Creating Brand Equity in Myanmar Private Higher Education Sector

Building Customer-Based Brand Equity through
Student Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty

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I would love to express my gratitude to the people who have supported me throughout my life and my doctorate journey. My heartfelt gratitude goes to my beloved parents, who raised me with love and kindness to become the person I am today. Whenever I had difficulties, they were there for me. In addition to them, I have always been supported by my husband, Phyo Maung Maung. I would not be who I am today without my husband's love, encouragement, arguments, and support. My family have supported me through ups and downs, and they will be in my heart forever.

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With love and respect,

ABSTRACT

The role of brand equity has recently captured the attention of scholars and practitioners to create competitive advantages for brands in the 21st century. Understanding the brand equity determinants and their relationship to customer satisfaction and brand loyalty can support the brand in improving customer-based brand equity and customer satisfaction. This thesis explores the relationship between brand equity determinants to student satisfaction and brand loyalty to create customer-based brand equity.

This empirical research was based on the Myanmar private higher education sector. It examines the factors influencing and limiting brand equity creation through students' perspectives. This paper proposes a newly developed theoretical model based on six different brand equity models and previous literature. This study proposes that five brand equity determinants - brand awareness, perceived quality, physical quality and facilities, staff behaviour and customer ideal self-congruence - have an impact on student satisfaction and brand loyalty. It is revealed that in the creation of customer-based brand equity, student satisfaction has the highest impact on Myanmar's private higher education. Brand image is the most critical determinant, followed by brand awareness, physical quality and facilities, followed by student ideal self-congruence. Perceived quality is the least important determinant. The findings propose brand loyalty as the outcome. The strongest relationship between brand loyalty and student satisfaction suggests that the higher the student satisfaction, the higher the brand loyalty. The data shows student satisfaction as a significant indicator, and thus, higher education providers are advised to focus on improving student satisfaction over time to improve brand equity.

The study contributes to the methodological use of pragmatic philosophy and a mixed method approach from the stance of an insider researcher through a survey and a focus group discussion with the students at Myanmar Imperial University. The empirical findings of this study offer an academic contribution to the existing body of knowledge on brand equity in the Higher Education Sector and five main management implications to improve brand equity in the Higher Education Sector. Finally, this research contributes conceptually to the holistic understanding of the brand management process with special reference to Myanmar's private higher education sector. The study highlights several managerial-level implications for

brand leaders in developing effective brand management strategies and policy-making processes in creating strong brands.

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1.1: Introduction

This introduction chapter aims to provide a brief overview and introduction of the study with the essence of the importance of brand equity in creating a competitive edge in the 21ˢᵗ century. This chapter covers the introduction, research background, purpose, aim and objectives, research questions, research methodology, proposed model, significance and justification of the study and the organisational structure of the thesis.

1.2: Research Background

Today's service industry is less tangible than a physical product and is more likely to vary in quality, depending on the personnel who provide the service (Keller, 2001). A brand can identify and provide meaning to the services or products that organisations offer to customers. A brand can also support customers' buying decisions when making repeated purchases. For universities, the purchase can either be one-time or repeated as satisfied students continue their studies at their university. This study is based on the higher education sector, where higher education providers are required to emphasise brand loyalty to promote positive word-of-mouth marketing and improve repeated purchases (Vukasovic, 2015). The role and importance of brand equity in the higher education sector have recently gained focus.

The concept of branding is applied in higher education, just as in other commercial sectors (Vukasovic, 2015). In the context of higher education, brand image plays a significant role in reducing the risks associated with such related services, mainly because quality assessment occurs both during and after consumption. Brand equity has been considered one of the critical factors in creating competitive advantages for the firm's long-term success by many scholars and practitioners (Mourad, *et al*., 2011; Keller, 2013; Trapp, *et al*., 2014). The challenging market has been leading organisations in the higher education industry to try their *best* to improve their performance in order to gain a competitive advantage. Brand equity seems to be an exciting area in improving business performance. A brand can be a

powerful weapon to differentiate an organisation from its competitors and a decision-making tool (Aaker, 1996; Keller, Ivy, 2008; 2013; Bangari and Chaubey, 2017). The significance of brand equity has been addressed by various scholars in the higher education sector (Mourad, *et al.*, 2011; Trapp, *et al.*, 2014).

1.2.1: The Role of Higher Education

Education is critical for every country's human resource cultivation and overall development (Maung, 2020). Mandela (1990) said education is the most potent weapon and can change people, communities, nations, and humanity's future. He also insisted on the role of education by saying that education is the key to eliminating all the problems. He highlighted that every person needs to be educated to grow and succeed in the future (Mandela, 1990). Education can help fight poverty and give people the courage to speak against injustice (Mandela, 1990). Education leads people to know what is right and wrong, and at the same time, education gives the person the courage to raise a voice against injustice. Thus, education can be considered a weapon of change for individuals, the country, families, society, and the future of youth.

Moreover, education is also the only channel to save the world's humanity. We need education as a negotiator to lead individuals towards making considered decisions and to develop an ability to see right or wrong in ambiguous situations. A proper education can give individuals the courage to dream and make sure their dreams come true. Education can also promote gender equality and reduce poverty. Hence, the power of knowledge can help one walk the right path, make the right decision, and help bring the change that has always been wanted. In addition, higher education is perceived as the most reliable mechanism for upward social mobility (Jones, 2016). Education also promises and brings people increased lifetime earnings, broader career prospects, improved status opportunities and other personal benefits (Sanyal and Johnstone, 2011). Thus, the role of education cannot be ignored by individuals, professionals, leaders of organisations, and leaders of countries.

1.2.2: The Rationale of the Study

Different scholars and higher education providers believe that the education sector is considered a service sector that provides quality education and transforms lives (MIC, 2017). Higher education providers must maintain and improve brand equity in this highly competitive century to achieve competitive advantages. The brand is a multidimensional concept, and the education provider needs to thoroughly understand brand equity from the customers' perspective in managing what the brand offers them. The interconnective and high level of competition also demands that providers look from the customers' perspective. In terms of that specific purpose, customer-based brand equity is also crucial for higher education organisations to focus on.

Myanmar's private higher education has notably developed since 2011 (Pyi, 2017). The intensity among competitors is increasing with the growing demand in the private education sector. However, there are minimal education studies in the literature, especially focusing on the Myanmar private higher education sector. Likewise, most recent papers have focused on exploring student satisfaction, but very few studies have yet to focus on the limiting factors of student satisfaction. Thus, this study intends to explore the influencing factors to improve student satisfaction and to explore the factors limiting the student satisfaction of an educational brand. Simultaneously, there are very few studies on the mediating role of student satisfaction in the relationship between customer-based brand equity determinants and brand loyalty in the higher education industry (Mourad, *et al.*, 2011; Pinar, *et al.*, 2014; Maung, 2021). One of the rationales of this study is to look at the students' perspectives and insights to improve student satisfaction in creating a university brand.

Exploring the relationship between the different brand equity determinants in the Higher Education sector can improve the brand equity-creating practices for University Brands. This thesis explored the relationship between brand equity determinants and examined the factors influencing and limiting brand equity creation through students' perspectives. This study also investigated customers' expectations and preferences in choosing a university brand and developed management implications and practices for creating strong customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's higher education sector. The theoretical model was

developed based on previous literature (e.g., Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996; Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Nam *et al.*, 2011). The framework was tested through the scope of Myanmar's private higher education sector. In this literature and practitioner gap, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the role of the brand equity determinants in creating customer-based brand equity and understanding the influencing factors of the creation of customer-based brand Equity through Student Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty.

The Educational Landscape of Myanmar

As Myanmar is in the middle of the transformation period from the autocratic era to the democratic age, the role of the educated professional has become vital. In Myanmar, the higher education landscape has entered a more visible era. Starting in 2010, many private institutions have emerged to fulfil the human resource requirement of Myanmar's business economy. The absence of a strong human talent base is acknowledged as one of the most critical factors constraining Myanmar's economic development (Institute of International Education, 2013). Consequently, the higher education sector has currently emerged as an area of national priority. Opening private sector investment in the country's higher education sector is evident to foreign and domestic investors. Therefore, higher education tends to be a battleground for attractive investments.

Competition among education providers is now extreme, and soon, it will be even stronger than at present (Institute of International Education, 2013).Out of the 51.4 million of the total population, fewer than 2.5 million people in Myanmar are university graduates and only 11 per cent are enrolled at a university. Distance education is well established in Myanmar – from 1991 to 2011, more than 1,073,000 undergraduate students were in distance education (YUDE, 2012). According to the Ministry of Education (2021), the number of state-run universities is seventy-four (Ministry of Education, 2021). The Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) from the Ministry of Education (2021) said there were almost 200,000 students in higher education in 2021.

Starting in the early 2000s, the private education sector's role in Myanmar gradually increased. In 2010, the government allowed private higher education providers to participate in the country's education sector. Some of the most active institutions are Myanmar Imperial University, Myanmar Noble College, Victoria University College, STI University College, and Mand HR Institutes in the Myanmar higher education sector (Swe, 2015). In 2015, Myanmar had 20 private colleges with various accreditations from different countries, particularly the United Kingdom and Singapore (Lwin, 2016). The role of private higher education in Myanmar became notably developed by the end of 2011 (Pyi, 2017).

Myanmar is in the transformation process toward a democratic country and in the middle of generally transforming youth, as well as students, who are the ones who will be leading the country into a better future. In developing a nation, education plays the most vital role. The intensity among competitors is increasing with the growing demand in the private education sector. There is a strong relationship between students' satisfaction and other institutional characteristics, such as retention and graduation rates in the education sector (Khosravi, 2012). Brand equity is the most critical issue in standing out from the competition. However, there were limited studies in the literature on the education business, especially in the Myanmar private higher education sector. Accordingly, this study will focus on the higher education sector. By conducting the research, Myanmar higher education providers can understand insights and factors influencing the students' journey to create effective learning where universities, students, and communities can enjoy the outcomes. With the contribution of thesis research papers, higher education providers can realise the role of brand equity and create more substantial brand equity in higher education, promoting the careers and dreams of the country's youth and the national human resource development.

1.2.3: Research Context: Introduction to Myanmar Imperial University

Myanmar Imperial University is one of the prominent universities in the country with the highest student numbers in the private education sector (Education Digest, 2011). Two founders established the University with a start-up capital of US$ 2000 in 2005, and in 2015, they launched a new campus worth US$ 3 million with a network of over 4000 students (Aung, 2017). The university's management is also committed to creating strong brand equity to

create competitive advantages (Maung, 2016). Myanmar Imperial University delivers a Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Doctoral Degree with a strong collaboration with Northampton University, Bolton University and Pearson Education. Myanmar Imperial University also works with Singapore Management University to strengthen the quality of education. Myanmar Imperial University focuses on Business, Marketing, Branding and Management. Additionally, Myanmar Imperial University has around 1000 students studying for different Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes in 2022. Myanmar Imperial University committed itself to creating positive change for Myanmar society and building dreams for the youth. With 22 years of experience, Myanmar Imperial University has been transforming one dream at a time by delivering quality education while providing knowledge contributions and full scholarships for certificate and diploma programmes.

In addition, the university was founded by the researcher. By choosing the university as the case organisation, the researcher can reap the benefits of utilising prior experience with the benefits of an insider researcher's stance, which is beneficial for both the researcher and the case organisation. By conducting this study, the university can obtain new knowledge on the brand equity creation process and its benefits and use the findings of this study to explore how brand leaders can facilitate and improve the effectiveness of the brand equity creation process.

Introduction to the Researcher

I am a Founder, Managing Director, and Professor at Myanmar Imperial University. I am also the person who ultimately makes the decisions while managing the university. I have been committed to creating and establishing Myanmar Imperial University since I was 18. I founded Myanmar Imperial University in 2005 at 20 years old with US$1800. Now, I am 38 years old (as of 2024). For 20 years, I have been working my heart out to transform a tiny school into a beautiful University from the basis of US$1800. At that time, I was just a young girl with a big dream, a dream that people said was too big for me and it was not achievable for me. With hard work, high resilience and ups and downs after 20 years, MIU has become one of the leading private universities with the highest student numbers in Myanmar's Private Higher

Education sector. Creating a brand that can stand out in the competition while creating positive things for my students and society has always been my passion and priority.

As I harbour a passion for creating a strong brand for Myanmar students and society, and with the position of personally making all the decisions, I need to know different managerial practices to be able to create strong brand equity in the Myanmar Higher Education sector. I also need to gain insight from customers' perspectives to understand the situation and make decisions. Understanding the students' insight, with the relevance of my prior knowledge of 20 years of brand creation experience in higher education, I can develop managerial practices to improve my educational brand.

Personal Motivation: There has been little or no prior research done on branding in higher education, especially in Myanmar, so in that regard, it might be worth doing an exploratory study. This thesis is about how to create a successful brand, especially in the higher education sector. This thesis explores the areas that brand leaders need to focus on in creating a strong educational brand, the common problems associated with creating a brand in the higher education sector and identifying the things students like the most from their chosen brand. Understanding these things can also improve the MIU brand for Myanmar students.

1.3: Purpose, Aim and Objectives of the study

This study aims to contribute to the literature through ways to create customer-based brand equity in Myanmar Private Higher Education by improving student satisfaction. The study investigates brand equity's determinants and their effect on building stronger brand equity through student satisfaction, as well as provides insightful customer perspectives. With an enhanced understanding of the students' perspectives and challenges, higher education providers can focus on creating customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher educational landscape. The objectives of the research are:

Objective (1) To investigate the different brand equity determinants impacting the creation of customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Objective (2) To investigate customers' expectations and preferences in choosing a university brand in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Objective (3) To investigate the relationship between the brand equity determinants, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Objective (4) To develop and propose a brand equity conceptual framework for Myanmar's private education sector.

Objective (5) To explore the current student satisfaction with the case university and develop management practices for creating a strong customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

1.4: Research Question

This study intends to answer the following research questions:

Question (1): What equity determinants impact the creation of customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector?

Question (2): What is the relationship among the brand equity determinants, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in creating customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector?

Question (3): What are the students' expectations and perceptions of the current brand equity determinants of Myanmar Imperial University?

Question (4) What management practices can be used to promote the creation of customer-based brand equity at Myanmar Imperial University and in Myanmar's private higher education sector?

1.5: Research Methodological Overview

The study empirically analysed the customer-based brand equity determinants and the impacts of creating strong customer-based brand equity in the Myanmar higher education context. This study adopted the Pragmatism Philosophical approach. This research also employed the descriptive and explanatory disciplines using quantitative and qualitative data

collection methods to ensure data triangulation, validity, and reliability of the research findings. It is also recommended that qualitative studies be followed by quantitative research to test the hypothesis (Yin, 2003).

The data examined in this study were collected with two specially designed research instruments, a structured questionnaire for the students and a focus group discussion with selected students. The research questionnaire and focus group discussion investigated students' perceptions of the brand equity determinants and their expectations. The questionnaire was the leading research instrument for this study and was considered to be the primary input. The focus group discussion validated the survey data while strengthening the more profound inputs of students' perceptions and expectations in choosing a university brand.

1.6: Parameters of the Research

This research was based on the Myanmar private higher education sector focusing on the case study of one of the leading private universities in Myanmar.

