

# Literature Review on Branding Higher Education in Ethiopia

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to review the brand literature focusing on higher educational institutions until 2017 so as to identify areas where researches were conducted and further studies are required. Within the concepts brand, branding, brand strategy, brand management, brand equity, academic journals aligned with University, academic institutions, higher education institutions and related issues were scanned. Among all the articles accessed, ten of them were published in reputable brand related articles were considered in this review. The case articles were reviewed based on their respective year of publication, journal name, methodology, and country of the study, findings and recommendation. The review process employed a content analysis. The findings show that the trend of branding in academic institutions is growing. However, the number of published papers in reputable journals is in infant stage. Most of the papers used quantitative methods and collected data from students via convenience sampling. Eventhough few numbers of articles employed probabilistic method; the size of the population was not stated. The research in the area is confined to few developed countries which also lacks a grand conceptual framework in the sector. Therefore, it is advisable to conduct a comprehensive study to fill such gaps through using sound methodology and developing an appropriate framework which can be applied across nations. The major limitation of this review article is that only ten papers were examined of which generalization about the area is not as such important. Therefore, further studies may apply the procedures and investigate the area comprehensively.

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## 1. Introduction

Brand has several benefits for firms, consumers and society. In terms of consumers, brand is a quality indicator and creates awareness for products (Kapferer2008). In terms of firms, brand provides customer loyalty, consistent sales amount and a high profit margin (Kotler and W. Pfoertsch. 2006; K. L. Keller, 2001). As a result of consumer and firm benefits, brand plays a key role on social development. In intense competence conditions, firms need to create strong brands in order to survive and gain a competitive advantage.

For both goods and services, brands are found to fulfill the same basic functions, in terms of representing a distinctive value system, relevant to consumers (de Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003) and by Dall"Olmo Riley and de Chernatony (2000). They propose a notion of "the service brand" as a holistic process which provides focus to the internal relationship between the service company and the employees, and comes alive in the external relationship (encounter) between consumer and service provider (employee). A virtuous circle is created whenever a strong "brand as a company" identity permeates the organization and provides a relevant focus to both consumers and employees.

Brand is a firm asset that contributes identity and character, guides consumers for product choices and forms the relations among consumers (Kavak ,Bahtışen ,2015). Along with the movement of goods and general services, the movement of educational services and products has improved significantly in the last decade (Bloom, 2005). Education is increasingly seen not only as an export commodity, but also as a key national brand for a nation's knowledge proficiency (Bano & Taylor, 2015). Increasing competition between universities heightens the need for institutions to understand, manage, and leverage a strong brand position (Celly & Knepper, 2010; Hemsley-Brown & Goonawardana, 2007; Maringe & Gibbs, 2009). Consequently, more and more universities apply common marketing techniques including brand management to compete effectively (Chapleo, 2011, Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006) as cited by Rauschnabel ,Philipp et. al.( 2016).

Though the practice of branding has been emerging in the service sector, literatures in the area are rare. Among the service scopes, education gets attention in the present review. With the purpose to examine the application of brand concepts in higher education sector, systematic literature review approach is used in the present work by classifying the literature on academic branding area until 2017. The review process involved methodological procedures with respective presentation and analysis, conclusion and implication. The literature review is subjected to a content analysis

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Content analysis technique is defined as a systematic, repeated technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (K. Krippendorff, 1980 ;. P. Weber, 1990). Content analysis helps researches to sieve the large amount of data with easing in a systematic process (U.S.

General Accounting Office, 1996). Qualitative content analysis or document analysis can be undertaken without engaging with individuals involved in your study (Daymon, Cgristine, 2011). In this paper, all brand related concepts connected to higher education institutions were used to search prior research work in online databases. Those journals and graduate study papers containing a “brand” in their title names, until present time were searched in search engines. Furthermore, systematic categorical classification of investigated articles were summarized by title, year, type of study, research design, data collection method, sampling method, sample size and the country where the studies were conducted.

## 2.1. Analysis

The analysis was made based two consecutive data presentation procedures. In the first part, Table I, the distribution of 21 brand-related papers by year, title, journal name and category were presented. Due to credibility matters, titles which do were no published in reputable journals and categorized as thesis, doctoral dissertation, some without full information of publication were not extended for successive analysis. In the second part, from the twenty one papers, only ten articles published in reputable journals articles were presented in table II for further analysis.

