	.828
S2	<---	satisfaction	.864
S3	<---	satisfaction	.900
WOM1	<---	wordofmouth	.732
WOM2	<---	wordofmouth	.848
WOM3	<---	wordofmouth	.862
L1	<---	loyality	.766
L2	<---	loyality	.764
L3	<---	loyality	.860
L4	<---	loyality	.888
BI1	<---	brandimage	.864
BI2	<---	brandimage	.827
BI3	<---	brandimage	.890
BI4	<---	brandimage	.879

A goodness of Fit is tested based on the model adapted and using the collected data being tested (Byrne, 2010).

Now, there is three model fit indicators are considered in general (Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen, 2008):

• Absolute fit indices ($\chi2/df$, RMSEA, SRMR, GFI and AGFI)

• Incremental fit indices (CFI and NFI)

• Parsimony fit indices (PGFI and PNFI; AIC and CAIC)
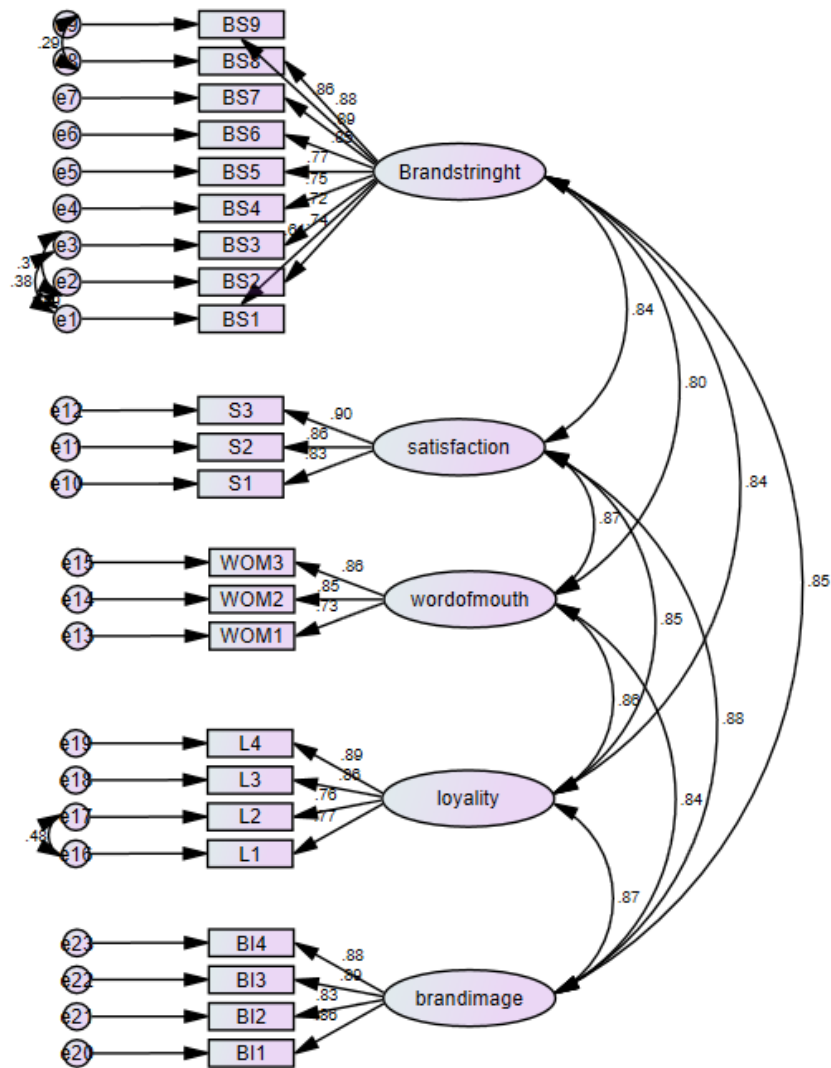
Figure 4.1: CFA model

With recommended thresholds that demonstrate a good fit

• CFI ≥ 0.95 (Hu and Bentler, 1999).

• GFI values close to 1.00 is a good fit (Byrne, 2010).

• AGFI values close to 1.00 is a good fit (Byrne, 2010).

• RMSEA between 0.06 to 0.08 (Schreiber et al., 2006).

• SRMR ≤ 0.05 (Byrne, 2010) or ≤ 0.08 (Schreiber et al., 2006).