1.7: Proposed Model of the Study

After a careful literature review, this study proposed a research model which was developed based on six models; Aaker (1991), Berry (2000), Yoo and Donthu (2001), Keller (2002), Mourad *et al*., (2011), and Nam *et al*., (2011). The conceptual framework of creating customer-based brand equity is proposed using six brand equity models by balancing each model's needs with careful thought from insider researcher perspectives. The model has been developed to analyse the relationship between brand equity determinants, student satisfaction and brand loyalty. The model includes independent variables as five brand equity determinants –   brand image, brand awareness, perceived quality, physical quality and facilities, and student ideal self-congruence impacting student satisfaction. Brand loyalty is considered to be the outcome.

Chapter (2) Literature Review

Chapter (2) Literature Review on Creating Brand Equity for Organisational Success in Higher Education

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This literature review investigated the role of brand, branding, and brand equity and the benefits and different determinants impacting the higher education sector's customer-based brand equity creation process. It examined the relationship between brand equity determinants, student satisfaction, and brand loyalty. This literature review also explored factors influencing brand equity dimensions to improve customer-based brand equity through customer perceptions.

Firstly, this chapter discusses the meaning of brand and branding, using different concepts from famous authors and literature. After that, the benefits of branding are discussed. The study used the funnel approach and explored the role of brand equity with four different brand equity concepts based on customer, financial, employee and dynamic capabilities. As this study aims to explore different ways to create customer-based brand equity, the concept of customer-based brand equity is broadened. Different brand equity models of Aaker (1991), Yoo and Donthu (2001), and Keller (2013), were relevant to this study in the understanding of the concept of customer-based brand equity.

With the funnel approach, this study explored the role of brand equity in higher education. The Brand Model developed by Mourad *et al.*, (2011) is explained with relevance to the study. After that, brand equity in the services sector is discussed with the model developed by Berry (2000) and Nam *et al*. (2011). After that, a related literature review in higher education is discussed based on the key constructs of the role of brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, physical quality and facilities, student ideal self-congruence, student satisfaction and brand loyalty in higher education.

After a very systematic theoretical review and literature review, this study proposed a newly developed brand equity conceptual framework based on six brand equity models with a

carefully balanced need for each model and careful consideration of the insider researcher's stance. This newly developed brand equity conceptual framework can also be considered an academic contribution to this thesis.

2.2: What are Brands?

This discussion will explain the role and concept of brands and their benefits with the support of different literature and practitioner perspectives. The word 'brand' was derived from the Old Norse word "brandr", which means "to burn" (MAHA, 2021). Maintaining and improving business performance is becoming critical in this dynamic business world (Pavel, 2017). In that aspect, the role of brands is in the spotlight for the interest of scholars and business leaders.

Farquhar (1989, p. 24) states, "A brand is a name, symbol, design, or mark that enhances the value of a product beyond its functional purpose". The concept of Farquhar (1989) is limited to considering the determinants; it is regarded as an ancient but straightforward and basic definition that served as the foundation for further research. Kapferer (1994) considered branding from the financial perspective to represent an intangible asset that boosts the brand's performance and competitiveness. The American Marketing Association defines a brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, and services of one seller or group of sellers to differentiate them from their competitors", as cited in Kotler and Gertner (2002, p. 249). This definition indicates that a brand is the name of the product that managers and practitioners refer to during the operation (Keller, 2013).A more specific definition is proposed by Aaker (1991, p. 15) as "a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and that firm's customers." It highlights the importance of differentiating a brand from competitors, and brands adopt different strategies to create and reinforce brand uniqueness.

The concept of the American Marketing Association (1991) and Aaker (1991) is limited to brand elements and materials, although later, the importance of valuing functional and emotional benefits is also argued (AMA, 1991; Aaker , 1992; De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley,

1998). The success of brands requires meeting and matching the customer's functional and psychosocial needs, which is critical for success (Anderson, et al., 1994; De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998). A brand is more than a product or service and an intangible asset consisting of associations held in the customer's mind (Keller, 2000). These associations should be unique, strong, and positive. The founder of Apple supported these statements. Jobs (2002) said that a chance to make a memory is the essence of brand marketing. The concept of Keller is extended to customers' perspectives and is limited to the internal and financial needs of the organisation. Keller's definition is extended to fulfil the emotional needs of customers.

The role of creating emotional attachments is also considered critical by De Chernatony *et al*. (2000), who highlighted the role of symbolic attributes and emotional attraction in building brands, which was different from the early concept of brand management. The brand's emotional values can also strengthen the customers' decision-making process (De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998; Doyle , 2001; Macdonald & Sharp, 2003). Brands need to communicate functional and emotional values, internally and externally, to create a strong brand perception (De Chernatony & Lynch, 2004). A strong functional perception of the brand with a weak emotional attachment will have a rational attitude motivated by the quality, performance, and price (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). At the same time, brands with customers with strong emotional perceptions will develop an emotional connection with the brand even if its performance is not as efficient and effective as competitors, as the emotional value perceived by the brand compensates for the functional limitations. Drawing on the previous literature (De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998; Doyle , 2001; Macdonald & Sharp, 2003), the conclusion may be drawn that organisational leaders need to understand the organisation's stance and balance the customers' emotional and functional expectations to gain competitive advantages.

Brands differentiate and create meaning with customers and employees; creating a strong brand provides numerous financial rewards to organisations (Keller, 2013). A strong brand can motivate and engage employees while attracting customers to buy the products and services. A strong brand can also benefit from easily selling products or services and improving marketing effectiveness and efficiency (Maung & Kyi, 2012). Branding can also create

competitive advantages (Keller, 2001), higher customer satisfaction (Mourad, et al., 2011) and create higher brand loyalty (Keller, 2001). According to Dimitrova & Desev (2020), Branding is usually associated with the creation of images with the purpose of increasing sales", and in higher education, the purpose of developing a brand is not to sell products and services but to communicate 'corporate identity' to promote attraction and loyalty is rather limited and somewhat confusing.

In this study, brand loyalty is considered the outcome because the findings from Dimitrova & Desev (2020) indicated that there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. This finding is supported by (Nguyen, et al., 2024) saying brand loyalty is the outcome of the brand equity determinant, and there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Attracting students through several promotional activities might support universities in making students a one-time purchase but the need is to find out what happens with the brand loyalty of educational universities in the long run (Abbas, 2019).

Organizations are expected to grow till the time the customer makes the repetitive purchase (Dick & Basu, 1999). In the context of the higher education sector, the repetitiveness of customer purchase means that education is on the right track. The paper (Zehir, et al., 2011) also proved a positive impact on the established brand and service quality on building brand loyalty in automobile and other service industries paper analyzed the contribution of established and esteemed brand awareness and service quality on brand loyalty in Higher Education. After considering all the above aspects this study considers Brand Loyalty as the outcome (Nam, et al., 2011; Dimitrova & Desev, 2020; Nguyen, et al., 2024).

2.3: What is The role of Branding ?

Branding is the activity of increasing the mass audience's knowledge about the product or service feature to increase sales volume (Reynolds & Gutman, 1984; Gardner & Levy, 1995). In understanding the concept of branding, it is worthwhile looking at the entrepreneurs' perspectives. Creating good personal brands is also essential to creating great organisational

brands (Branson, 2001). Entrepreneurs believe that focusing on purpose and passion is essential to branding. This concept is quite contradictory to the academic aspects. With the contradictory perception of branding, entrepreneurs have different perspectives from academics. Richard Branson, the leader of Virgin Group, defined branding as "Build your brand; you have built that of your business" (Branson, 2001). Branson highlighted the role of people, especially the owners' role, as a reflection of their owner and the owners' qualities, behaviour, and quirks that influence the business and its activities. If you want your business to be remembered a certain way, change *your* values, not the company. This belief of Branson highlighted the values and beliefs of the entrepreneurs and their reflections on business activities. In that case, leaders should not ignore the importance of personal beliefs and values in creating strong brands. Thus, personal brand creation cannot be overlooked as a branding aspect. While academic brand theory concentrates on customers' functional and emotional needs, the entrepreneurs' perception of branding focuses on their passion and purpose. Companies whose culture and values are congruent with employees have a much stronger brand that genuinely is "Lived" by the employees (Chernatony & Cottam, 2006). In the increased competition, Branding is utilised to support universities with a competitive edge to attract more students and to differentiate their brand from the others (Stephenson, et al., 2015).

In branding, advertising has been highly influenced by innovations in communication technologies, from the printing press to radio, TV, and the internet. With the rise of the internet and social media technology, reputation is much harder to control today than in the past, and it can be earned or lost much more quickly. In branding, reputation is also considered a brand's valuable asset. Managing a reputation in this century has become one of the biggest challenges in maintaining a strong and positive brand. The new online and instantaneous communications environment adds another layer of complexity. Brinker et al. (2012) discussed that managing an online community and associated "word-of-mouth" on social media, blogs, comment threads, and reviews is challenging for companies in managing their digital reputation and image. Thus, word-of-mouth recommendations and digital marketing activities are important in creating this study's brand image.

The best advertisement continues to satisfy clients (Kotler, 2019). The author also summarised that a great product or service at the heart of a successful brand is backed by careful planning, long-term commitment, and creatively designed and executed marketing. A strong brand commands intense consumer loyalty (Kotler, 2019). To win the game, brands must communicate their internal and external activities to their customers through different channels, and internal branding should not be ignored. The requirements of this century demand brands to focus on corporate social responsibility to create a positive brand image (Daboul, 2019). The earlier concept focused on the customers and internal stakeholders, and later, it was expanded through society. Daboul (2019) proposed that in their creation, good brands should focus on participating in corporate social responsibility to have an incredible brand image.

It can be concluded that, in this highly competitive digital age, the working definition of branding for this study is based on a multidimensional aspect and a combination of the tangible, product-related and intangible service-related creation process to fulfil the functional needs and emotional needs of the border stakeholders, including society, and to create a positive contribution to the community, i.e., values, assets and associations (Hoeffler & Keller , 2003; De Chernatony, 2010; Keller, 2013; Daboul, 2019). In creating a good brand, it is critical to consider the customer perspectives to meet their functional, psychological, and emotional needs through the communication of functional and emotional values, internally and externally.

2.4: The Benefits of Branding

Branding can create several benefits for the organisation and society. With proper branding, organisations can have external and internal benefits, such as improving customer satisfaction and loyalty, maintaining competitive advantages, creating a brand reputation, positively impacting the decision-making process, and enhancing word-of-mouth recommendations (Gorbatov, et al., 2018) .

Maintaining Competitive Advantages: Many scholars and practitioners acknowledge that creating a great brand is one of the main critical factors in maintaining competitive

advantages and the long-term success of the organisation (Mourad, et al., 2011; Keller, 2013; Trapp & Boyt , 2014). Organisations aim to create a strong and unique brand to win over their competitors while creating competitive advantages and financial rewards (Nguyen, et al., 2021). Thus, it also demands choosing the proper development of internal organisational needs. In creating great brands, marketers are assumed to listen to customers' voices while monitoring their competitors and ensuring that the organisations can fulfil the customers' needs and expectations better than the competitors (Maung, 2020). The brand is considered the organisation's main intangible asset as it can create more than 60% value for the organisation (Halliburton & Bach, 2012). Marketers should understand the need to adapt to the changing demands of customers and ensure that the organisation has the right capabilities for responding to and fulfilling their needs.

Creating Brand Reputation: Branding can also enhance the brand's reputation (Daboul, 2019). Reputation is defined as the collective representation of a firm's past actions and results describing the firm's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders (Garberg & Fombrun, 2002). Reputation is critical for the brand as it is the primary source of strong competitive advantages. The organisation's service quality impacts profit, growth, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. The concept of employee-based brand equity and dynamic capabilities can improve employee satisfaction and service quality. Successful brand campaigns create demand and willingness to pay to help increase profit margins and companies' market share and value (Wipo, 2013).

Improving Retention: Creating and improving brands where the purchase is not only a one-time purchase, but a repeated purchase is essential. At the same time, monitoring customer retention is one of the most important aspects to be focused on by organisational leaders. Brand equity strongly impacts customer retention (Pongiannan & Chinnasamy, 2014), and it has also been proven that the stronger the brand equity, the higher the brand loyalty.

Creating Word-of-mouth Recommendation: Customer satisfaction is widely accepted as a critical leverage point for differentiating themselves from other organisations (Gillespie, et al., 2007). Satisfied customers are happy to purchase the product repeatedly and are willing to provide positive recommendations to others (Maung, 2021). Word-of-mouth is one of the

oldest ways of conveying information (Dellarocas, 2003) but is also a communication channel between consumers about a product, service, or brand (Litvin, et al., 2008). Word-of-mouth is more effective than the messages provided by the companies and involuntarily influences the individual's decision-making (Brown, et al., 2007). A positive recommendation is social interaction, which is also related to customer retention and reduces transaction costs while creating long-term profitability (Jamieson, 1994; Mackey , 2005). In that case, word-of-mouth recommendation becomes critical, especially in this digital era where customers are connected through digital social media platforms. While positive word-of-mouth can create customer recommendations and attract more prospects, negative word-of-mouth can damage a brand if the service provider fails to meet expectations and solve customer complaints. In that case, while creating a strong brand, being a service-oriented and brand-oriented organisation is critical for creating positive organisational performance (Maung, 2019).

2.5: What is brand equity?

Practitioners acknowledge that creating brand equity is one of the primary critical factors in having competitive advantages and long-term success in the organisation (Keller, 2003; Mohammad & Meysam, 2011; Trapp, et al., 2014). Creating successful brands in this volatile age provides many challenges for organisational leaders (Rimita, et al., 2020). Various scholars have significantly focused on brand equity in recent decades (Farquhar, 1989; Aaker , 1992; Walfried, et al., 1995; Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Brand equity is a set of activities and functions driving the organisation to achieve the desired results while creating competitive advantages (Maung, 2021). The parameter of brand equity depends on the customers' awareness how they associate with a brand, and how they receive the information about the brand. A strong brand is an identifier of a good quality product and the monetary value it can generate (Bhasin, 2017). It can be concluded that brand equity reflects the choice of strategy and activities to achieve the desired results by creating positive associations to meet the customer's functional and emotional needs.

In the 21st century, brand customers are shifting their focus to product quality and service quality (Maung, 2020). The brand's purpose is to fulfil the brand's functional quality for the emotional benefit of the customers. In that case, service quality is becoming very important in both the product and service sectors. Most of the service industry is less tangible than a physical product and more likely to vary in quality since it is based on personnel providing it (Keller, 2001). For service institutions, the nature of purchase is one-time to create customer satisfaction and loyalty by improving customers' needs, leading to business success. Thus, organisations need to focus on them to attain stronger customer loyalty and long-term goals (Khadka and Maharjan, 2017). Creating a strong brand can differentiate from competitors and build strong businesses in customer loyalty (Baalbaki, 2012).

Organisational leaders need to look from the customers' perspective when creating brands. The relations and interaction of the service quality of the staff and customers are becoming critical. Organisational leaders should focus on the service quality and the capabilities of the people providing the service to the customers. This thesis aims to explore different managerial practices to create strong brand equity for this century, and the role of service quality is critical to that understanding.

