

# Brand Equity in University: Literature Review

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**Purpose:** A review of the history of university brand equity research is attempted to be given in this paper.

**Research methodology:** Extracts from the Scopus database. Ten publications discussing university brand equity made up the sample, which spanned the years 2000 to 2203. The analysis approach groups articles according to pertinent subjects about institution brand equity.

**Results:** All things considered, the study findings revealed that little study has been done on university brand equity.

**Limitations:** Our research focuses exclusively on scientific articles published in the last 23 years and in the Scopus index.

**Contribution:** Given the dearth of study on brand equity in the service industry, particularly in universities, this could offer researchers a chance to focus on university brand equity, particularly in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *University, Brand Equity*

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## 1. Introduction

Through the use of Scopus-indexed publications, this study seeks to give a summary of the evolution of brand equity research in foreign universities and colleges between 2000 to 2023. Recently, universities have developed better branding strategies in response to the challenges of increasing global competition (Pinar et al., 2020). This challenge requires the implementation of differential strategies in higher education institutions (Fazli-Salehi et al., 2019). It is important to mention that experts from many disciplines now commonly refer to higher education as a market. Higher education institutions face significant competition when it comes to attracting students (Rutter et al., 2017). In order to ensure the continued success and growth of a university's business, it is crucial to establish and uphold a unique brand identity by enhancing the entire brand strategy (Balaji et al., 2016). While past study indicates that colleges prioritize their reputation, there is less evidence of their implementation of branding efforts to address the emerging issues of the modern era. Insufficient research exists on brand positioning strategies and enhancing brand presence, particularly for colleges with limited reputation capital seeking to attract new students and solidify their brand identity as seen by stakeholders such as parents, students, and staff.

Despite the considerable body of research dedicated to university brand matters, there remains a scarcity of studies that specifically examine this topic, particularly those that concentrate on particular facets of university branding. There are numerous scholarly investigations into various subjects, including the significance of university brands (Gray et al., 2003), the perceptions of brand image and methods to enhance it (Panda et al., 2019), the determinants of brand satisfaction (Alwi et al., 2020), brand affection and allegiance (Twum et al., 2021), the impact of brand strategy types on brand engagement (Kamal Basha et al., 2020), the function of brand identification (Erjansola et al., 2021), brand equity (Hanson et al., 2020) and brand reputation (Foroudi et al., 2019), among other subjects. In reality, the impact of university brands on the competitive advantages of universities is multifaceted and intricate. However, an all-encompassing and integrative methodology to assess the correlation between university brands

and student perceptions, brand positioning, brand identification, and university marketing communications is currently lacking.

The responsibility of brand management has been increased in importance in the modern global market. Strong assets, brands are the core of any company, hence they need to be carefully considered and nurtured. Among a company's most significant intangible resources, brands help consumers make decisions and distinguish them from other businesses (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993b). The capacity of a successful brand to arouse customer preferences and loyalty is its ultimate value since brands reflect consumers' perceptions and emotions regarding the good and its effectiveness (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Best of all, brands are symbols of fulfilled promises and encourage loyalty via trust, which sustains successful consumer relationships (Reichheld, 2001). Campaigns for branding go beyond consumer goods these days. Branding techniques have been tried by a variety of services to help companies and organizations create stronger brands. Higher education institutions are no exception in this sense; they are starting to realize the significance of creating long-term brand strategy. Brand positioning holds a very important role in the company's branding and marketing strategy (Ferdian, 2024). To represent their skills, universities and other post-compulsory educational institutions are actually finding that branding is a strategic necessity (Jevons, 2006). Trust is linked not only to individuals but also to firms, products, and brands (Muhammad et al., 2020). The consumer experience is associated with a positive brand image, simple use, and service quality for multi-financing, that ends up in greater spending (Nugraha, 2024).