The model in (Figure:4.1) was adapted after couple of iteration of evaluation and corrections made, relaying on the results of modifications indices obtained through SPSS Amos (Version26). Modification indices propose fix to be made to correct the conflict between the suggested and the estimated mode. These modifications are significantly important because the CFA no more regression

lines could be added after the ones between observed and latent factor has been applied.

And according to this logic we could considered a CFA modification index of covariances. Keeping in mind the fact that only error terms that belongs to the same factor could be covariance. Priority for modification is given to the modification indices with higher value and done on many iterations. In our study E16 E17, E8 E9, E1 E2, E1 E3, and E2 E3

Now E1, E2, E3 have asked a corelated questions about the knowledge of the university, the ability to describe it to others, and the knowledge of the university past, and thus they are expected to covary together which we accept.

While E8, E9 is question about how much the participant loves the university and have a positive view of it, which also complete each other by being corelated.

Finally, E16, E17 have questions about if the participant has a feeling of bond and dedication towards the university and thus, they are accepted to covary.

have been covaried to have the best model fit with the lowest covariances possible. Now due to covaried measures aimed to measure Loyalty, Familiarity and remarkability it is expected to have covariance when measuring feelings and thus we accept it.

Conducting this CFA there were 276 distinct sample moments identified, referring to the number of the available elements in a sample covariance. 61 parameters were estimated and leaving 215 degrees of freedom.

The test result having Chi-square value of 620.175 and probability of 0.000. gives a good overview about significance of this model fit (Table 4.10) shows the fit analysis for the model hypothesized, according to the recommended parameters mentioned above, we can study to say that our model shows a good fit

Table 4.10: Model Fit Analysis for CFA.

Measure	Result
Chi-square/df (cmin/df)	2.885
p-value	0.000
CFI	0.951
GFI	0.878
AGFI	0.844
SRMR	0.0376
RMSEA	0.070

Highlighting (Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen, 2008) citing a study of (Hu and Bentler, 1999) says that Chi-square value is a statistical measure that is good to be used in measuring goodness of fit, and thus it evaluate the nonconformity among fitted covariances, matrices and the sample, it's also known that Chi-square to be sensitive for sample size. So, proposing the $\chi2/df$ evaluation parameter to minimize the effect of sample size which between 2 and 5 should indicates a good fit, our model showed a value of 2.885 as a first sign of a good fit

RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) is the second indicator of goodness of fit, it was developed by Steiger and Lind in the 1980's (Steiger, 2010) it has been graded recently as a very valuable and informative indicate, where RMSEA work by eliminating the issues of sample size by analyzing the number of parameters in the hypothesized model along with optimal chosen estimations with the populations covariance matrix (Byrne, 2010) a value of RMSEA between 0.06 and 0.08 indicates a good fit for the model , our CFA shows a value of 0.070 making the second sign of our goodness-of-fit

Next GFA (goodness-of-fit statistic) and AGFI (adjusted goodness-of-fit statistic) as introduced by (Hooper,Coughlan and Mullen 2008) crediting (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007) are our third indicator of a good fit, they have been found by Jöreskog and Sorbom to have a different approach than Chi-square test to calculate the nonconformity of the model fitted in the covariance matrix for any given population, Now having AGFI as a separate value have because it has the ability to change according to number of degrees of freedom specified in the model(Byrne, 2010). Both GFI and AGFI are sensitive to the sample size and adopting the recommendation of (Byrne, 2010) the closer value

to 1 means a better fit, the values of 0.878, 0.844 for GFI and AGFI meeting the recommended values

(Normed Fit Index) NFI is proven to be very sensitive and thus not reliable when working with large sample, Competitive Fitness Index (CFI) is recommended for assessing the model fit (Byrne, 2010).By assuming all latent variables being not corelated and keep the hypothesized model constrained with null model (Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen, 2008). As recommended by (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Schreiber et al., 2006) the value of CFI should be ≥ 0.95 to indicate a good fit, and our CFA resultant value is 0.951 indicating a good fit.

Based on results we have discussed above it can be concluded that our hypothesized model has showed a well fit according to collected data within this study.

4.3.1 Validity and Reliability Assessment

Calculating the validity and reliability is an important part of doing CFA when the research is focused on measurement aspects, validity checks the accurate nature of the measurements especially that latent factors could not be measured directly, additionally, reliability examines the consistency of the measurement of items along resonance across the scope of time (Smith and Albaum, 2005). in this current study constrained on focusing on : Discriminant validity and Convergent validity.