2.6: Different concepts of Brand Equity Conceptualizations

There are four main brand equity perspectives and they are (1) Financial Perspectives (Farquhar, 1989), (2) Customer Perspectives (Simon & Sullivan, 1993), (3) Employee-based Perspectives, and (4) Organisational Dynamic Capabilities Perspectives (Samih, 2012). The beginnings of the concept of brand equity are considered an investment from a financial perspective. After that, Aaker (1992) and Keller (2003) developed the idea of brand equity from customer perspectives.
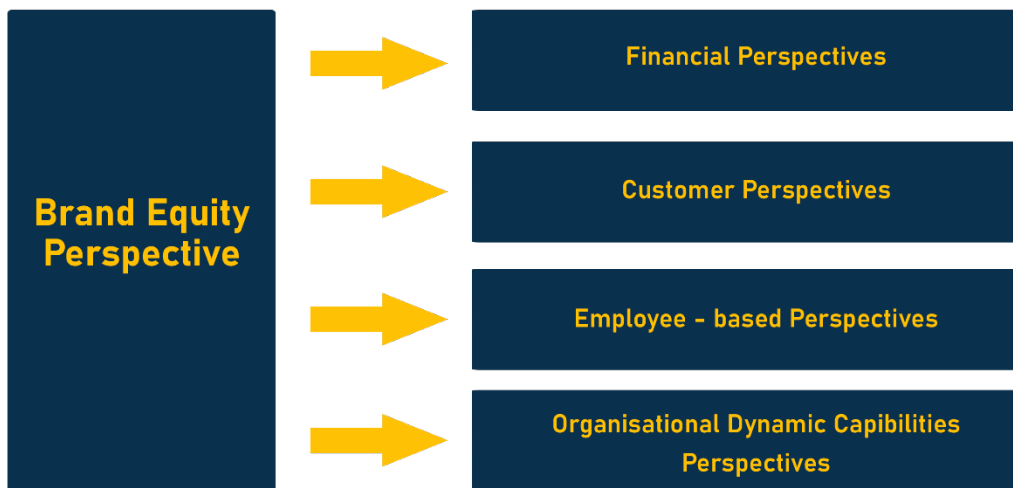
Figure 2. 1: Four different types of Brand Equity Perspectives

Financial-based Brand Equity Concept: The perspective proposed by Christodoulides and De Chernatony (2010), which is based on the financial perspective, considers the brand a financial asset and emphasises the value of a brand to a firm or the financial value of the brand equity generated from the firm. The authors consider brand equity as "the incremental cash flow which accrues to branded products over and above the cash flows which would result from the sale of unbranded products" (Simon & Sullivan, 1993, p. 29).

Customer-based Brand Equity Concept: In this concept based on Simon and Sullivan (1993), brand equity is seen from different perspectives and based on customer-oriented value-added perspectives by Aaker and Biel (1993). They proposed consumer-based brand equity as "a consumer perceives a brand's equity as the value-added to the financial product or service by associating with the brand name" (Aaker & Biel, 1993, p. 268). Creating strong brands through customers' perspectives has become the most popular topic among scholars and practitioners in a highly competitive environment in order to fulfil customer needs. In creating customer-based brand equity, organisational leaders need to understand that customers prefer brands that offer value-added goods or services. Branding plays a significant role in creating value for customers (Berry, 2000). Accordingly, internal brand management practices must be embedded in the organisation's overall brand management strategy in the consideration of the customer-based brand equity concept (Hasni, et al., 2018).

2.7 : Review of Customer-based Brand Equity Theories and Framework

A diverse range of models is explored and discussed with relevance to this study to understand the factors influencing brand equity.

2.7.1: Aaker Brand Equity Model (1991)

Aaker (1993) focused on the customers' side and proposed a customer-based brand equity model by providing four dimensions: (1) brand awareness, (2) perceived quality and leadership, (3) brand association, and (4) brand loyalty. Among them, perceived quality is the core dimension. Academic scholars and practitioners widely accept the concepts developed by Aaker (1993) and Keller (1993), which is the most dominant brand equity model and has been underpinned in much academic research (Lo, et al., 2002; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Mourad, et al., 2011; Pinar, et al., 2014; Vukasovic, 2015).
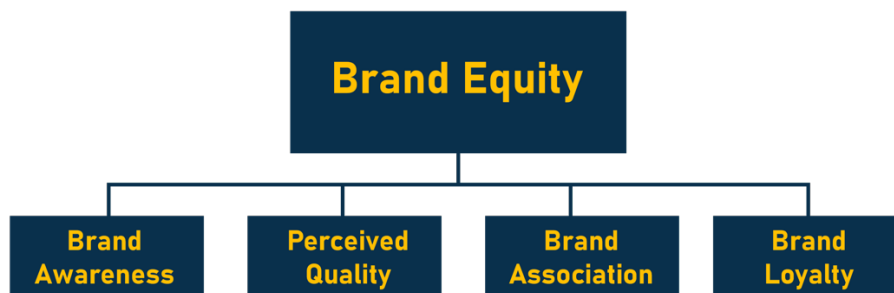
Figure 2. 2: Aaker Brand equity Dimensions (1996)

Perceived quality is one of the main drivers for creating strong brand equity. Perceived quality has been found to be an important determinant of a brand (Morton, 1994). The quality dimensions that customers value are the essence of creating perceived quality that affects financial performance (Aaker, 1996). Having a great perceived quality leads the brand to be differentiated from the competitors and attracts customers to choose the brand among its competitors. Aaker also discussed that perceived quality could be created and improved by creating a supportive culture and quality improvement process to support the delivery of quality products or services. Perceived quality is "the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority" (Zeithaml, 1988).

However, Aaker (1991) argued that (1) customers might be influenced overly by a previous image of poor quality, (2) the organizations are focusing on the quality dimensions that are not preferred by the customers, (3) customers did not or rarely have all the information necessary to make the right and rational judgment of quality are barriers to providing quality service. Therefore, the importance of knowing the customer's preference is placed on the perceived quality dimensions that match the customer's preference. To avoid this discussion of the organizations focusing on the wrong perceived quality value preferred by the customers, this study will fill the gap of the Aaker model by focusing on the perceived quality values preferred by the students in the Higher Education Sector.

The best way to improve perceived quality is to improve the objective of quality and to communicate the quality through quality signals in the brand's marketing activities. Only after that can consumers perceive brand quality through their direct experience and the information obtained from the environmental factors as well as the communication from the brand itself (Yoo , et al., 2000). The good quality perceived by the customers can provide value to the brand with a reason to buy. Having a good perceived quality of brands and benefits and a good reason for the consumers to buy the brand also allows the brand to differentiate itself from the competitors, to be able to charge a premium price and to have a strong basis for the brand extensions (Aaker, 1991).

Brand awareness is the ability of a brand to be recalled and recognized by a potential buyer of a certain product category (Aaker, 1991). Brand awareness is considered one of the significant factors in the product or service purchase consideration. Brand awareness is the strength of a brand's presence in the minds of the customers (Aaker, 2014). It can be developed through event promotions, sponsorships, publicity, samplings, and other attention-getting approaches. Keller also agreed with Aaker's statement that brand awareness is one of the most important determinants in the creation of brand knowledge in his brand knowledge model (Keller, 1993). Thus, it can be concluded that organizations which have a positive brand awareness level will have significant positive, strong brand equity. Brand Awareness has different levels; the recognition level of brand awareness provides the brand with a sense of familiarity as well as a signal of substance, commitment, and awareness. Brand awareness generates a high level of purchase as consumers tend to buy the brands

with which they are more familiar, and it can also enhance the profitability and sales of organizations.

Brand associations: The third dimension of brand equity determinant is Brand Association. Brand associations refer to "anything linked in memory to a brand" (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Brand association is how consumers link and associate the brand in their memory. The brand association is one of the significant parts to create strong brand equity (Aaker, 1996). Keller also supports the statement by saying that the more unique, strong, and favourable the associations are, the more positive equity will be developed (Keller, 2002). It is the association creation process with the customers. The association can be product attributes, a celebrity spokesperson, or a particular symbol. The brand associations are driven by the brand identity, which the organizations want the brand to stand for in the customers' minds. One of the best ways to create a strong brand association is to develop a strong brand identity.

Brand Loyalty: Another dimension of brand equity is Brand Loyalty. Brand loyalty is the value of the firm that creates customer loyalty towards the brand (Aaker, 2014). Consumer loyalty and satisfaction of a brand can create consistent buying. Loyal customers are more likely to stick with a particular brand and have the least chance of switching over to other brands due to price advantages. That is why Brand Loyalty is very much needed to be focused on by the organizations. Brand loyalty provides greater revenue and supports organizations in charging premium processes for their brands with high loyalty. High customer loyalty generates sales, profit stream, the barrier to entry, reduced marketing costs and time to respond to competitive threats. At the same time, one of the best marketing tools for brands is to have satisfied customers. Atilgan (2005) found out that brand loyalty is the main driver of brand equity as it is considered to be the main reason that provides marketing advantages such as reduction in marketing cost, price premiums and market share, creating strong brand loyalty that has significantly higher positive customer-based brand equity.

In the Aaker Model, Brand Loyalty is considered as the determinant and not the outcome, but some researchers also regard brand loyalty as an outcome rather than a dimension of brand equity (e.g. (Chaudhury & Holbrook, 2001). In order to be able to make recommendations on

how to create customer-based brand equity, we need to generate a better understanding of the composition of brand equity in disparate cultural contexts and distinct product categories.

Aaker's Model (1993) is widely used to research its relevance in a specific sector, and its approach is utilised as a foundational theory to develop a new integrated model in marketing and branding literature. In this model, brand loyalty is considered a determinant rather than the outcome. This is different from the concept of Nam *et al*., (2011), which considered brand loyalty as a result. Marketing and brand literature spotted and highlighted the role of brand loyalty and its consideration as an important antecedent. In the Aaker model (1993), the consumer's brand knowledge as a component of brand equity is considered to be the brand equity dimension. In Keller's 1993 model, they are considered as outcomes. In that case, the researcher needs to explore more brand theories which also consider brand loyalty as the outcome to balance the stance. Thus, in this study, the concept of Nam, *et al*., (2011) is added to develop a new relevant model of brand equity for Myanmar's private higher education sector, where brand loyalty is considered an important aspect and outcome.

Aaker's Ten Dimensions of Brand Equity Model: Aaker (1996) proposed ten measures for five dimensions of brand equity. All dimensions are categorised as eight measures from the customer perspective and two from the organisation's perspective. The following Figure 2.3 shows Aaker's ten dimensions of brand equity:

Loyalty Measures

1. Price Premium
2. Satisfaction Loyalty

Awareness Measures

3. Brand Awareness

Perceived Quality/ Leadership Measures

4. Perceived Quality
5. Leadership/ Popularity

Associations/ Differentiation Measures

6. Perceived Value
7. Brand Personality
8. Organizational Associations

Customer Perceptions

Market Behavior Measures

9. Market Share
10. Market Price and Distribution Coverage

Market Information

Figure 2. 3: Aaker's Ten Dimensions of Brand Equity Model (1996)

Ten measures were proposed to evaluate customer perception and market information (Aaker , 1991). Customer perceptions of the brand can be measured with brand awareness, brand association (perceived value, brand personality, organisational associations), perceived quality (leadership and popularity), and brand loyalty (price premium, satisfaction loyalty), while market information can be measured with market behaviour measures (market share, market price, and distribution coverage). Customers choose a particular brand over others when they observe favourable associations and perceived value from the brand (Beverland, et al., 2008). Strong brand awareness and desirable association directly contribute to reductions in the perceived performance risk of customers, social risk, and self-image risk (Laroche, *et al*., 2001; Rubio, *et al*., 2014). Therefore, in creating brand equity, it is essential to have a positive brand identity and create brand awareness by communicating the brand identity to the customers to develop a good brand image. Thus, brands need to associate with customers' perceptions and close the gap between brand identity and brand image (Roper, et al., 2012).

The Aaker model (1991) is used in this framework as it is considered a classic model relevant to services and product-based sectors. Previous research has been conducted on the relevance of using the Aaker model for the higher education sector. It was proven to be a very high-relevance model for higher education (Mourad, et al., 2011; Pinar, et al., 2014; Vukasovic, 2015).

This study believes that the main factors of brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, customer perception and perceived quality are essential determinants in the higher education sector. Keller's model (1993) has the limitation of focusing on customer preferences, but the Aaker Model has concentrated on the perceived quality dimension, which is considered very important in higher education. In Keller's model (1993), brand loyalty is considered an outcome which is very relevant to the higher education sector. Therefore, this study decided to use both. Another essential aspect of using both the Aaker model and Keller model (1993) is that there are limited studies based on higher education, e.g.: (Mourad, et al., 2011; Pinar, et al., 2014; Vukasovic, 2015; Leko-Šimić & Ostojić, 2021). Hence, this study intends to explore the customer perceptions of their preferred university brand.

2.7.2: Keller's Customer-based Brand Equity Model / Brand Knowledge Model

A strong brand is created through the creation of Great Brand Knowledge. In the Brand knowledge model, Keller (2013) proposed that the brand is the combination of (1) Brand Awareness and (2) Brand Image. The model is very useful to listen to the feedback of customers, team members and stakeholders in creating a brand image that is perceived by the customers. It is designed for an organization to deliver the promises that we have made to our customers day by day, also exploring ways to improve with the support of evidence & research.
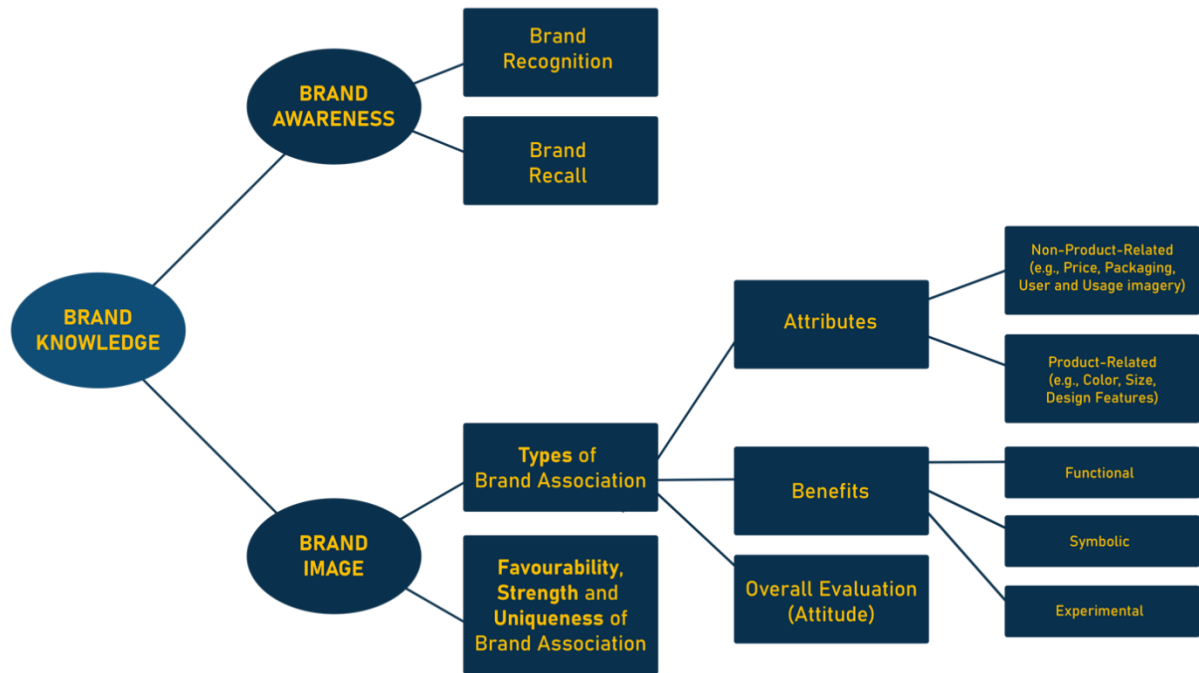
Figure 2. 4: Measurement of Brand Knowledge Model Adapted from Keller (2013)

Brand Awareness can be created with the careful linkage & combination of 1) Brand Name, 2) Logo and 3) Symbol, etc. In Keller's model, brand awareness is the main factor in creating strong brands, and professionals are required to make sure that the organization has the right brand awareness of its own brand identity. Brand Awareness creates the formation of a good brand association, which makes up the brand image and provides brand meaning. Brand awareness creates serious consideration from its customers to purchase decisions and the motivation to purchase. It also creates purchase ability by providing the right information to create the right judgments about a brand (Reason to buy).Brand awareness can stimulate consumer purchase motivation and purchase ability.