Universities and colleges are using branding to address contemporary global issues in the more complicated and competitive market (Whisman, 2009). Actually, given the complexity of most colleges, it is becoming more and more evident that many of them may have several brands (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009). "Universities may be too complex and fragmented to be understood and expressed as single identity organizations," write (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009). For instance, a single institution may have several university brands for its undergraduate, graduate, alumni, business recruiters, parents, groups, and local community members. According to (M. Y. S. Barusman, 2018), a university's competitive advantage is derived from four internal factors: curriculum relevance, availability of funds and financing, effectiveness of human resource management strategies, and leadership effectiveness. Student happiness is positively influenced by perceptions of the university's image, study program repute, and general reputation (A. R. P. Barusman, 2014).

Colleges and universities have been up against more rivalry in recent years due to a bad global economic climate, growing enrollment, and both domestic and foreign competitiveness (Whisman, 2009). Therefore, university administrators turned to branding efforts as a relatively easy promotional effort after realizing that depending just on external marketing and branding initiatives was insufficient to develop a strong university brand and brand equity (Pinar et al., 2014). Previous strategies appear to be ineffective now. The newest marketing technique for higher education institutions, university branding seeks to position the university and draw in, interact with, and keep students (Sultan & Wong, 2014; Wilson & Elliot, 2016). The capacity of a university to satisfy the demands of its students and inspire confidence in its ability to provide promised services is reflected in its brand (Nguyen et al., 2016). Moreover, colleges as service firms depend on the special quality of their offerings to set themselves apart from rivals. Different studies demonstrating growing interest in higher education branding have addressed a range of issues linked to university branding and university brand equity in recent years. Though earlier research sheds light on particular aspects of university branding, it falls short of capturing the overall influence of the core and supporting dimensions of university brand equity as well as the direct and indirect interactions and relationships between the dimensions shown in the brand ecosystem (Pinar et al., 2011).

Using the research on the reliability of services, (Ng & Forbes, 2009) propose an incomplete approach to the university learning experience that highlights the many players including students in creating that experience. They draw attention to its complexity since no two students have the same learning, private, occupations, or social orientations and because the college process is co-created, emergent, unstructured, dynamic, and unpredictable. A framework for documenting college experiences that pinpoints the factors that are important and enable the development of academic values was issued by (Ng & Forbes, 2009). Core and supporting brand equity features from (Ng & Forbes, 2009) are included into the brand ecosystem framework by (Pinar et al., 2011), where academic-student interactions are frequently an

important component of the learning experience in establishing a university brand. CSR helps organizations to create their brand image (Ratul et al., 2023). Brand image is the brand's memory, which encompasses the consumer's comprehension of the brand's distinctive features, method, structure, customer, and the brand's independent marketing efforts. (Muslim et al., 2020). Strategically speaking, brands may be established to deliver greater value to customers by developing a network of values and their interactions at each stage of creating and giving brand value. A brand ecosystem is a collection of numerous acts that, from the first design concept to the last brand experience for the customer, help to develop a successful brand (Pinar & Trapp, 2008). The fundamental dimensions of university brand equity identified are brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, brand trust, learning environment, emotional environment, university reputation, and brand loyalty; library services, dining services, dorms, and physical facilities are the supporting university brand equity dimensions. Giving a basic description of the evolution of university brand equity research, this study is highly noteworthy. At last, it is hoped that this study will advance the following realizations. First of all, this study presents confirmation of university brand equity studies carried out in different nations between 2000 and 2023. Second, university brand equity research in Indonesia can be undertaken with the help of this study. We structure this research according to the following framework. Introduction, research methods, results and discussion, and conclusion come in that order.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Brand Equity

The concept is defined by (Keller, 2013) as the importance of a brand that consumers perceive, which in turn changes their responses to the brand occasionally. (Keller, 2013) also elucidates that CBBE arises when consumers have strong associations with the brand and have a high level of awareness and familiarity with it. strong, appealing, and distinctive to the brand. These corroborates the assumption that CBBE is dependent on the notion that the power of a brand lies in the impressions of consumers (Keller, 2013; Leone et al., 2006). Brand equity helps to the organization's potential purposes and capabilities by supplying the product with a type of added value (Chen, 2008).