Convergent validity Discriminant validity and reliability are assessed under the following thresholds Hair et al. (2010), Gefen and Straub (2005) :

Reliability: CR (Composite Reliability) > 0.7

Convergent Validity: AVE (Average Variance Extracted) > 0.5

Discriminant Validity: MSV (Maximum Shared Variance) < AVE and Square root of AVE > inter-construct correlations

(Table 4.12) shows the resume of reliability and validity assessment results, ensuring good results is important, based this table that was created using Gaskin, J., James, M., and Lim, J. (2019), "Master Validity Tool", AMOS Plugin, values of AVE are higher than 0.5 as an evidence of good convergent Validity, values of CR are above 0.7 indicating good reliability, discriminant

validity is shown values of MSV that are larger than AVE by a small margin which are not within the thresholds , now Malhotra N. K., Dash S. argue that AVE is often too strict (Malhotra N. K., Dash S.,2011). And thus, using a more recent study to asses discriminant validly again via HTMT (The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations) using Gaskin, J., James, M., and Lim, J. (2019), "Master Validity Tool", AMOS Plugin, and thresholds are 0.850 for strict and 0.900 for liberal discriminant validity.(Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2015) (Table 4.11) express the values of HTMT showing acceptable Discriminant validly within the liberal threshold.

Table 4.11: HTMT Analysis

	Brandstringht	satisfaction	wordofmouth	loyality	brandimage
Brandstringht					
satisfaction	**0.814**				
wordofmouth	**0.778**	**0.853**			
loyality	**0.846**	**0.854**	**0.859**		
brandimage	**0.851**	**0.865**	**0.824**	**0.848**	

Table 4.12: The resume of Validity and Reliability Assessment

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Brandstringht	satisfaction	wordofmouth	loyality	brandimage
Brandstringht	0.937	0.626	0.725	0.948	**0.791**				
satisfaction	0.898	0.747	0.770	0.904	0.836***	**0.864**			
wordofmouth	0.856	0.666	0.749	0.869	0.798***	0.865***	**0.816**		
loyality	0.892	0.674	0.753	0.904	0.838***	0.853***	0.862***	**0.821**	
brandimage	0.923	0.749	0.770	0.925	0.852***	0.878***	0.842***	0.868***	**0.865**

4.4 Hypotheses Testing (SEM)

Structural equation modeling generally concentrates on analyzing the relationship of hypothesized latent variables, it provides a bigger arsenal of options to evaluate the relationship among latent variable compared to CFA and have two main components:

- Measurements model

- Structural model

Measurement model is composed in the Confirmatory Factor Analysis and the results are composed earlier, our current focus will be on structural model in (Figure 4.2) which shows the interrelationship between latent and observable variable in which many regression equations take place.

Direct and indirect effects are taken into consideration withing the shown model. Direct effect is the effect done by the exogenous variable on endogenous variables, the indirect effect on the other hand is when the effect of exogenous variable on endogenous variable is mediated by mediating variables and such variable (Schreiber et al., 2006).
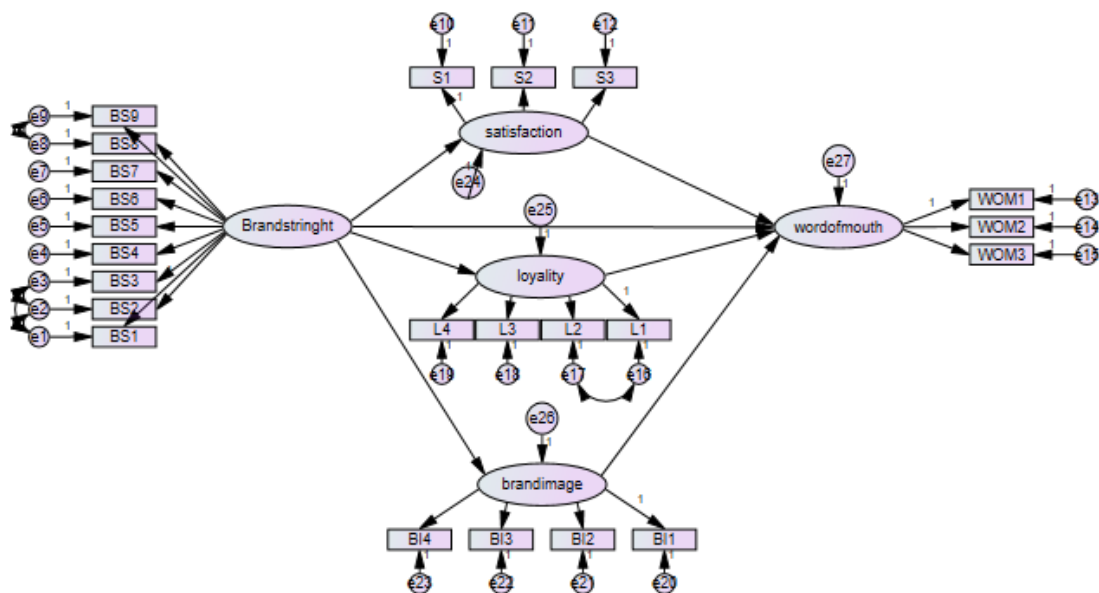