A brand can have a strong and positive customer-based brand equity when consumers react more favourably to an element of the marketing mix for the brand (Keller, 1993). This concept is a very important factor in Higher Education as it could take a number of years for a student to achieve these feelings (Vukasovic, 2015). Vukasovic (2015) discussed that prospective students may be aware of the University as a brand but may not be familiar with the product, having never used it. The focus of this statement of Keller should be on achieving a high level

of awareness as students' decisions on the study destinations are quite often made based on recommendations from family, friends, and current teachers (Maignan, et al., 2005).

Brand image is the consumer's perception of the brand reflected through the brand association held in the consumer's memory. Brand Image can be measured by the type of brand association, the favourite of brand association, the strength of brand association and the uniqueness of brand Association (Keller, 1993).

Measurements Brand Knowledge Model: Brand Awareness is the strength of the brand in a consumer's memory which can be measured with Breadth (i.e., the likeliness of recall and recognition of a brand) and Depth (i.e., mindfulness of brand under different purchases and consumption situations). Brand Image is the consumer perceptions and preferences for a brand.
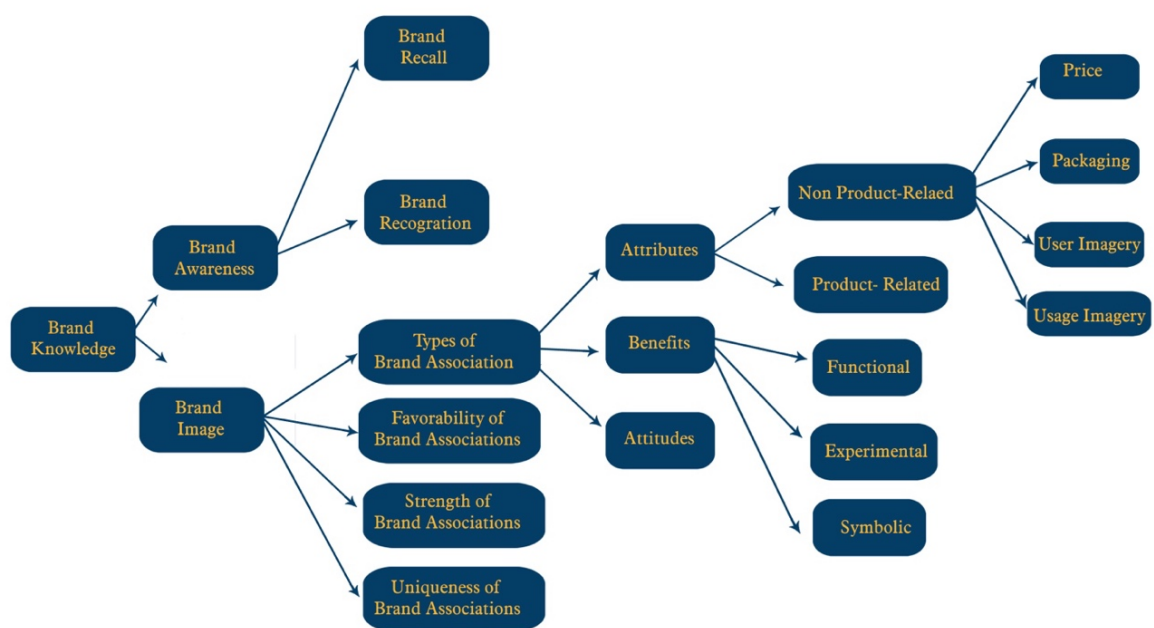
Figure 2. 5: Measurement of Brand Equity Dimensions Model Adapted from (Keller, 2013)

Keller has the same perspectives as Aaker, stating that brand equity occurs when the consumer has a favourable story and unique brand association (Keller, 2002; Keller, 1993). Keller's model did not include the exploration of each determinant of customer preference. The exploration of the customers' perception of each criterion is lacking in Keller's model.

Moreover, the financial indicator is also missing in the brand equity-creating model proposed by Keller. Keller discussed that the advantages of a strong brand could improve perceptions of performance, greater loyalty, less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions, less vulnerability to marketing crisis, larger margins, more inelastic consumer response to price increases, greater trade corporation and support, increase in marketing communication effectiveness and additional brand extension opportunities (Keller, 1993).

The success of a brand is also based on the differential effect of a brand on the customer response, and the differential effect only exists if the consumers perceive the brand differently from the others (Keller, 1993). This means that brands must have a competitive advantage through differentiation strategies. From that perspective, scholars view the impact of the differential effect of the brands in creating customer-based brand equity and that approach of considering customers' perception as the foundational approach (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003; De Chernatony, 2010; Mourad, et al., 2011; Buil, et al., 2013; Pinar, et al., 2014). This study also decided to examine the brand creation process from the customers' perspective.

The Aaker model is beneficial for listening to the feedback of customers, team members, and stakeholders in creating a brand image that the customers perceive. It is designed for organisations to deliver the promises they have made to their customers daily and to explore ways to improve with the support of evidence and research. Keller has the same perspectives as Aaker, stating that brand equity occurs when the consumer has a favourable story and unique brand association (Keller, 1993; Keller, 2002).

The Keller model did not include exploring each determinant of customer preference nor the exploration of the customers' perception of each criterion. Moreover, the financial indicator is also missing in the brand equity-creating model. Keller (1993) discussed that the advantages of a strong brand could improve perceptions of performance, greater loyalty, less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions, less vulnerability to marketing crises, larger margins, more inelastic consumer response to price increases, greater trade cooperation and support, increase in marketing communication effectiveness, and additional brand extension

opportunities. Several authors also used the Keller model as it was relevant in the higher educational context (Mourad, et al., 2011; Vukasovic, 2015).

The concepts of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) seem to reflect the emergence of customer-based brand equity as they are viewed from customers' perceptions. They are widely accepted as the customer-based brand equity creation process and philosophy. Therefore, this study decided to combine the two models as a foundational background in developing CBBE for Myanmar's private higher education.

Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) commonly demonstrated brand equity as an additional value generated by a brand to influence customers' perception of products and services, accepting that brand equity could be increased through marketing programs such as advertising, promotion, and celebrity endorsements (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). Based on the different research focus, these theories were widely utilised for the relevance of the various sectors, and other researchers updated the models based on their findings (Mourad, et al., 2011; Vukasovic, 2015; Berry, 2000; Pinar, et al., 2014).

Yoo and Donthu Customer-based Brand Equity (2001)

Another well-cited model is that of Yoo and Donthu (2001), which was developed based on the model of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993). Based on the weaknesses of the Aaker and Keller Model, the third approach was developed based on the substantial consideration of the relationship between brand knowledge and customer response. This integrated approach of Yoo and Donthu (2001) model was considered more accurate and relevant since they combined the antecedents and brand equity dimensions to measure the strength of the customer-based brand equity (Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Shan, 2017; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007).

Yoo and Donthu's (2001) customer-based Brand Equity model proposed three main brand equity determinants: perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand awareness/association. Among different dimensions, perceived quality has the highest impact on brand loyalty and brand equity. Yoo and Donthu (2001) suggested that brand association and brand awareness are in the same category. Yoo and Donthu's model is based on six corporate brands and has

two product categories: cars and TV sets. This is also strengthened by the support of other authors (Pappu, et al., 2005; De Chernatony, 2010), who proposed putting brand association and brand image in the same category. The researcher agreed with both authors and considered putting brand image and brand association under the same category. Under the same concept, Keller (2003) defined brand association as the brand's meaning from consumers' perspectives.

Creating a positive brand association is very important in creating brand equity. A positive brand association occurs when the consumer holds favourable, strong, and unique brand associations in their memory (Kamakura & Russell, 1991). Some studies conducted the creation of customer-based brand equity through customer responses and investigated the driving factors and antecedents of brand equity derived from the brand knowledge components (Brady, et al., 2008; Mourad, et al., 2011; Wang & Li, 2012; Tsai, et al., 2013).

Figure 2. 6 : Dimensions of customer-based brand equity proposed by Yoo and Donthu (2001)

The model of Yoo and Donthu (2001) highlighted the role of perceived quality from the customer perspective, which the models of Keller (1993), Mourad *et al*., (2011), and Nam *et al.*, (2011) did not highlight. The study's findings indicated that perceived quality has the highest impact on brand loyalty and brand equity. Thus, this model is studied with great

interest and used for this study. The concept of highlighting the role of perceived quality is in line with Aaker (1991), Yoo and Donthu (2001), and Mourad *et al.*, (2011). All these studies included perceived quality as one of the important determinants.

The model proposed by Yoo and Donthu (2001) showed limited exploration of the perceived values and expectations from the customer perspectives and financial perspectives, as it focused much more on customer perceptions of current brand performance. In this model, brand loyalty was considered the determinant and not the outcome. This model has been decidedly used in this study as one key challenge that faces the higher education sector is the lack of applied research on marketing and, more specifically, branding and brand equity. There has been an absence of education as a specific marketing area in the services research and Myanmar's private higher education sector is also considered the most intangible service sector, as the quality of education is just as important as the quality of service (Mazzarol & Soutar , 1999). Thus, this study uses the Yoo and Donthu Model (2001) to develop a CBBE model for Myanmar's private higher education sector.

2.7.3: Customer-based brand equity model for the services sector proposed by Berry (2000)

As the main purpose of this study is to explore different managerial practices to create customer-based brand equity, it is critical to review a diverse range of customer-based brand equity models for the services sector. One of the famous brand equity models for the service industry was developed by Berry (2000), and it was adopted and examined by several studies in the services sector, notably by Boo and Busser (2009); Han, *et al.* (2009) and Tsai, *et al.* (2013). Berry (2000) developed a service brand equity model based on the classical model of Keller (1993) and tested it on fourteen service companies who were performing very well in marketing.

Berry adopted the concept of Keller by including two main components of brand image and brand awareness as antecedents of the service brand. He proposed that brand image and brand awareness can be derived from three primary sources: (1) a company's presented brand (i.e., marketing and advertising of the brand), (2) external brand communication (i.e., word of mouth) and (3) customer experience with the brand. Berry's brand equity model

(2000) considers the extent of brand communication as a new concept, and it seems very relevant in this hyperconnected era. The Berry (2000) model includes thinking of internal sources and internal activities of the brand itself. Berry (2000) considered brand experience as the most significant contribution to creating brand equity. This concept is relevant to higher education as the learning experience of students is critical. Berry (2000) highlighted the role of customer experience as an internal information source that customers can provide as a verification of brand knowledge derived from external information sources through the marketing and advertising of the brand. An essential contribution of Berry's brand equity model highlighted the role of consumer experience in creating brand equity in the services sector. Nonetheless, it limits the consideration of the essential element known as brand loyalty. The model of Berry's limitation is the lack of consideration of service quality.

Thus, using the Keller (1993) and Berry (2000) models as foundational models is relevant for this study as higher education is considered to be one of the most intangible services sectors (Keller , 1993; Berry, 2000). The model highlighted that customer experience and external marketing are equally important in creating a strong brand in the services sector (Berry, 2000). It also highlighted the importance of external brand communication (i.e., word of mouth), which fills the limitation of the Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) Brand Equity Model. In the services sector, reputation plays an important role, and word-of-mouth recommendations are very critical; thus, this model is considered very relevant for this study.
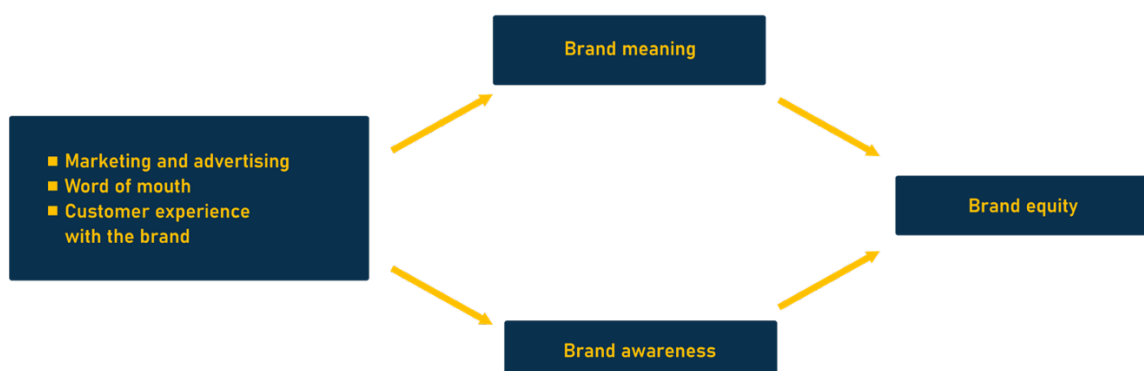
Figure 2. 7: Customer-based Brand Equity model for the services sector proposed by Berry (2000)