Strong brands foster profitable and sustainable customer relationships by preserving consumer knowledge and loyalty (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993a). Consequently, the robustness of brand equity has been regarded as a measure of competitive advantage and a key performance indicator (KPI) (Christodoulides et al., 2015; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995a). Higher pricing, long-term income, and the effectiveness of marketing communications all follow from this for the organization (Keller, 2013). Like (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995b), the CBBE technique represents the dominant and most popular viewpoint of marketing research as, in the end, a brand will not have value for investors, manufacturers, or stores if it does not represent something for customers.

## 3. Methods

This review drew its articles from the Scopus database. 184 articles, review articles, and research publications in English peer-reviewed journals between 2000 and 2023 were found when we searched for them using the terms "university" and "brand equity." With just articles bearing the titles "university" and "brand equity," we were able to focus the results to those that were more pertinent to the research issue and produced ten articles for examination.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The following is a table containing the 10 Scopus indexed articles that we analyzed.

Table 1. Analyzed Articles

Title	Authors	Year	Finding
Brand equity in higher education (Mourad et al., 2011)	Maha Mourad, Christine Ennew, Wael Kortam	2011	This research helps to enhancing academic understanding of brand equity in the higher education sector in Egypt and gives useful insights for both academic research and practical consequences for university administration and marketing initiatives.

The role of brand attachment strength in higher education (Dennis et al., 2016)	Charles Dennis, Savvas Papagiannidis, Eleftherios Alamanos, Michael Bourlakis.	2016	The outcomes of this study underline the relevance of brand engagement in higher education and its impact on key relationship characteristics and brand equity. By focusing on building strong brand meaning and cultivating engagement among students and graduates, universities can strengthen their relationships with stakeholders and increase their overall brand equity in a competitive higher education landscape.
Brand equity of academics: demystifying the process (Shafaei et al., 2019)	Azadeh Shafaei, Mehran Nejati, Nina Maadad	2019	This research contributes to understanding the academic branding process and its impact on the overall image of the university. By uncovering the mechanisms through which academic competence influences brand equity and emphasizing the importance of trust, likability, and commitment, this research provides valuable insights for improving academic branding strategies in higher education contexts.
Assessing Corporate Brand Equity of Public Universities (Noor et al., 2019)	Shuhaida Md Noor, Kamaruzzaman Abdul Manan	2019	These results show that, within Malaysian public universities, aspects including awareness, service excellence, trust, and relevance have a significant impact on USM corporate brand equity. This study, which focuses especially on USM's efforts to raise its brand visibility and reputation in the global higher education market, offers insightful information about the important factors that contribute to brand equity in the higher education sector and their implications for university branding strategies.
The impact of subjective norms, eWOM and perceived brand credibility on brand equity: application to the higher education (Perera et al., 2021)	Charitha Harshani Perera, Rajkishore Nayak and Long Thang Van Nguyen	2020	The results of this study emphasize how subjective norms, eWOM, perceived brand credibility, and brand equity interact intricately in the higher education industry and how important these elements are to students' perceptions and decision-making processes about higher education.
University students' insight on brand equity (Tran et al., 2020)	Khoa T. Tran, Phuong V. Nguyen, Huynh Thi Sa Do, Lieu Thi Nguyen	2020	brand of instruction. This research contributes to understanding the factors influencing university brand equity in Vietnam's higher education sector and provides insights for universities to improve their branding strategies and marketing efforts to increase brand equity among students and other target audiences.
Examining the relationship between brand equity dimensions and university brand equity An empirical	Musa Pinar, Tulay Girard, Cigdem Basfirinci	2020	This research gives insight into the relationship between brand equity components and their impact on institution brand equity from the