Figure 4.2: Structural Equation Model.

To examine the hypothesis local and global tests were conducted (Figure 4.2). In order for a hypothesis to be supported it is required for the local test to be passed, while its initially important that global test measure to be passed in order to conduct local test. A hypothesis with significant p-value and poor fit for the model is unreliable, additionally, a low R-square hypothesis with a significant p-value and good model fit cannot be supported as the relationships tested does not reflect a significant variance on the endogenous variable (Gaskin, J. and Lim, J., 2016).
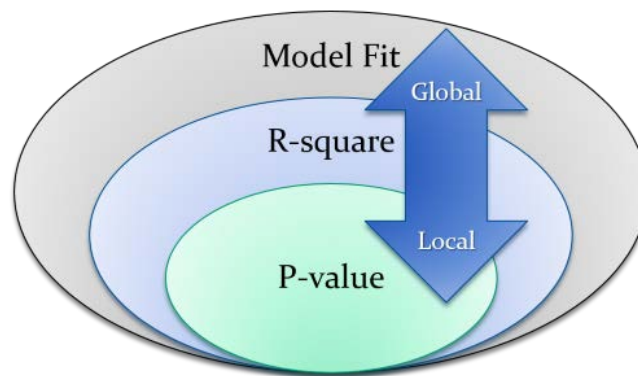
Figure 4.3: Hypotheses support through global and local tests

(Gaskin, J)

The results obtained from for the model are provided below and based on these results it has been concluded that the model have overall good fit.

- Chi-square value of 620.175 with 215 degree of freedom

- Chi-square/df of 2.885

- P value of 0.000

- CFI of 0.951

- GFI of 0.878

- AGFI of 0.844

- SRMR of 0.0376

- RMSEA of 0.070

Next, we refer to R-squared which is known as (SMC) Squared Multiple Correlations which indicates the percentage of variance that is reflected by the

predictions of factors (Byrne, 2010). The value of R-squared falls between 0 and 1 (0% to 100%), and the higher the value is, better the data matches the model. Our squared multiple correlations values for the hypothesized structural model is displayed in (Table 4.13) and based on these numbers it's possible to conclude that the overall predictions explain variables relatively fine.

Table 4.13: Squared Multiple Correlations

Predictor Variable	Estimate
brandimage	.797
loyality	.775
satisfaction	.772
wordofmouth	.810
BI4	.792
BI3	.784
BI2	.696
BI1	.726
L4	.774
L3	.750
L2	.594
L1	.584
WOM3	.738
WOM2	.713
WOM1	.528
S3	.796
S2	.760
S1	.687
BS9	.737
BS8	.771
BS7	.769
BS6	.678
BS5	.576
BS4	.550
BS3	.512
BS2	.557
BS1	.380

Finally, with the use of p-value we were able to test the hypothesis paths to determine if it could be supported in regard to our hypothesized model we were able to test the hypothesis (H1: ß= -0.163, S.E.= 0.189 and p>0.05) did not

show a significant result and cannot be supported as the brand strength has a positive effect on WOM.