*Customer-based Brand equity model proposed by **Nam et al. (2011)***

The Nam Model focuses on the customer experience with the brand and considers brand loyalty as the behavioural outcome of the customers rather than one of the determinants of brand equity. According to Nam *et al.* (2011), customer satisfaction leads to brand equity and brand loyalty. Nam *et al.* (2011) also propose brand equity dimensions as (1) Physical Quality, (2) Staff Behaviour, (3) Ideal-Self Congruence, (4) Brand Identification and (5) Lifestyle Congruence. The study of Nam *et al.* (2011) explored the mediating role of customer satisfaction on the relationship between consumer-based brand equity and brand loyalty. The study of Nam, *et al.*, (2011) used the structural equations modelling approach and discovered that five dimensions of brand equity components positively impact customer satisfaction. In turn, this leads to strong brand equity and brand loyalty. Therefore, the study considered customer satisfaction as an important brand equity determinant and brand loyalty as the outcome. The model explores the perceived values and expectations from the customer's perspective and focuses more on the customer's perception of current brand performance. Nam *et al.*, (2011) also has several limitations. This model did not consider the need for the capabilities and competencies requirements from the internal need to create strong customer-based brand equity.
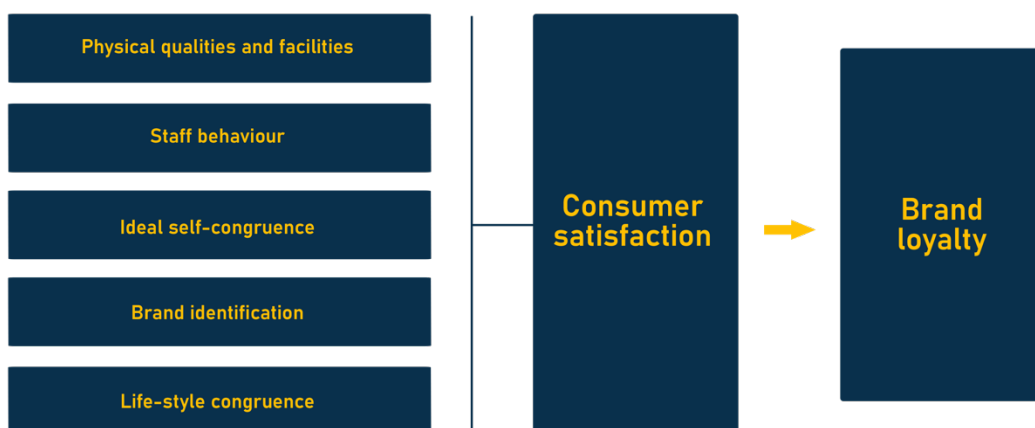
Figure 2. 8 : Consumer-based Brand equity Model by Nam et al. (2011)

Using all the concepts of Nam *et al.*, (2011), as the model for this study can be questionable because it was undertaken based on the services sector of the hotel and tourism services

sector. However, customer experiences seem to be very relevant to this study on the higher education sector, as higher education is more of a one-time decision-making process than a repeated purchase. As higher education is considered an intangible service sector, the model proposed by Nam, *et al.*, (2011) for hospitality and tourism was analysed due to its relevance to the study. In addition, Nam's (2011) model considered physical qualities and facilities as an important aspect is very relevant to higher education. Thus, this study uses the concept of Nam, *et al.*, (2011). Physical quality, staff behaviour, and ideal congruence are used as constructs in this study. The other brand equity determinants – brand identification and lifestyle congruence – are not considered for utilisation in this study as the research considers lifestyle congruence to have a minimum impact on brand loyalty. The researcher also thought those determinants were more related to the hospitality and tourism sectors. This is supported by the findings of Ali and Muqadas (2015).

2.8: Brand Equity in the Higher Education Sector

2.8.1: Brand Equity in the Higher Education Sector

The significance of brand equity has been addressed by various (Mourad, et al., 2011; Keller , 1993; Trapp, et al., 2014). Many scholars and practitioners acknowledge the creation of brand equity as one of the primary key factors in maintaining competitive advantages and the organisation's long-term success (Mourad, et al., 2011; Keller , 1993; Trapp, et al., 2014). The concept of brand is applied in the higher education sector akin to other commercial sectors (Vukasovic, 2015). There has been an absence of education as a specific marketing area in the services research (Mazzarol & Soutar , 1999). Some studies conducted research based on the creation of customer-based brand equity through customer responses and investigated the driving factors and antecedents of brand equity derived from the brand knowledge components, e.g.: (Tsai, et al., 2013; Wang & Li, 2012; Mourad, et al., 2011; Brady, et al., 2008). There has been great attention paid to marketing research for higher education in international universities in terms of brand equity attributes (Ivy, 2008). Scholars such as Mourad *et al.*, (2011) and Trapp and Boyt (2014) explored brand equity dimensions which have impacted the creation of brand equity and proved that perceived quality, brand image, and brand loyalty are the biggest influencers in creating brand equity in higher education.

2.8.2: Customer-based Brand Equity model proposed by Mourad Customer-based Brand Equity.

The study of Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) is based and adopted on the work of Aaker (1991) and Keller (2000) for use in the service sector in the context of the intangible service sector and the higher education sector. The constructs proposed in Figure (2.8) are carefully considered and researched by Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) for brand equity creation in higher education. This research pinpoints the role of service quality in creating a strong brand in the higher education sector. The model is constructed based on the two important determinants of brand image and brand awareness and concluded that the brand image determinants are significantly more important than brand awareness-related determinants. It leads the higher education providers to focus and give more effort to creating   brand image-related practices.
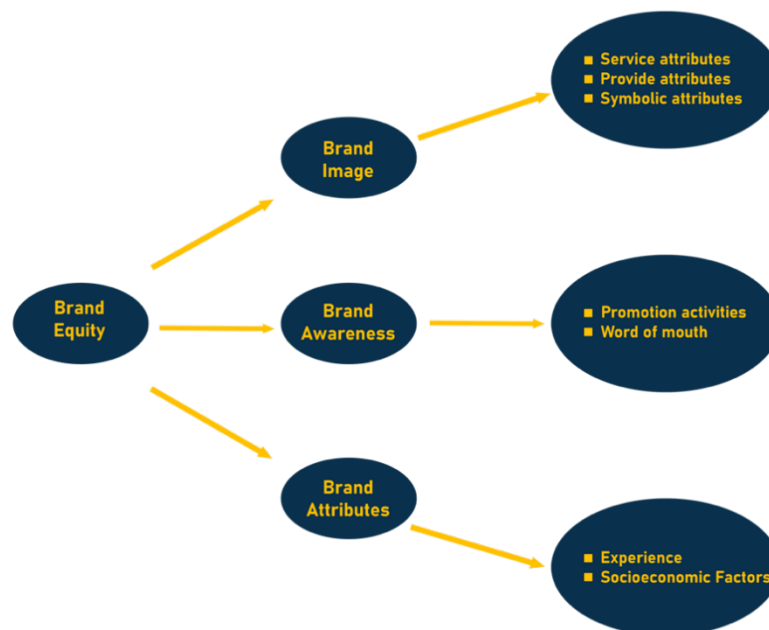
Figure 2. 9: Consumer-based Brand equity model proposed by Mourad, et al., (2011)

The model is tested in an emerging market using current and prospective higher education students. Thus, it is considered very relevant to this study. Mourad's (2011) study has been tested in the educational landscape of Egypt as an example of an emerging HE market. That perspective also adds a new relevance to this study, as Myanmar is also considered an emerging market. The model of Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) is based on three aspects: brand image, brand awareness, and consumer attributes.

The consumer attributes are measured with experience and socioeconomic factors. Brand awareness is primarily driven by marketing and promotion activities, e.g., advertising, and word of mouth (Mourad, *et al.*, 2011). Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) proposed brand awareness as one of the main essential dimensions in creating strong brands in higher education. Berry (2000) and Aaker (1999) also recognised brand awareness as an important brand equity dimension.

Brand image is measured using service attributes (price, perceived quality, and after-sales service), provider attributes (personality, social image, and positioning), and symbolic attributes (relationship, location, country of origin, and staff). This supplements the limitation of the Aaker Model (1991) for the role of service attributes and symbolic attributes, which are considered critical for the higher education sector.

Among core dimensions (perceived quality of the faculty, the university's reputation, emotional environment, brand loyalty and brand awareness) and supporting value creation dimensions (library services, student living, career development and physical facilities), perceived qualities of faculties have the highest impact towards brand equity (Pinar, *et al.,* 2014). The discussions highlighted that the service attributes of the faculty are an essential brand equity dimension in higher education.The role of service quality is also highlighted in this model, and it is revealed that among perceived quality dimensions, the perceived quality of the service attributes has the highest impact. Among service attributes of price, perceived quality, and aftersales services, the perceived quality of education services has the highest impact. The result is supported by other research stating that perceived quality strongly influences brand equity in higher education (Mourad, et al., 2011; Trapp, et al., 2014; Vukasovic, 2015).

The model of Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) highlighted the role of staff under provider attributes and symbolic attributes. Vukasovic (2015) provided three attributes: service attributes, symbolic attributes, and finance attributes, all considered significant drivers in creating brand equity. In this hyper-connected digital era, considering symbolic attributes is very relevant for higher education. So, higher education providers are needed to create a positive social image to have

competitive advantages (Daboul, 2019). Thus, the concept from Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) is highly relevant to this study which is the case of higher education.

2.9: Related Literature Review for Higher Education Sector

Regarding practices and factors contributing to brand equity creation in Myanmar private higher education, the literature was explored so that the theoretical understanding of the different brand equity determinants and their impacts could be understood. In this discussion, the role of brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, physical quality and facilities, student ideas, self-congruence, student satisfaction and brand loyalty in higher education were all explored to understand their impacts and relationships.

The role of Brand Image in HE: Brand Image is one of the most critical determinants in creating brand equity and is considered one of the popular areas in the marketing and brand literature (Daboul, 2019; Mourad, et al., 2011). The pressure to differentiate to create a competitive advantage becomes an important aspect, and in that case, it is highlighted that the role of articulated vision is an important aspect in managing a successful HE brand (Spry, et al., 2020). The study by (Spry, et al., 2020) proposed that core values are needed to be shared at the programme level by internal and external stakeholders and that the brand identity and image were convincing, supporting the notion of 'value complementarity' amongst stakeholders. It is also highlighted that in creating a brand image, it is important to be aware of the different layers of the university as a brand, the programme as a brand and the faculty as a brand. Those different layers are needed to be aligned with the vision and core value of the Brand. The role of focusing on the programme and focusing on faculty are highlighted in the study of Spry et al. (2020).

Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) also proposed brand image as one of the most critical dimensions in creating a strong brand. It was revealed that brand image-related determinants are far more vital than brand awareness in creating substantial brand equity in higher education (Pinar, *et al.,* 2014). This finding is also supported by Vukasovic (2015), who conducted exploratory research to understand brand equity by integrating brand image and brand awareness. His study revealed that brand image determinants have higher impacts on brand equity. The

finding aligns with the same philosophy as Aaker (1991), Keller (1993) and Mourad, *et al.*, (2011). Brand image determinants are more critical than brand awareness, but brand awareness is needed for creating customer-based brand equity. Based on this understanding, the construct of brand image is assumed as one of the main essential aspects of creating customer-based brand equity in higher education. Thus, universities must pay attention to brand image in creating brand equity.

The role of Brand Awareness in HE: Keller (2013) and Aaker (1996) proposed that part of brand awareness is the bridge between customers and organisations in providing the correct information. In creating brand equity in the higher education sector, image-related factors such as symbols, services and financial attributes mainly drive brand equity (Vukasovic, 2015). At the same time, perceived quality is also the most critical dimension. In contrast, other dimensions, such as university reputation and emotional environment, brand loyalty, and brand awareness, impact brand equity in higher education (Pinar, *et al.*, 2014). Infrastructure, curriculum, practical website usage, and social media are the dominant determinants of higher education (Bangari & Chaubey, 2017).

In contrast, Khattak, *et al.*, (2015) found that the students' perception of the quality, image, and awareness level of a university has an impact on creating strong brand equity in the private higher education sector. It is also supported by Keller's (2001) statement that a powerful brand succeeds in a high level of consumer awareness and loyalty, and it forms the basis for building strong and profitable customer relationships (Keller, 2013). Several studies also support the finding that brand image has the strongest influence on brand equity in the higher education sector (Mourad, *et al.*, 2011; Trapp and Boyt , 2014; Vukasovic, 2015). The above discussions have highlighted the role of brand image and brand awareness in creating strong brands in higher education.

Brand leaders and decision-makers increasingly accept corporate Social Responsibility as it is beneficial to an organization's profit and influence as well as the perceptions and commitment of its stakeholders, and doing CSR is very much related to creating good brand reputation (Li, et al., 2019). As brand reputation is very important in creating a strong brand, Higher Education providers need to focus on Corporate Social Responsibility and use CSR as a

Strategy for creating a strong brand. The role of operational managers' attitudes and mindsets is important in implementing the strategy into real practices. Thus, higher education providers should not ignore developing and educating the mindset of CSR to create a strong brand for operational leaders (Martinez , et al., 2015).

The role of Perceived Quality in HE: Several studies have proved that, among different dimensions of brand equity, perceived quality and brand image seem to be the most influencing factors in higher education (Mourad, *et al*., 2011; Trapp and Boyt , 2014). Mourad *et al*., (2011) researched and pinpointed the role of perceived quality and proposed that the perceived quality of the education service has the highest impact. The result is supported by other research stating that perceived quality has the strongest influence on brand equity in the higher education sector (Mourad, *et al*., 2011; Trapp and Boyt , 2014; Vukasovic, 2015).

In higher education, the faculty and administrative team members' attitudes impact students' perceived quality (AACSB, 2013). The study by Allui and Sahni (2016) also highlights those human resources management policies such as recruitment, selection, and training play important roles in creating perceived quality in higher education (Allui and Sahni, 2016). Pinar *et al*., (2014) have conducted exploratory research with survey methods based on the core value creation dimensions (perceived quality of the faculty, university reputation and emotional environment, brand loyalty and brand awareness) and support value creation brand equity dimensions (library services, student living, career development, and physical facilities). Pinar, *et al*., (2014) found that among core dimensions and the supporting value creation dimensions, the perceived qualities of the faculty have the highest impact towards brand equity (Pinar, *et al*., 2014). The research highlighted that the perceived quality of the faculty seems to be the most important brand equity dimension in higher education.

In creating perceived quality, the faculty's knowledge, willingness to support students, accessibility to students' questions and concerns, concern for students' needs, responsiveness to the needs of the students, and politeness in responding to students are considered the main dimensions in measuring perceived quality in higher education (Pinar, *et al*., 2014). In the creation of perceived quality, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy can be used as the main dimensions. It is revealed that tangibility

and empathy are the most important determinants in creating perceived quality in higher education (Calbo-Porral, et al., 2013). Abdullahi, *et al.*, (2015) stated that physical evidence is the most influential factor in determining performance. Thus, it was decided to concentrate on tangibility and empathy. The tangibility dimension is related to physical quality and facilities such as facilities, equipment, layout, et cetera. Empathy in higher education is related to the employee variables and attitudes, both teachers and personnel.

In the higher education industry, the perceived quality that has a very high impact on brand equity includes the solid foundation of the academic board and member and their knowledge and eagerness to support students and their responsiveness and concerns for students address the factors in evaluating the perceived quality of higher education (Pinar, *et al.*, 2014). Based on the previous literature findings, it was decided to focus on perceived quality in creating a strong brand in the higher education sector.

The role of Physical Facilities in HE: This section examines the importance of the quality of physical facilities. Physical quality positively impacts customer satisfaction in the brand experience (Shahroodi, et al., 2015). Several studies considered physical quality to positively impact customer-based brand equity (Oliver, 1993; Ekinci, et al., 2008; Nam, et al., 2011). Chang (2000) has conducted a service sector study, proving that customer satisfaction is affected by the physical environment. Physical facilities can improve student satisfaction and support top-tier learning and teaching (Earthman, 2004) . Physical facilities are a medium of interaction with university students; they should be carefully maintained, adapted, and changed under the dynamic nature of today's higher education. A school that invests in its physical facilities knows that one of the best ways to help students succeed is to invest in resources that benefit them (International Education in Beijing , 2021). For a university, the facilitating goods are lectures, tutorials, presentation slides, supplementary materials, and the recommended module textbooks. It also includes the physical facilities such as the lecture theatres, tutorial rooms, furnishings, decorations, lighting, layout, and supporting services such as catering and recreational amenities (Douglas, *et al.*, 2006). In the educational landscape, physical assets include land, building, furniture, facilities for teaching spaces, and ancillary rooms (Musa and Ahmad, 2012).