**Table I . Distribution of researches by year of pub., title, journal name and category: until 2017**

S, n	Author	Year	Title	Journal	Category
1.	Rauschnabel, philipp et. Al.	2016	Brand management in higher education: the university brand personality scale	Journal of business research	article
2.	Menon p, et. Al	2016 may	Dimensions of brand equity: an investigation on higher education institutions	Asian journal of research in social sciences and humanities	Article
3.	Shcherbak , et.al	2016	Formation and development of brand equity of higher education institution	None	Article
4.	Sylvie lome, et.al	2016	Constructing a national higher education brand for the UK: positional competition and promised capitals	Routledge : taylor and frances group	Article
5.	Vukasovič, Tina	2015	Managing consumer-based brand equity in higher education	None	Article
6.	Singh , jaywant	2015	Co-branding in higher education: an investigation of student attitudes	None	Article
7.	Gade, jess, et.al	2014	Higher education branding: attracting Brazilian talent to Danish higher education	None	Thesis
8.	Bansal sanjeev	2014 may	Branding an academic institution: the strategic issues	Journal of international academic research for multidisciplinary	Article
9.	Dr. Johnl s. Franklin et.al	2013	Factor branding in selection of higher educational institutions in india	Journal of business and management (iosr-jbm)	Article
10.		2013	Designing and explaining brand equity model in higher education	European online journal of natural & social sciences	Article
11.	Valtere, laura	2012	Branding in higher education: the concept of brand and key stakeholders	None	Article
12.	Yih, laihuey	2012	A study of brand equity and institutional image between two higher educational institutions	None	Thesis
13.	Beneke, j.h	2011	Marketing the institution to prospective students – a review of brand (reputation)	International journal of business and management vol. 6, no. 1; January 2011	

S, n	Author	Year	Title	Journal	Category
14.	Amboy joy, victoria	2011	Implications of branding initiatives in higher Education among trademarked institutions in California	None	Doctoral dissertations
15.	Harsha ,pragya p	2011	Creating brand value of higher education institution	Jim, volume 19, number 2, July - December 2011	Article
16.	Beneke	2011)	Marketing the institution to prospective students – a review of brand (reputation) management in higher education	International journal of business and management vol. 6, no. 1; January 2011	Articles
17.	Mourad, maha, et.al	2010	Brand equity in higher education	Marketing intelligence & planning, vol. 29 no. 4, 2011 pp. 403-420 Emerald group publishing limited	Article
18.	Beker, christian, et.al	2009	Branding in universities: identity versus image; case study of Swedish university	No	Thesis
19.	Kimberly, m. Judson, et.al.	2009	Building a university brand from within: university administrators' perspectives of internal branding	Services marketing quarterly, 30:54-68, 2009	
20.	Jane , hemsley-brown, et.al	2007	Brand harmonization in the international higher education market	Journal of business research, vol. 60 pp 942-948 (20p).	
21.	Katarzyna,	N.d	Components of brand of a higher education institution	Jel classification: m14, m31	Articles

Source: Own organization

As seen in table I, of 21 research works, 19 %( 4) of the papers were published between 2007 and 2010; whereas 81 %( 17) were published between 2011 and 2017. This implies that the trend of applying brand concept in higher institutions is increasing through time.

The distribution ratio of the examined studies among the journals indicates that a large portion of the studies on higher education branding were published in marketing and business journals. Among ten papers, only 2(20%) of the articles were published in journal of business research and 80 %( 8) were published in different journals. The remaining studies, which were recent ones, published in journals with fundamental topics such as natural science, social science and multi-disciplinary journals. The fact that journals focusing on different disciplines have published studies on brand in recent years is an indicator that the subject has gained importance in a multidisciplinary aspect.

The table also shows that majority of the researches conducted in the area are related to brand equity with few other concepts such as brand identity and brand reputation. Though there is improvement in the application of the concept in the higher education setting, the number of papers (articles) published in reputable journal is yet in infant stage. This shows the area is not exhaustively investigated in this context.