Next using SPSS AMOS (Version 26) plugin by (Gaskin, J., James, M., & Lim, J. 2020) we were able to test the indirect hypothesis paths of H2, H3, and, H4 (Table 4.14) with all of them having a p<0.05 they are able to be supported

Table 4.14: Indirect (mediation) effect analysis result

Indirect Path		Unstandardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	P-Value	Standardized Estimate
Brandstringht satisfaction wordofmouth	--> -->	0.439	0.226	0.639	0.003	0.379**
Brandstringht loyality wordofmouth	--> -->	0.437	0.238	0.652	0.002	0.378**
Brandstringht brandimage wordofmouth	--> -->	0.265	0.058	0.514	0.032	0.229*

Significance of Estimates: *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.010, * p < 0.050

summary of the hypotheses testing is provided in (Table 4.15)

Table 4.15: Hypotheses testing summery

Hypothesis	Relationship	Status
H1	BS--> WOM	Not supported
H2	BS --> S --> WOM	supported
H3	BS --> L --> WOM	supported
H4	BS --> BI --> WOM	supported

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

Word of Mouth has been since the start of time and will continue to exist with a great potential of exploiting work focused on inducing more positive WOM and using it for growth and passive marketing. As higher education is a market now and everyone is looking for a force to leverage in order for them to not only attract new students, but also retaining students as well, by using the university as a brand and emphasizing on it making it stronger . Based on these efforts we decided to do this research on this scope.

The research was aimed to understand the market of higher education market customers in turkey, specifically students and their family, in order to evaluate how much a better brand could affect their choices of telling other people about their selected brand, with around 90 million residence of turkey in which have 7.5 million current university student and around 200 thousands international students it is defiantly a field to be discovered.

This research worked on analyzing the impact of Brand strength -composed with its three factors familiarity, remarkability, attitude - on customer generated WOM, with satisfaction, loyalty and brand image as mediator variables. WOM here indicates the possibility of our target customer to initiate, be involved, or attracted to conversations that have positive mentions about their university brand. The value of this research is that it unveils the behavior of the customer towards their university with having an experience with it.

Our data is collected through questioners and used for analysis and hypothesis testing proposes, the data included 384 participants, making use of quantities research methods, our survey was a 5 scale Likert survey and all the responders were randomly selected, more than 90 percent of the survey takers reported to have enrolled in a university which increases our trust in their responds.

This research adapted the research model from a previous paper by (Wymer and Casidy, 2015) and introduced one more mediating factor of university brand Image, the measures of the previous data were adapted and for brand image, we adapted measure from previous studies, Cronbach alpha was calculated to our measures each on its own to ensure the consistency of each measure , all measures reported an alpha value of >0.8 indicating a very good internal consistency.

Then the brand strength measure was run through an EFA to test its multidimensionality, the EFA testing was done through SPSS (version 24) loading value was distributed evenly on 3 extracted factors, the data was analyzed to prove the multidimensionality, with an acceptable KMO value and Bartlett's test , which is aligned with as the research where adapted.

Furthermore , the brand strength is used as one variable and thus it was run in synch with WOM through a EFA in order to discover the nature of the relationship between these independent and depend factor respectively, using SPSS (version 24), KMO, Bartlett's test, and Communalities showed in fitting values for EFA , with high values of Cronbach alpha we were able to extract 2 factors with clean factors loading numbers, which demonstrate a good model.

Now the hypothesized variables are tested in CFA SPSS AMOS (version 26) statistical software. With the scope of the CFA standardized regression weights were calculated, measuring how does the observed variables present latent variables, the outcome represented significant contributions.

Forward, the model fit of our hypothesized model is tested through model fit indices, and χ2/df, RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, PCLOSE, GFI and AGFI [ÖU1]fit indices were used to analyses the model fit. The results represented a very good fit. The SEM analysis was done to cover the hypothesis testing, global fitting measures were established through the CFA and then structural test through SPSS AMOS (version 26) p-value based local hypothesis analyses was done.

Brand strength has failed to demonstrate a positive impact on WOM (P>0.05) which not significant, on the other hand brand strength has shown a positive impact on WOM when mediated (supported) with satisfaction (P<0.01), and also brand strength showed a positive impact on WOM when mediated with

loyalty (p<0.01), finally Brand strength demonstrated a positive impact when mediated (supported) with good university brand image (P<0.05) which our Nobel variable.

Overall, through the structural model brand strength were demonstrated not to have a direct impact on WOM, rather an indirect impact by being supported with others, that we calculated which is by being moderated by factors, such as satisfaction, loyalty, and, university brand image, which gives indications on the customers behavior in turkey towards higher education institutions, as knowing the university , having experienced the university, and thinking that this university is exquisite is not enough to induce WOM based communication , customers need to be satisfied from the institute by any means , or the customer loves the university and have a high loyalty to in, and finally if the brand of university have a good image in front of others this will encourage people to engage in WOM more often.