Environmental beautification and sanitation provide the aesthetic impression that guarantees a serene and conducive climate for teaching, proper learning and research activities, and healthy and secure lives of the school's communities. Leaders of higher education ensure that the physical qualities and facilities are up to the standard by being aware of their role and developing a quality assurance process. Ivy (2008) and Price, *et al.*, (2003) determined that major core value-creation activities involved creating a positive university reputation, warm and friendly interactions among faculty, students, and staff, and finally, excellent physical facilities. Gibbs and Knapp (2002) state that physical facilities make a service more tangible primarily because, in an institution like a university, there is not usually much to be seen or touched in terms of the quality of education before purchasing (Gibbs, 2001). In online learning, the quality of digital learning is significant, followed by the quality of the course material, the lecturers, the service support, and the online learning administration (Kim, et al., 2019).

Customers have high regard for a pleasant physical environment and easily express satisfaction. Customers readily recommend a physically pleasing environment to friends (Hutton and Richardson, 1995). Price *et al.* (2003) found that excellent physical facilities influence students' selection of universities. Shahroodi, *et al.*, (2015) proposed that physical quality affects satisfaction and loyalty in the service industries. Thus, these discussions lead attention to be paid to physical quality and facilities in creating strong brand equity.

The role of students' ideal self-congruence in HE: Ideal Self-Congruence is considered as the personal thoughts, feelings, and opinions of an individual toward the image of a brand (Rosenberg, 1979). The self-congruence theory of customer behaviour has partly been influenced by the congruence resulting from the psychological comparison of product and user image with the customer self-concept (Graeff, 1996). In other words, ideal self-congruence depends on the level of meeting the expectation of the brand in the actual situation, which can be described with customer perception. Exploring the ideal self-congruence is exploring customer expectations from their psychological perspectives. Thus, this study will explore their expectations by asking customers about their preferred values and expectations.

In literature, Levy (1959) was among the first to mention the relationship between self-image and product image. He focused his research on what different image products had. He found that we buy not only for the product's utility but also for what it means and what it symbolises. He presumed that consumers preferred goods with a perceived image that matched theirs. The study highlighted a positive relationship between self-image and product image. This study will use this stance by asking about the self-image of the students and their perception of the   brand image. Carol Dweck (2017) discussed the role of a growth mindset in students' academic performance and success. Dweck (2017) also conducted and measured students' mindsets for college students through the course while watching their grades and asking about their strategies and proved that the students with growth mindsets have better grades and better performance in their life as they tend to have better positive attitudes.

The role of student satisfaction in HE: "Satisfaction" is a popular area in academic and non-academic workplaces. It is also considered a key performance indicator in measuring the success of the education industry. Many universities have been trying their best to achieve the highest satisfaction rate in their institutions' services to have competitive advantages. According to the complete university guide, the higher the student's satisfaction with a college, the higher rank they can achieve (Times Higher Education, 2015). Since students are the key stakeholders, student satisfaction is essential to generate revenue for institutions as they can also create customer loyalty (Sigala, *et al*., 2006).

Various research studies have proved that the higher the satisfaction level, the more successful the business becomes, and Customer satisfaction is the key to long-term business success and is one of the popular chosen research topic areas in marketing and brand literature and industry (Aaker, 1996; Jones and Suh, 2000; Pappu, *et al*., 2005). Customer satisfaction is also an indicator and fundamental determinant of the brand's success.

Satisfied customers are less price-sensitive, less influenced by the other competitors, and are loyal to the firm longer than dissatisfied customers (Dimitriades, 2006). Thus, the more satisfied customers the brand has, the higher the brand equity will be and the more valuable the assets. Creating happy customers is one of the tremendous competitive strategies for building strong brands. In that case, organisations must understand whether the brands have

met the customers' functional and emotional benefits. To understand that the brands must focus, research, and ask many questions to ensure that the customers' perceived quality meets their expectations. Accordingly, understanding the customers' expectations is mandatory in creating great brands too. Overall satisfaction indicates further loyalty and business performance (Fornell, *et al.,* 1996; Johnson, *et al.*, 2001).

After reviewing different literature and various customer-based brand equity models, this study used the approach of looking at the lens through the customers' eyes to create a strong brand. Thus, it is critical to highlight the role of customer satisfaction in this paper as it is considered the main performance indicator in higher education . Furthermore, Sigala et al. (2006) suggest that students are the main stakeholders of higher education. Hence, this study considers consumer satisfaction as a common emotional response to the entire brand experience.

Brand loyalty also includes overall student satisfaction, which provides for students' decisions on next level enrolment and recommends the brand to other students. Students sharing good things about the university are part of the brand loyalty measurements (Aaker, 1996). As discussed, the nature of purchases in the higher education sector can be both one-time purchases and repeated purchases; it is very important to focus on customer satisfaction and creating brand equity.

In a study on the relationship between service quality and satisfaction in private higher education, Abu Hasan, *et al.*, (2008) found a positive relationship between education service quality, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. The study is also the same as the findings of Mattah, *et al*., (2018), stating that there is a positive relationship between education service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty. Hence, this study considers consumer satisfaction an overall emotional response to the entire brand experience following the last purchase.

Student satisfaction in higher education is vital as it can also impact brand equity and student retention. Seven different determinants create student satisfaction: academic advising, social connectedness, involvement and engagement, faculty and staff approachability, business procedures, learning experiences and student support services; among them, academic

advising is a critical aspect of student satisfaction (Roberts & Styron, 2015). The most crucial part of a student's interaction and engagement with higher education is the relationship with their advisor. It is found that poor academic advising experiences can lead students to depart prematurely from the university, and one of any retention programme's secrets is an excellent advising programme (Tuttle, 2000).

The only organised and structured attempts in which university faculty or staff have sustained interaction with students (Hunter & White, 2004). Focusing on faculty and staff approachability is considered an important aspect. Many scholars and researchers stated that the relationship between students and faculty is vital to student success in college (Kuh, et al., 2005). It is noted that the relationship between students and faculty is essential to student success in college (Kuh, et al., 2005). Thus, universities must ensure that the approachability of the university faculty members and the support team is there to fulfil the students' satisfaction.

The institution's mission is to provide a meaningful learning experience for the students to transform their lives and support their dreams. Students learning experience is the integrating concept of the quality of education and student satisfaction with the service they receive overall. This learning experience is determined by the collective effort of faculty, staff, and students. Meaningful learning experiences are an essential key to the retention of students (Roberts & Styron, 2015). When the educational programme misses meaningful learning experiences in the curriculum, students become disengaged and dissatisfied as they see no relevance in the learning (Roberts & Styron, 2015). Thus, higher education providers must prioritise creating valuable and enriching learning experiences within their academic programmes.

Student support services are also considered one aspect of creating student satisfaction. The most popular academic support services are tutoring centres offering academic assistance in various areas, such as writing, speaking, and mathematics (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Thus, this indicated that the student support centre and tutoring centre focus on academic writing, speaking writing, and support sessions for the main lecturers are required. Students can expect a satisfying service experience in classrooms, meaning good quality teaching and

valuable learning experiences (Gruber, et al., 2012). Thus, the lecturers' role and the professors are very critical in shaping student satisfaction. The quality of the lecturers is among the most important factors in the provision of higher education (Gruber, et al., 2012).

A study has been conducted by Gruber, *et al.*, (2012) on the influence of lecturers' characteristics in relation to student satisfaction. They found that the five preferred personalities of professors are: 1) communication skills, 2) enthusiasm, 3) empathy, 4) rapport, and 5) use of real-life examples in class. Swanson, *et al.*, (2005) also propose that being knowledgeable, empathetic, friendly, helpful, reliable, responsive, and expressive are the students' preferred characteristics of their professors. Students expect their professors to be reliable, which means they want their professors to turn up to classes on time and keep records of the students' performance (McElwee & Redman, 1993). So, professors must understand and satisfy the students' expectations, and they need to understand the expectations of the students to behave in such encounters (Swanson & Davis, 2000).

Among teaching and learning associated aspects and physical aspects, the aspects associated with teaching and learning were revealed to have more impact on student satisfaction in a UK university (Crawford, 1991). Souri (2017) investigated the relationship between brand equality, brand loyalty and customer satisfaction in the higher education sector and found a strong relationship. Student satisfaction, retention and recruitment are linked very closely. Student satisfaction is highlighted by Sigala, *et al.*, (2006), who say that students are the key stakeholders and are very important in generating the revenue of institutions, and that customer satisfaction positively impacts brand equity. Similarly, Li (2013) suggested that loyalty is created by student satisfaction and generates word-of-mouth recommendations.

The role of Brand Loyalty in HE: Satisfied and loyal customers purchase from the same brand, and they are less affected by the incentives and price promotions offered by other competitors' brands' (Dimitriades, 2006). Creating customer satisfaction can be used as an organisational strategy to compete with competitors and to improve brand loyalty. By fulfilling the customers' needs, organisations and brands can attempt to build brand loyalty and create long-term relationships with them (Gremler, *et al.*, 2001). Once customer satisfaction was created, brand loyalty emerged as a result. Two types of brand loyalty are

behavioural loyalty and attitudinal loyalty. As the study will focus on consumer loyalty in the private higher education sector, both loyalties are appropriate and suitable for measuring and using in this context.

Loyal customers are likelier to stick with a particular brand and have the lowest chances of switching to other brands due to price advantages. At the same time, one of the best marketing tools for brands is to have satisfied customers. High customer loyalty generates sales, profit stream, the barrier to entry, reduced marketing costs and time to respond to competitive threats. Organisations can also promote brand loyalty through buyer programmes, customer clubs, and database marketing. Atilgan, *et al.*, (2005) have found that brand loyalty is the primary driver of brand equity as it is the main reason for marketing advantages such as reduction in marketing cost, price premiums and market share. Positive customer-based brand equity creates significantly stronger brand loyalty (Atilgan, *et al.*, 2005).
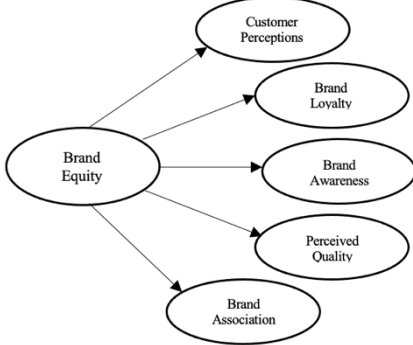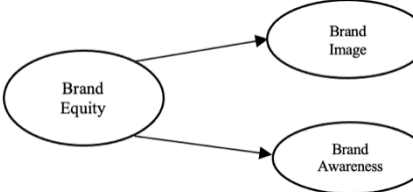
Brand loyalty is composed of the intention to pay premium fees, the intention to study for further steps, the intention to recommend to others, and the Intention to share positive things with others (Parasuraman, et al., 1988; Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Moiseecu & Ovidiu, 2005; Chieng & Lee , 2011; Lukasik & Schivinski , 2015). As this research chooses the case study of Myanmar Imperial University, which operates in the higher education sector, Keller's concept of brand loyalty is more appropriate. In the higher education sector, brand loyalty is considered the outcome rather than the determinant.
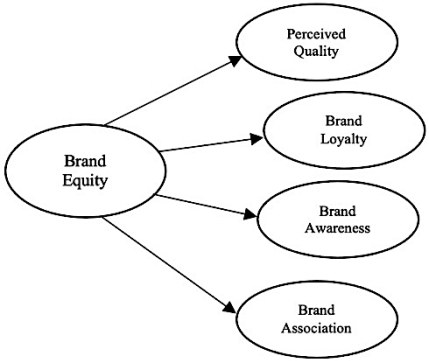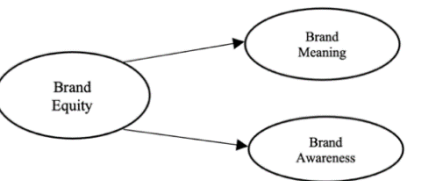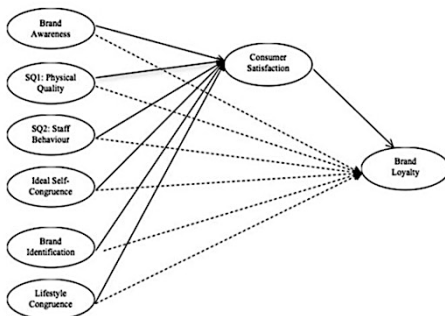
2.10: Proposed theories with their relevance to use in this study
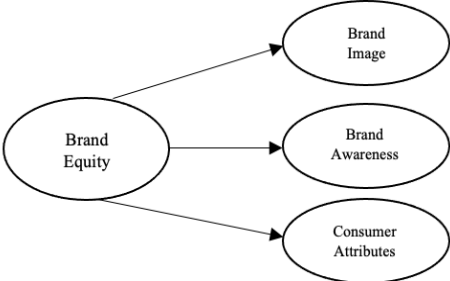
After reviewing all the literature and theories, the following theories are proposed to be utilised in this study.

2.10.1: The underpinning of the use of the different Brand Equity models

Table 2. 1 Summary of Developing Customer-Based Brand Equity

Authors / Year	Research Context	Model	Theoretical Basis	Key Findings
Aaker (1991)	Consumer product or individual brand context (also applicable for B2B and service market contexts)	Brand Equity Model	Original Model	 Customer Perception Brand Loyalty Brand Awareness Perceived Quality Brand Association
Keller (2013)	Product and Business-to-business (B2B) context	Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model	Original Model	 Brand Awareness Brand Image

Yoo and Donthu (2001)	Six corporate brands with two categories of cars and TV sets	Customer-Based Brand Equity focusing on Perceived Quality	Keller and Aaker	Perceived Quality Brand Loyalty Brand Awareness Brand Association
Berry (2000)	Services sector with case studies on 14 service companies with excellent marketing	Service Branding Model for Services Sector	Keller	Brand Image Brand Awareness
Nam et al., (2011)	The services sector of Hospitality and Tourism Sector	Customer-Based Brand Equity Model for Services sector of Hospitality and Tourism Sector	Keller and Aaker	Physical Quality Staff Behaviour Ideal Self Congruence Brand Identification Life-Style Congruence

Mourad *et al*. (2011)	Higher Education	Brand Equity Model for Higher Education Sector	Keller and Aaker	
				Brand Image Brand Awareness Consumer Attributes

Underpinning of the Theoretical Framework: This section discusses the reasons for choosing the proposed models with their relevance. With the increasing role of the brand equity concept, several types of research have focused on brand equity creation. However, there are very limited studies based on the context of the higher education Sector. Furthermore, an instrument to measure brand equity from the customer perspective has been lacking (Charles & Gherman, 2015). Keller (1993) claimed that the source of brand equity is customer perception. There are also very limited studies exploring customer perceptions in choosing a university brand with significant consideration of service quality, physical evidence quality, staff quality, and symbolic attributes. Thus, this study decided to use the holistic approach of integrating several brand equity models to strengthen and cover the limitations of each other.