### 2.1. Distribution of the research Paper by approach and type of study

Table 2, columns 4 and 5 provides the distribution of research papers based on research approach and type of study. From the approach aspect, the share of quantitative approach is 5(50%), qualitative is 4(40%) whereas mixed approached contains the lowest size,1(10%). This shows mixed research is in an infant stage in higher education branding. This is different from the result found by (Bahtışen ,Kavak, 2015) involved review of 409 journal articles where quantitative, qualitative and mixed design hold 62%, 27% and 34% respectively

No.	Author(Year)	Title	Approach (design)	Type of study	Sampling Unit	Sampling Method	Sample Size(N/n )	Data collation method	Method of Analysis	Country
1	Rauschnabel ,Philipp et.al.(2016)	Brand Management In Higher Education: The University Brand Personality Scale	Mixed	Conceptual	Secondary, Students, Stakeholders	Non Pro.	No N. n=551	Document, interview, online survey	Content analysis,SEM	USA, Germany
2	Menon P, et.al(2016 May)	Dimensions Of Brand Equity: An Investigation On Higher Education Institutions	Quantitative	Empirical	Student	Prob.(random sampling)	No population (N) n=635	Questionnaire Survey	correlation and regression	India
3	Sylvie Lome, et.al (2016)	Constructing a national higher education brand for the UK: positional competition and promised capitals	Qualitative	Conceptual	Secondary data	Non. Pro.	Not available	Document	Content analysis (thematic analysis)	UK
4	Bansal Sanjeev(2014, May)	Branding an Academic Institution: The Strategic Issue	Qualitative	Empirical	Not stated	Non prob	NOT available		Narrative	India
5	Dr. Johnl S. Franklin et.al (2013)	Factor Branding In Selection Of Higher Educational Institutions In India	Quantitative	Empirical	Students	Non Pro b	780	Questionnaire survey	multiple regressions and Partial least Squares	India
6	Moghadam,Akram, Hadizadeh(2013)	Designing And Explaining Brand Equity Model In Higher Education	Quantitative	Conceptual	Students	Pro(cluster)	N= 828,000 =564		t-test, ANOVA, SEM(path, analysis)	Iran
7	Beneke, J.H (201)	Marketing The Institution To Prospective Students – A Review Of Brand (Reputation) Management In Higher Education	Qualitative	Conceptual	Secondary (Literature review )	Not applicable	Not applicable	-	Content analysis	South Africa
8	Mourad, Maha, et.al (2010)	Brand Equity In Higher Education	Quantitative	Conceptual	Students	Convenience	600	Questionnaire Survey	multiple regression	Egypt
9	Kimberly, M. Judson, et.al.( 2009)	Building a University brand from within: university administrators 'perspectives of internal branding	Quantitative	Empirical	university administrators	Non Pro.	343	on-line survey	Percentage, mean, st.dev.	USA
10	Jane , Hemsley-Brown, et.al (2007)	Brand Harmonization In The International Higher Education Market	qualitative	Emperical	1).Students (applicants) 2)Directors	Random, Purposive	30	Secondary, semi-structured interview.	Triangulation	UK

With respect to type of study, the table presents that both the empirical and conceptual models are equivalent. This is in contrast to the finding of Bahtışen ,Kavak, (2015), which shows empirical and conceptual researches constitute 84% and 16% of the overall study respectively . In the present study conceptual models might be used due to the scarce literatures in the area.

### 2.1.1. Distribution of the research Paper by Sampling Units, Method & size

As seen in the above table of column 6, students were widely used units of sampling in educational branding following secondary sources (documents, literatures etc), administrative and managing directors and stakeholders at last.

When it comes to the classification according to the sampling Method, Table 2, of column 7, non-probability sampling method takes the lion's share followed by probability sampling in the methodology part, Simple random and cluster sampling methods mentioned as probabilistic sampling method; Convenience and purposive sampling methods are mentioned in non-probabilistic method. Even though few numbers of articles employed probabilistic method, the size of the population is not stated.

With regard to sample size, of 10 articles, only 7 papers that give information about the sample are included in this analysis. The sample size of the seven paper ranges from 30 to 780, where, the average size is 420.

### 2.1.2. Method of data collection and Analysis

It is revealed from the table that the data collected by quantitative method exceeds the qualitative method of collection. Table 2, column 8 indicates that survey method is frequently used in quantitative data collection whereas interview is a major tool in qualitative methods. Secondary data from documents and literatures were used in both designs.