5.2 Research Limitation and suggestions for other researches

This thesis work focused on Brand strength as a whole unite and it is limited to that the results that are valid for this case might not valid for its components and thus I advise other reserchers on exploring them second the data used in the analysis of this research has been obtained based on accessibility and might subjected to the researches opinion their surrounding environment.

Despite asking the respondents to give their honest opinion and were informed fully about the purpose and the objective of the research, also about the anonymous nature, surveys were carried with self-monitored environment, where most of the responses were recorded online due to COVID-19 outbreak.

This study was conducted and specified to Turkish higher education, and all the respondents are residence of turkey and the results might not applicable on other communities nor generalizable globally, but the research might be done on a different group and sample to explore more.

Most higher education institutions marketing teams and PR management in turkey are aware of how big is WOM contribution to marketing in turkey, and it should be exploited more often, in this time and age where its way easier to

reach to information and other people comments within a click of a button, and thus is noticed [ÖU2]a lack of reserchers around turkey especially when in relation to brand strength in its all shapes and form, brand management takes a big portion of turkeys profit generation as it is one of the world's most profitable countries on tourism, and thus I would recommend more research on exploring how brand strength components could or is integrated in our Turkish customer base.

It also advised for brand universities to focus on satisfying their students and gaining loyalty as much as building a strong brand because it might be a key for higher retention and more student attraction , enabling reaching stronger, bigger and funding more researches that will contribute in the university overall success.

Also having in this said reserchers may conduct more studies having a better more improved models in order to discuss this type of hypothesis and have a more understanding about Brand management in the Turkish higher education.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire (Turkish Version)

Appendix :B Survey Questionnaire (English Version)

Appendix C Ethical Approval Form

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire (Turkish Version)

Demografik Özellikler			
Cinsiyetiniz:	☐ K ☐ E		
Yaşınız:	☐ 18 yaş ve altı ☐ 45 yaş ve üstü	☐ 19-25 ☐ 26-34	☐ 35-44
Medeni Haliniz	☐ Evli ☐ Bekâr		
Eğitim Durumunuz:	☐ İlköğretim ☐ Lise ☐ Ön Lisans	☐ Lisans ☐ Lisansüstü	
Mesleğiniz:	☐ Öğrenci ☐ Kamu Çalışanı	☐ Özel Sektör Çalışanı ☐ Serbest Meslek	☐ Emekli ☐ Çalışmıyor
Hane Geliriniz:	☐ 2020 TL ve altı ☐ 2021-3500 TL	☐ 3501 TL - 5.000 TL ☐ 5.001 TL - 7.000 TL	☐ 7.000 TL ve üstü

Marka gucu						
Aşağıdaki ifadelere ne derece katıldığınızı **1 = Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum, 2=Katılmıyorum, 3=Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum, 4=Katılıyorum ve 5=Kesinlikle Katılıyorum** olacak şekilde işaretleyiniz						
1.	Üniversitemin etkinlikleri hakkında bilgim var	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	Üniversitemi diğerler insanlara anlatabiliyorum	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	Üniversitemin geçmiş etkinlikleri hakkında bilgi sahibiyim	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	Yaptığı şeylerde benim üniversitemden daha iyi bir üniversite yoktur	①	②	③	④	⑤
5.	Benim üniversitem diğerlerinden farklıdır	①	②	③	④	⑤
6.	Benim üniversitem diğerlerine kıyasla belirgin bir farkla öndedir	①	②	③	④	⑤
7.	Üniversitemi düşündüğümde , pozitife düşünüyorum	①	②	③	④	⑤
8.	Üniversitemi seviyorum	①	②	③	④	⑤
9.	Üniversitemle ilgilimi olumlu bir izlenimim var	①	②	③	④	⑤
Memunniyet						
Aşağıdaki ifadelere ne derece katıldığınızı **1 = Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum, 2=Katılmıyorum, 3=Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum, 4=Katılıyorum ve 5=Kesinlikle Katılıyorum** olacak şekilde işaretleyiniz						
1.	Üniversitemde aldığım eğitimin kalitesinden oldukca memnunum	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	Üniversitemdeki tecrübelerimden memnunum	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	siteme kayıt olmakla doğru bir karar verdiğimi düşünüyorum	①	②	③	④	⑤
WOM						
şağıdaki ifadelere ne derece katıldığınızı **1 = Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum, 2=Katılmıyorum, 3=Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum, 4=Katılıyorum ve 5=Kesinlikle Katılıyorum** olacak şekilde işaretleyiniz						
1.	orulamasa bile Üniversite İle ilgili iyi yorumlar ve bilgi veriyorum	①	②	③	④	⑤