The Aaker Model (1991) has been used in this framework as it is considered a classic model relevant for both the services and product-based sectors. Furthermore, several researchers considered the relevance of using the Aaker Model for the higher education sector, for which it was proven to be a very highly relevant model (Vukasovic, 2015; Pinar, et al., 2014; Mourad, et al., 2011). Aaker (1991) states that it is critical to focus on customer perception in creating a good brand, and it is strengthened by the authors Mourad *et al.*, (2011), saying that the role of customer experience is one of the most important factors to explore in creating good brands. Thus, this study believes that brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, customer perception and perceived quality are considered determinants in higher education. Several authors also use the Keller Model for the relevance of its model to the higher

educational context (Mourad, *et al.*, 2011; Vukasovic, 2015), for which it was proven relevant on a contextual basis. Thus, this study also decided to use the Keller Model as one of the influencing models in developing CBBE for Myanmar private higher education.

The model of Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) is highly applied in this study. It is based on the work of Aaker (1991) and Keller (2000) and has been opted for use in the service sector, and specifically, the intangible context of higher education. Mourad's (2011) study was tested in the educational landscape of Egypt as an example of an emerging HE market. That perspective also added a new relevance to this study, as Myanmar is also considered to be an emerging market. The model of Mourad *et al.*, (2011) covered the limitation of the Aaker model for the role of service attributes and symbolic attributes, which are considered critical for the higher education sector. In this hyper-connected digital era, considering symbolic attributes is very relevant for higher education, the providers of which are very much needed to create a positive social image to maintain competitive advantages (Daboul, 2019).

The model decided upon for this study was developed by Nam, *et al.*, (2011) for the services sector, and the higher education sector is considered to be one of the most intangible services sectors. The model of Nam *et al.*, (2011) focuses on customer experience with the brand and considers brand loyalty as the behavioural outcome of the customers rather than one of the determinants of brand equity. According to Nam, *et al.*, (2011), customer satisfaction leads to brand equity and brand loyalty. The study considers that five brand equity determinants have an impact on student satisfaction and brand loyalty as the outcome. After the adaptation of Nam *et al.*, (2011), the researcher considered ensuring that the conceptual framework was relevant to higher education. The concepts of Mourad, *et al.*, (2011), Pinar, *et al.*, (2014) and Vukasovic (2015), which were developed and tested in higher education, were utilised in this study to balance the stance of the relevance of higher education.

The model of Yoo and Donthu (2001) is used in this study as it highlights the role of perceived quality from the customer perspective. The concept of highlighting the role of perceived quality is in line with the concept of Aaker (1991), Yoo and Donthu (2001), Mourad, *et al.*, (2011), and Pinar, *et al.*, (2014). They all included perceived quality as one of the important

determinants. Thus, this study decided to use the Yoo and Donthu Model to develop the CBBE model for Myanmar's private higher education.

2.11 : A proposed Model and Conceptual Framework

After reviewing different models and literature, the newly developed customer-based brand equity model for Myanmar's private higher education sector is proposed with a careful stance with the six brand equity models together with the researcher's insider stance and careful consideration. After that, this model will be tested to understand its relevance to Myanmar private higher education with quantitative data and qualitative data. The following figure shows the proposed research framework to investigate each dimension of brand equity as customer-based brand equity for Myanmar private higher education sector.
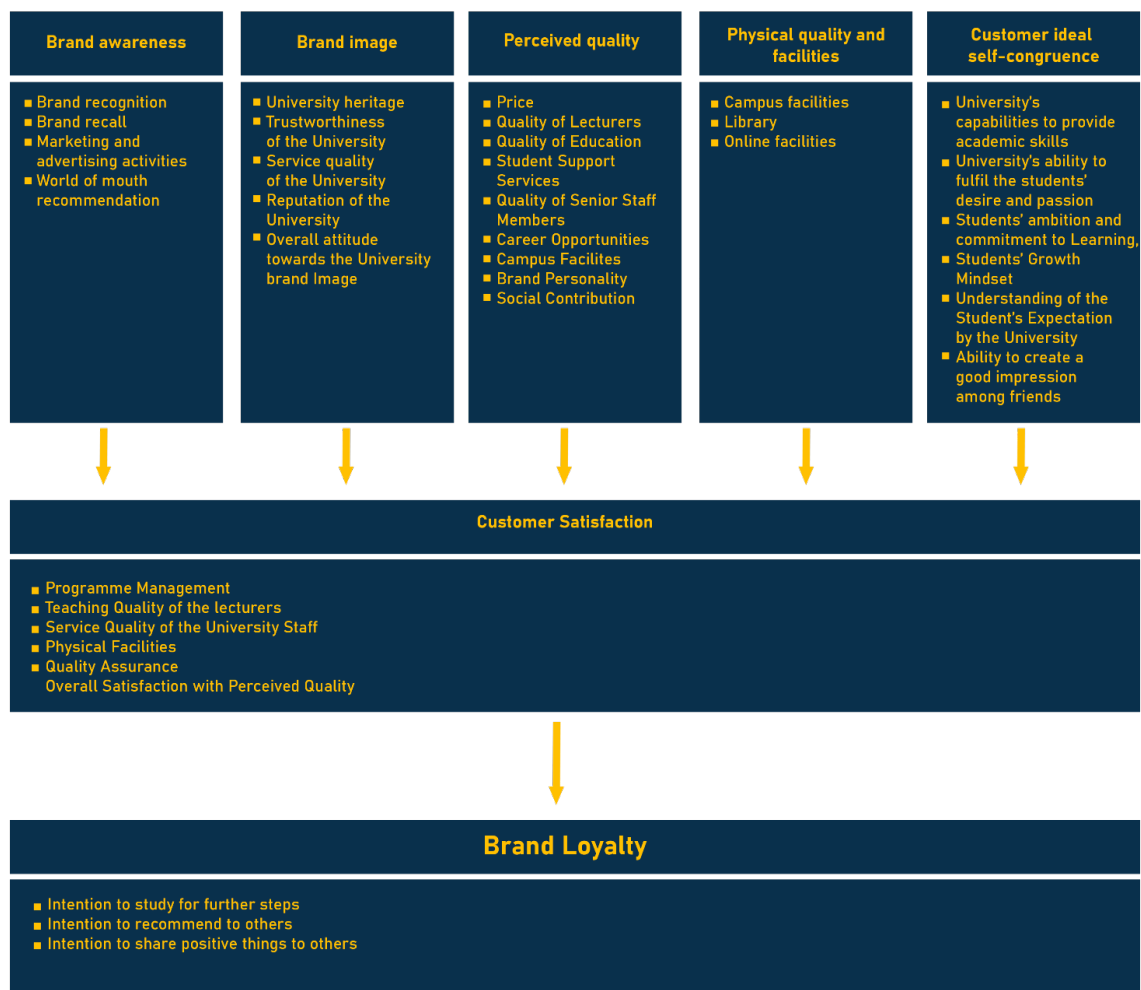
Figure 2. 10 : A proposed conceptual framework for Customer-Based Brand Equity in Higher Education

In this Conceptual Framework, five brand equity dimensions are considered independent variables; they are (1) brand awareness, (2) perceived quality, (3) physical quality and facilities, (4) student ideal self-congruence, and (5) brand image. Those five brand equity determinants have an impact on student satisfaction, and brand loyalty is considered to be the outcome.

2.12 Hypothesis Statement

This study proposed the conceptual framework based on six brand equity models and a careful literature review. This study needs to test whether this conceptual framework applies to Myanmar Private higher education sector and MIU or not. With this purpose, the hypothesises are developed based on the conceptual framework to be tested in this thesis.

H1: Brand awareness has a positive influence on customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H2: Brand image has a positive influence on customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H3: Perceived quality has a positive influence on customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H4: Physical Qualities and Facilities have a positive influence on customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H5: Students' ideal self-congruence has a positive influence on customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H6: Brand loyalty is impacted by customer satisfaction, and the higher the customer satisfaction, the more loyal students the university has.

H7: Brand loyalty can be considered the outcome of the brand equity determinants in the customer-based brand equity creation process in the Myanmar higher education sector.

There has been significant attention to dealing with branding research for higher education in international universities in brand equity attributes (Ivy, 2008). Recent scholars such as Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) and Trapp and Boyt (2014) explore the brand equity dimensions and prove that perceived quality, brand image, and brand loyalty are the most influencing factors in creating brand equity. The concept of Keller (2001) also takes into consideration that student attitudes are sensitive toward the brand image, and brand awareness leads to achieving long-term sustainability with high satisfaction.

Exploratory research based on the work of Aaker and Keller stating brand equity as the integration of brand image and brand awareness revealed that brand image-related determinants have higher impacts on brand equity (Vukasovic, 2015). The infrastructure, curriculum, effective website usage and social media are the most dominant determinants in higher education (Bangari & Chaubey, 2017). Mourad, *et al.*, (2011) proposed determinants of brand image as service attributes (price, perceived quality, after-sales service), symbolic Attributes (personality, social image, positioning) and provider attributes (relationships, location, country of origin, staff) and determinants of brand awareness as promotional activities and via word-of-mouth. The study revealed that service attributes have the highest impact on brand equity. Among service attributes, the perceived quality of the education service has the highest impact (Mourad, et al., 2011; Vukasovic, 2015). The result is supported by other research stating that perceived quality has the strongest influence on brand equity in the higher education sector (Mourad, et al., 2011; Vukasovic, 2015). Among core dimensions (perceived quality of the faculty, university reputation and emotional environment, brand loyalty and brand awareness) and supporting value creation dimensions (library services, student living, career development and physical facilities), perceived qualities of faculty have the highest impact towards the Brand equity (Pinar, et al., 2014).

The discussions highlighted that the perceived quality of the faculty is the most important brand equity dimension in higher education. Among them, service attributes seem to have the highest impact in creating customer-based brand equity. The past studies also indicated that, in service quality, the quality of the faculty members and the delivery of quality education have the highest impact on brand equity.

Regarding provider attributes, the university's campus facilities have a great impact on creating a great university brand. In creating customer-based brand equity, perceived quality seems to be the most dominant and important aspect in creating customer-based brand equity. The study of Nam *et al.*, (2011) also highlights physical quality, staff behaviour, ideal self-congruence, brand identification and lifestyle congruence as the factors influencing consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty. After that, the study concludes by considering the seven brand equity determinants of brand image, brand awareness, customer satisfaction, perceived quality, physical qualities and facilities, customer ideal self-congruence and brand loyalty.

Chapter (3) Research Methodology

Chapter (3) Research Methodology

3.1: Introduction

This chapter includes a review of the research methodology to explore valid and reliable findings. This thesis investigated the factors impacting brand equity creation and impact of its determinants to create stronger brand equity through student satisfaction in the Myanmar private higher education sector. It also explored how these determinants affected student satisfaction and brand loyalty in the Myanmar higher education sector. This chapter is composed of the philosophical research position, research approach, research strategy, research methods choices, research context, sampling method, determining sample size, designing the questionnaire, Data Collection and Analysis tools and Ethical considerations which fit the research questions and research framework.

3.2: Research Assumptions: Epistemology, Ontology, Axiology and Typical Methods

Epistemology: Epistemology is related to examining the knowledge, what is and what can be considered acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman, 2012). The stance of epistemology supports the reflection of methods and strategies by identifying which knowledge is to be achieved (Grummel, 2006). Different philosophies lead to different research epistemologies, and it is essential to understand the use of a fitted approach based on research philosophy in achieving the research objectives, strengths, and limitations of subsequent research findings. Saunders, *et al.*, (2016) highlighted the importance of understanding the limitations of different epistemological assumptions related to the choice of research methods and the findings. The researcher expressed Epistemology skills by expressing the limitations of the research findings of the study in the paper and providing recommendations for further research areas.

Research ontology: Research Ontology is related to the nature of reality (Bryman, 2012). The ontology determines the way the researcher sees the world of business and management and the choice of what to research for your research project (Saunders, et al., 2009). It also can be considered to be the researcher's perception of how the world

operates and their commitment to their views (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2021). Two ontological considerations are objectivism and subjectivism. To look from the stance of objectivism was inappropriate for the study because of the researcher's role and responsibilities as an insider researcher. Subjectivism was decided for this study so the best advantages of being an insider researcher could be utilised. In the stance of objectivism, the researcher should stay distanced from their study so that the findings depend on the nature of the study rather than on the personality, beliefs, and values of the researcher (Payne & Payne, 2004). The aspect of subjectivism considers the perception that social entities can be regarded as social constructions built from the assumptions and consequent actions of social actors (Bryman, 2012).

The researcher focused on the role of branding and creating brand equity for the case organization as the true passion of the researcher is to create Quality Education for Myanmar Society, and the title of Creating Brand Equity in Higher Education can strengthen the researcher's further management practices. The researcher also believed that understanding the expectations and perspectives of the students can be a valuable knowledge input for the researcher and the higher education sector of Myanmar.

The positionality of the researcher needs to be considered in research ontology. Murry and Lawrence (2000) discuss that the validity of studies is maintained as long as the insider researcher collects data with careful attention, especially concerning questions about insider bias and validity. There might be a criticism of work-based studies from traditional research. The nature of subjective research in the researcher's practice can lead to partiality. The researcher must be aware of the criticism and critiques and make sure to balance the need and choice by acknowledging the role and responsibilities of insider research. This can be achieved through paying careful attention to feedback from participants, initial evaluation of data, using research triangulation in data-gathering methods and asking for the opinions of a third party who is aware of the issues represented in the project (Costley *et al.*, 2010). All research is subject to criticism, as both criticism and critique are considered good practices in discussions about research.

Axiology: The axiology refers to the researcher's value while conducting the research. The critical choice that a researcher can face is the extent to which the researcher wishes to view the impact of their values and beliefs on their research as positive things (Saunders, *et al.*, 2016). The researcher believed that the understanding of the creation of brand equity in higher education could extend to the need at the national level. The researcher also needs to decide how the researchers deal with their own values and that of the research participants (Saunders, et al., 2016). In that case, the researcher expressed the skill of the proper understanding of Axiology by providing a consent form for all the participants and clearly stated that they were free to walk out if they wished to. The consent form also clearly stated that participation in the research is voluntary. The researcher also arranged a Trustworthiness Committee to balance the axiology needs.

Positionality of the researcher vs Research Epistemology: This research chooses the pragmatism philosophy because of the belief that managing organisations are complex, and reality is the practical consequence of an idea. The pragmatism philosophy aims to solve the problem of the researched area with very high-level involvement, which is suitable for being the study's insider researcher. However, the researcher is aware that being an insider can lead to potential challenges and will use various strategies to minimise the bias. The researchers' stance in the organisation, their experience and knowledge about the researched area, and being an insider researcher are also behind the choice of pragmatism.

3.3: Research Philosophy

The critical assumptions in research philosophy explain the researchers' views of the world (Saunders, et al., 2012). These assumptions determine the research strategy and the methods of the research study. The research philosophy is beneficial for identifying the right path for the research planning in answering the research question with validity and reliability (Saunders, et al., 2012).