In the case of articles reviewed, data were analyzed quantitatively through models of SEM, correlation, simple regression, multiple regression, PLS, ANOVA, t-test ,structural model path, percentages, mean and standard deviations. Of the method mentioned, regression and structural equation model were most frequently used one is factor analysis. In addition data which were gathered through survey method were analyzed quantitatively. Content analysis is most frequently used in the qualitative

### 2.1.3. Distribution of researches by country

Among the 10 articles reviewed in the present study. India constitutes 3(33%), USA and UK 2(20%) each and the rest three countries contain 30%. Branding studies in education sector is concentrated in three countries: India, USA, and UK. Studies conducted in these three countries generate the 70 % all studies conducted in 45 countries. Therefore, it can be suggested that to bring as many as discrete perspectives into the brand literature, increasing number of studies should come from different countries

## Results and Recommendations

In the present study, research papers were classified by year of publication, title, journal name, category, methodology and country of study. The result indicates that most of educational branding research was published between 2011 and 2017 than 2001-2010. This implies that the trend of applying brand concept in higher institutions is increasing through time. Though there is improvement in the application of the concept in the higher education setting, the number of papers (articles) published in reputable journal is in infant stage. Thus, the area is not exhaustively investigated in this context. With regard to the area of concept, majority of the researches focused on brand equity with few other concepts such as brand identity and brand reputation. This indicates brand equity is an important issue in educational setting.

The distribution ratio of the examined studies among the journals indicates that a large portion of the studies on higher education branding were published in marketing and business journals. The remaining studies, which are recent ones, published in journals with fundamental topics such as natural science, social science and multi-disciplinary journals. The fact that journals focusing on different disciplines have published studies on brand in recent years is an indicator that the subject has gained importance in a multidisciplinary aspect.

The research papers examined in the study were classified under two fundamental areas based on their approaches and type of study. The result shows that quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches were used with their respective decreasing proportion. It was evident that the application of mixed research in higher education branding is rare. With regard to type of study, findings of the review paper disclose that both empirical and conceptual models were used proportionally. Thus, conceptual models might be used due to the scarce literatures in the area.

The research papers were distributed by Sampling Units, Method & size. Accordingly, students were widely used units of sampling in educational branding followed by secondary sources (documents, literatures etc). It is also noticed that the involvement of other external stakeholders is minimal. The result of sampling method examination shows that non probability sampling method took the lion's share followed by probability sampling. In this perspective, Simple random and cluster sampling methods were mentioned as probabilistic sampling method whereas convenience and purposive sampling methods are mentioned in non-probabilistic method. Eventhough few number of articles employed probabilistic method, the size of the population is not stated. From this respect, scientific rule of research about probabilistic research has been ignored. In addition, in some papers, it was stated that stakeholders were used but no information is provided in the findings.

The sample size of the seven paper containing information ranges from 30 to 780. In gathering data, survey method is frequently used in quantitative data collection whereas interview is a major tool in qualitative methods. Secondary data from documents and literatures were used in both designs. Questionnaire survey and interview are commonly employed instruments in the articles reviewed. Data which are subject to quantitative approach were analyzed by large number of tools; of which, regression and structural equation model were most frequently used. Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. However, the triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative tools of analysis is not explicitly noticed.

The country related aspect of researches conducted illustrates that India, USA and UK constitute the larger proportion. According to Cengiz , Hakan (2016), US is also a leading one in brand loyalty research conducted in 140 countries. USA and India generate the one-third of all studies conducted in 45 countries (Kavak, Bahtışen, et.al, 2015). It shows the studies of brand concepts are concentrated in very few countries.

## Recommendation and Implication

Academicians and research need to give emphasis to branding services in general and to higher education in particular. It is advisable to conduct a comprehensive study using sound methodology and developing an appropriate framework which can be applied across nations. Future researches ought to apply branding in multidisciplinary areas in addition to marketing fields. The application of rule of probabilistic method, definition of target population and sample size is areas that need attention to fill the gaps seen in the reviewed papers of this study. The future researches need also to involve different stakeholders in addition to students in higher institution branding. The major limitation of this study is that only ten papers were examined of which generalization about the area is not as such important. Therefore, further studies may apply the procedures and investigate the area comprehensively.

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