2.	Soranlara üniversitemle ilgili iyi yorumlar yapıyorum	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	sitemdeki öğrenciler üniversitemle ilgili yorumlar yapınca olumlu şeyler söylüyorum	①	②	③	④	⑤
**Bağlılık** şağıdaki ifadelere ne derece katıldığınızı **1 = Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum, 2=Katılmıyorum, 3=Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum, 4=Katılıyorum ve 5=Kesinlikle Katılıyorum** olacak şekilde işaretleyiniz					
1.	Üniversiteme bağlılık hissediyorum	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	Üniversiteme kendimi adadım	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	Üniversitem bana değer veriyor	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	Üniversiteme güveniyorum	①	②	③	④	⑤
**Universitenin marka imajı** şağıdaki ifadelere ne derece katıldığınızı **1 = Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum, 2=Katılmıyorum, 3=Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum, 4=Katılıyorum ve 5=Kesinlikle Katılıyorum** olacak şekilde işaretleyiniz					
1.	Üniversitem güvenilirdir	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	Üniversitem çekicidir	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	Üniversitem tatmin edicidir	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	Üniversitemin iyi bir itibarı vardır	①	②	③	④	⑤

Demographics			
Gender:	☐ F ☐ M		
Age:	☐ under 18 years ☐ 45 and above	☐ 19-25	☐ 26-34 ☐ 35-44
Your Marital Status	☐ Married ☐ Single		
Education status	☐ elimetary school ☐ highschool ☐Associate Degree	☐ pregraduate ☐ postGraduate	
Profession:	☐student ☐public worker	☐privet scrot employee ☐Self-employed	☐Retired ☐Not working
İncome state:	☐ 2020 TL and under ☐ 2021-3500 TL	☐ 3501 TL - 5.000 TL ☐ 5.001 TL - 7.000 TL	☐ 7.000 TL and above

Brand Strength To what extent you agree with the statements below 1 = I strongly disagree, 2=I don't agree 3=nutral 4=Agree and 5=I absolutely agree						
1.	I am knowledgeable about the activities of my university.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	I can describe my university to others.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	I have a good understanding of what my university has done in the past.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	No university is better than my university at doing what it does.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5.	My university really stands apart as being exceptional.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6.	My university stands out in comparison to others.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7.	I have positive thoughts when I think of my university.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8.	I like my university.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9.	I have a positive impression about my university.	①	②	③	④	⑤
Satisfaction To what extent you agree with the statements below 1 = I strongly disagree, 2=I don't agree 3=nutral 4=Agree and 5=I absolutely agree						
1.	I am quite pleased with the quality of education I have received at my university	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	I am very satisfied with my experience at my university.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	I think I did the right thing when I decided to enroll in my university	①	②	③	④	⑤
WOM To what extent you agree with the statements below 1 = I strongly disagree, 2=I don't agree 3=nutral 4=Agree and 5=I absolutely agree						
1.	I offer favorable comments and information about my university to others without being asked	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	When people outside of my university ask about the university, I make	①	②	③	④	⑤

	favorable comments.					
3.	When students at my university talk about the university, I make favorable Comments	①	②	③	④	⑤

	Loyalty To what extent you agree with the statements below **1 = I strongly disagree, 2=I don't agree 3=nutral 4=Agree and 5=I absolutely agree**					
1.	I feel a sense of belonging with my university.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	I am devoted to my university	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	My university values me.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	I trust my university.	①	②	③	④	⑤
	Unibrand Image To what extent you agree with the statements below **1 = I strongly disagree, 2=I don't agree 3=nutral 4=Agree and 5=I absolutely agree**					
1.	My university is reliable.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	My university is attractive	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	My university is pleasing.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	My university has a good reputation.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Appendix C Ethical Approval Form

T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 88083623-020
Konu : Etik Onay Hk.

Sayın Sadık KHDIR

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Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

e-imzalıdır
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