study in Turkey (Pinar et al., 2020)				perspective of students in the Turkish higher education sector. These findings contribute to the knowledge of branding strategies in the higher education industry and offer implications for designing effective institution branding strategies in response to competitive difficulties.
Social media communication and higher education brand equity: The mediating role of eWOM (Sagynbekova et al., 2021)	Sabira Sagynbekova	2021		The findings of this research study provide insight into the relationship between social media communications, electronic word of mouth, and brand equity in the higher education sector, highlighting the importance of consumer perceptions and online interactions in shaping brand value and loyalty.
An empirical study of the dynamic relationships between the core and supporting brand equity dimensions in higher education (Girard & Pinar, 2021)	Tulay Girard, Musa Pinar,	2021		The study results give important insights for university stakeholders in creating and maintaining strong university brands and advance our knowledge of the connection between core and supporting brand equity characteristics in higher education. In higher education contexts, this study emphasizes the need of taking core and supporting characteristics into account when forming total institution brand equity and the impact of demographic variables on student perceptions of brand equity constructs.
How corporate social responsibility affects brand equity and loyalty? A comparison between private and public universities (Tan et al., 2022)	Poh Ling Tan ,S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh, Govindaraju Manickam	2022		The study results illustrate the usefulness of CSR activities in influencing brand perceptions and increasing student loyalty in Malaysian public and private universities, hence advancing our knowledge of the beneficial effect of CSR on brand management in higher education institutions.

The analysis of the 10 articles above resulted in the following similarities: (1) Analysis Method Used: These articles use sophisticated statistical analysis methods, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), to test the relationship between the variables studied. This shows a strong approach in testing hypotheses and identifying influences between variables. (2) The Importance of Student Perceptions: All research emphasizes the importance of understanding students' perceptions and interactions with university brands. This includes how students perceive the university brand, the extent to which they are loyal to the brand, and how their perceptions influence their decisions. (3) Brand Attachment: The articles highlight the importance of brand attachment in the context of higher education and how this influences factors such as student satisfaction, trust, and commitment to the university brand. (4) Student Engagement: The articles highlight the role of students as key stakeholders in understanding and building brand equity in higher education institutions. (5) Importance of Brand Attachment: Findings suggest that brand attachment plays an important role in influencing students' brand equity, satisfaction, trust and commitment towards the university brand. The stronger the student's attachment to the university brand, the higher the brand equity the higher education institution has. (6) Role of Brand Communication: The findings highlight the importance of brand communication in building a positive brand image, increasing brand awareness, and influencing student loyalty towards the university brand.

Effective brand communication can contribute to increasing overall brand equity. (7) Influence of Brand Equity Dimensions: Findings show that brand equity dimensions, such as brand image, brand trust, and brand loyalty, are interconnected and influence each other in creating strong brand equity among students. (8) Variations Between Countries: The findings also indicate that there are differences in factors influencing brand equity in higher education institutions between different countries. This shows the importance of considering cultural nuances and local context in the development of brand strategies in the higher education sector. (9) Recommendations for Further Research: Several findings provide recommendations for further research, such as involving other stakeholders such as faculty, staff, alumni, graduate users and parents in research to gain a more holistic understanding of brand equity.

## 5. Conclusion

Using an organized literature review covering the years 2000–2023 to discover, assess, and analyze university brand equity, this study looks at peer-reviewed journal articles from the Scopus database. Given the dearth of study on brand equity in the service industry, particularly in universities, this could offer researchers a chance to focus on university brand equity, particularly in Indonesia. The primary contribution is to offer a thorough and methodical analysis of the literature now in publication on university brand equity, while investigating how current research affects university branding and brand management, specifically brand equity and university communications plans.

## Limitation and Further Studies

Our study concentrates just on scientific publications in the Scopus index and over twenty-three years. Apart from Scopus, there are also other academic publications in the field of marketing and branding that have published scientific articles about Brand Equity that we did not include in the analysis this time even though this database comprises journals with the highest scientific impact in many scientific disciplines. To circumvent this restriction, we suggest that next studies also gather knowledge gathered in those publications not indexed by Scopus using alternative scientific databases including Google Scholars.

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