The four primary research philosophies in literature are pragmatism, positivism, realism, and interpretivism (Saunders, et al., 2012). Based on the philosophical research approach, which means the system and belief of the research, the nature of reality (ontology), the

way that the researcher collects the knowledge (epistemology), and the role of value (axiology) all differ. The following section will discuss the four main philosophical approaches and the different approaches of ontology, epistemology, and axiology with the study's choice to ensure they fit together in gathering, analysing and reporting the findings.

The Choice and Rational for the use of Pragmatism: The pragmatist research approach provides the freedom to use a range of research methods, unlike positivism, which suggests focusing on quantitative data with large samples and interpretivism, which suggests using qualitative data with an in-depth understanding of very small samples. The pragmatism approach allows the use of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The pragmatist approach can use a range of methods and provide freedom to use a range of research to fit study problems, often mixed, and action research which emphasises practical solutions and outcomes. It can provide the opportunity to practice both positivism and interpretivism approaches and lead to a stronger stance on methodological triangulation.

This study decided to use the pragmatic philosophical stance after understanding different research philosophies and their strengths and weaknesses. For pragmatist research, the research starts with a problem and time to provide managerial implications for future practices (Saunders, et al., 2012) .This study started with a Problem statement, which aims to provide managerial implications for creating brand equity in Higher education from students' perspectives for the case organization. The pragmatists are more interested in practical outcomes than abstract distinctions (Saunders, et al., 2012).

The pragmatist believed in value-driven research where the value of the study and purpose are based on the researcher's beliefs, passion, and doubt. The philosophical stance of pragmatism allows the researcher to combine both positivism and interpretivism positions within the scope of single research according to the nature of the research question. It also provides the flexibility needed for an effective researcher to be able to work within the appropriate research paradigm to explore the research problem that he or she is investigating (McKerchar, 2009). Pragmatism can be in the nature of both inductive and deductive research approaches (Saunders, *et al*., 2016). The philosophy of pragmatism has become one of the

popular methods in the twenty-first century for researchers who would like to conduct a theory-based study by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. This philosophy is more interested in results or truth than how the concepts or principles of theories work (Saunders, *et al.*, 2016).

The pragmatist approach is chosen as it is very relevant to my belief, my assumption of knowledge, the values in my heart, and my assumptions about reality. The philosophy of pragmatism views the ontology aspect as seeing reality as managing and organisations as complex, with the flux of processes, experience, and practices being the same as the interpretivist view of reality. From the epistemological stance of gathering knowledge, unlike positivism and interpretivism, the approach of pragmatism values collecting information and focusing on solving problems. Thus, this pragmatism philosophy is very suitable for business research as its aim is to solve the problems of the organizations under scrutiny.

Pragmatists focus on solving the problem and informing future practices by searching for the practical meaning of knowledge in a specific context. It provides the freedom to use a range of research methods, unlike positivism, which suggests focusing on quantitative data with large samples, and interpretivism, which suggests using qualitative data with in-depth understanding with very small samples. The pragmatism philosophy can use a range of methods and provide freedom to use a range of research to fit study problems and emphasises practical solutions and outcomes.

As one of the research objectives is to explore the student insights and their preferences and experiences, the study needs qualitative data. It is believed that the quantitative method may be helpful for realists but insufficient to have a promising finding. This is where the pragmatism approach comes in with the need to understand the broader aspect of the researched area and environment. Both quantitative and qualitative data are required to answer the question of the study. The approach of pragmatism supports the researcher in collecting qualitative and quantitative data to understand the participants' insights.

According to the philosophy of pragmatism, knowledge is explicitly linked with experience and subjective thoughts (Hildebrand, 2011). Thus, this consideration is very harmonious with most business researchers' stance as insider researchers with years of managerial experience

in the related field. The view of the insider researcher is very relevant and can provide additional benefits with the pragmatism approach for this research study. Thus, this pragmatist approach is suitable to use as a foundational philosophy for this research, together with insider researcher stances.

3.4: Research Approach

Inductive Approach: An inductive approach is an empirical observation that leads the researcher to an outcome from which more generalisations and theories can be reached. In this approach, the researcher might start by collecting data to explore certain social phenomena and build a theory (Bryman, 2012). The researcher who will use this approach might first understand the nature of the problem and then interpret and analyse the data collected, which will form a theory (Baker, 2003). This method is mainly used in qualitative research (Myers, 2009).

Deductive Approach: The deductive approach includes developing a theory from an idea, premises or a set of hypotheses (suggesting a relationship between variables or concepts), moving forward to be tested by the collection of appropriate data, and analysing the data to support the hypotheses and the theory, or rejecting the theory to be rejected entirely or modified (Bryman, 2012; Saunders, et al., 2012).

Abductive Approach: The abductive approach is where the researcher uses the hybrid approach of the inductive and deductive approaches (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). In the abductive approach, the data are collected to explore, identify, and explain a social phenomenon and pattern, which leads to generating a new theory or modifying an existing one (Bryman, 2012). The approach provides ongoing movement between theory and phenomena, is flexible, and fits with various methods. The abductive approach recognises that there will be surprising facts that change from how we are doing research from being either deductive or inductive and then adopting the alternative view. The study moves from the process of being deductive to inductive over the course of the study's surprising findings, new information, and available literature, which causes change.

The main philosophy of this study is pragmatism, and thus, it was decided to use an abductive approach. The abductive approach led to the use of the mixed methods approach. The purpose of the abductive approach was for theory generalisation and modification. This study used an abductive approach to test the current brand equity theory derived from different literature on Myanmar's private higher education sector and proposed a newly developed customer-based brand equity model based on the findings for the Myanmar private higher education sector, especially for MIU (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

3.5: Research Design

Eight types of research approaches can be used in research design: (1) Action research, (2) Experimental research, (3) Grounded Theory, (4) Surveys, (5) Case study research, (6) Archival Research, (7) Ethnography, and (8) Narrative Enquiry (Saunders, *et al.*, 2016). Experiments and survey research are quantitative approaches, whereas action research, grounded theory, ethnography, and archival research are qualitative, while case studies can be both.

The researcher decided to use a pragmatism approach, which allowed the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative research strategies to support each other in solving the problem of the research study and provide managerial implications. Understanding the current situations in quantitative and qualitative ways can generate more reliable and valid findings and managerial implications for the study. The findings are compiled from data triangulation methods that can enhance the confidence of the researcher (Bryman and Bell, 2015). This research implied that the best strategy was a case study. The choice was guided by the research objectives, questions, and the consideration of the research philosophy.

Case Study Research Design: The case study research strategy is widely used by business researchers. Yin (2014) defined a case study approach as an in-depth inquiry into a topic or phenomenon within the real-life setting of the case. The purpose of the case study research is to understand the dynamic of the topic or the context within its setting or context (Eisenhardt , 1989). The case study strategy focuses on an in-depth investigation of a single case (e.g., one organisation) or a small number of cases. It allows a composite and multifaceted analysis of the issue or problem. The case study approach is very relevant to the

researcher's stance of being the insider researcher. It also generates the capacity to create insights from intensive and in-depth research into the selected study in the real-life context, which leads to detail, empirical description, and development of the theory (Dubois & Gradde , 2002). The researcher decided to use an exploratory case study research design to gain a clear and deep understanding of the factors impacting brand equity creation in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Case study research collects multiple data sources such as observations, surveys, interviews, and analyses of documents (Saunders, *et al.*, 2016). Data can be qualitative, quantitative, or a mix of both. The case study strategy has been used widely over a long period, including in business and management (Flyvberg, 2011). Both positivist and interpretivism researchers have used the case study research method inductively and deductively. In the case of studies, researchers can use a combination of archival records and documentation, a different form of observation, ethnography and interviews and focus groups, questionnaires, reflection, and the use of research diaries and other research aids (Saunders, *et al.*, 2012). It is considered to be a case study when researchers choose an organisation as a complete unit for analysis, whether it is looking from the perspective of a unit or sub-division of the organisation (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012; Saunders, et al., 2016).

There are also criticisms of the case study research about their ability to produce generalisable, reliable, and theoretical knowledge contributions based on the small sample size and finding reliability as it is based on the data from a single case (Yin, 2003). From other aspects, it is argued that not every study has the intention to generalise its findings for the broader aspects, and sometimes the purpose itself is to understand the problem in the specific case so that the problem can be solved, but the findings and knowledge inputs can be transferable for the same case and a similar context. The choice of case study approach can also support the researcher's positionality towards the top management of the case university. The case study approach can support the researcher through being an insider researcher. Additionally, twenty years of experience and knowledge in leading the private higher education sector can be used to solve problems and create knowledge contributions with managerial implications. With support from the above discussion, the exploratory case study approach is utilised by using both qualitative and quantitative data, supported by a

questionnaire and focus group discussion on understanding and giving insights about the case and answering the research question (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

3.6: Research Choices

The research methodology can be considered the systematic approach to answering the research questions and hypothesis statements. This was carried out with clear consideration to balance the data reliability, validity, and appropriate approach for the best answer to solve the problem. Since this research is based on the philosophical stance of pragmatism, it allows the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand student insight to further the case of the research. Mixed methods are also mainly led by pragmatism and realism philosophies (Kervin & Murray, 2000).

Quantitative Research Approach: Quantitative research uses numerical measurement and statistics to explain the relationship between variables and concepts (Baker, 2003). Quantitative data collection methods are highly controlled and systematic. They can generate a large amount of data from the population in a mathematical method and test a set of hypotheses in a deductive approach (Saunders, *et al*., 2012). At the same time, the quantitative data collection approach is suitable for providing statistical relationships between variables (Bryman, 2012). Quantitative research explores and investigates the causal relationship between variables. The advantages of quantitative research areas are that they are in numerical form, so they are easily comparable, and the data are standardised, visible, and amenable to the test of classical survey statistics (Hart, 1987). In the quantitative study, the sample size is more significant and controlled to cover the selected population's representative, which creates greater confidence in accepting the reliability or generalisation of the findings.

Qualitative Research Method: In contrast with this idea, the qualitative research approach uses human perceptions and opinions to collect non-standardised data in a naturalistic and interactive research process (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). This qualitative approach is relevant to interpretivism philosophy as the researcher needs to take a subjective stance on the research phenomenon. Qualitative research aims to discover meaning and involves both

interpretation and a critical approach (Ahmed, 2008). Qualitative research can include interview methods, observation methods, review documents and focus group discussions. In the qualitative research approach, research questions are proposed rather than hypotheses and theory is often grounded in data. Data are sometimes in the format of outcomes from observation, documents, interviews, and participation.

Mixed-Method Research Approach: The mixed-method approach uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a better understanding of research problems (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Creswell and Clark (2007) defined mixed-methods designs as ones with at least one quantitative method designed to collect data with statistical numbers and one qualitative method designed to collect words. Mixed-methods research uses quantitative and qualitative data together (Bryman, 2006). The mixed-method approach is mainly fitted with the pragmatism and realism philosophies (Kervin and Murray, 2000). It can be used to have a diverse viewpoint to understand the research background better so that data can verify each other. Greene (2007) defines mixed-methods as collecting quantitative and qualitative data to conceptualise a form of inquiry differently to look at the social world.

Mixed-Method Research Approach as the chosen strategy: This study decided to use the mixed-methods approach. In using quantitative research, Zikmund (1991) discussed that surveys are the best choice for investigating causal relations between variables and producing models of these relations.

The mixed-methods approach can allow the researcher to see the findings in multiple ways. Thus, understanding the research, the problem, and their correlation can be much more in-depth than learning from only one perspective. In addition to that, due to the researchers' position, it is critical to use the triangulation methods to improve the validity of the research. One quantitative survey and one qualitative focus group discussion were used for more detailed insights. Although qualitative and quantitative research approaches are different, instead of using them to oppose them as two competing methodologies, they can be used in combination to support findings (Robson, 1997).

The survey is powerful in generating a large amount of data from the entire population. Survey design can also be beneficial for research with many variables (Easterby-Smith, *et al.*, 2012; Bryman, 2012; Saunders, *et al.*, 2012). The usage of survey design in branding has been very popular recently. Dawar and Pillutla (2000) used the survey to explore the impact of product-harm crises on brand equity. Daboul (2019) also used a quantitative research approach with a survey strategy to study the impact of brand crises on brand image in the age of corporate social responsibility.

Firstly, the quantitative method is used to answer the research questions by developing a questionnaire under the survey strategy to determine the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand equity determinants and the effect of customer satisfaction on the brand loyalty of the university. The survey questionnaire was constructed carefully from the previous models and relevant literature, and after that, the pilot study was conducted. A few amendments were made, revisions due to the outcomes of the pilot study, especially to the questions relating to expectations and perceived assumptions. Firstly, those two of preferred brand equity determinants and perceived brand equity determinants are asked in two different sections, so the survey questions seem to be long. After the pilot survey, two different columns for expectations and perceptions were decided to clarify it. The pilot survey process and the survey questionnaire will be discussed in detail later.

Secondly, the qualitative research technique is used in support of focus group discussions with semi-structured questions, which can give flexibility and the ability to study in-depth understanding of brand equity, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty.

3.7: Research Technique and Procedures

The objectives of the study were to understand the relationship between the brand equity determinants and to explore student insights to create stronger brand equity. With these purposes in mind, the pragmatism approach was selected with a case study design, which also demanded the collection of both quantitative data and qualitative data. Data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. For the primary data collection, qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and data analysis tools were chosen appropriately.

For the secondary data, this research was collected from the university. Quantitative data was collected to understand the relationship between the brand equity determinants and to understand the importance of the brand equity dimensions in the student perspectives. The qualitative data was collected to explore the students' insight to propose managerial implications to improve the current brand equity of Myanmar Imperial University and to propose managerial practices to create strong brand equity from student perceptions. The secondary data of the student feedback from the previous research conducted by the university were analysed to better understand the students' perceptions and the current situation.

3.7.1: Quantitative Data Collection Approach

The structured research questionnaire was distributed to all the students from each programme. The data from the survey were coded and analysed with the support of SPSS 23. The obtained data were analysed using Pearson correlation to measure the relationships between brand equity, student satisfaction and brand loyalty (Saunders, *et al.*, 2016). Spearman correlation was used to investigate which brand equity dimensions attracted students the most in purchasing decisions. Cronbach's Alpha analytical tool was employed to ensure the finding reliability. The descriptive analysis tool was used in the study to explore brand equity, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Explanatory research was analysed using linear regression methods to test whether brand equity determinants, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty were related or not. These results are presented in an ANOVA table to measure the goodness of fit by testing the F test for multiple regression. The questionnaire was distributed to (450) students from different programmes at the case organisation and (230) participants answered the questions.

Table 3. 1: Current Enrolled Programme of Respondents

Programme	Number of Respondents	Per cent
Higher National Diploma	52	22%
Bachelor	66	39%
MBA	112	49%
Total	230	100.0

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

Measurements of Brand Equity Determinants

Measuring Brand Awareness: The concept of brand awareness as one of the main critical essential determinants is adapted from Aaker (1991), Keller (1993), and Yoo and Donthu (2001). The concept of the measurement of brand awareness is adapted from Mourad *et al*. (2011), who proposed that brand awareness is measured by marketing activities and word-of-mouth recommendations. In addition to that, the study used the concept of Aaker, who believed that brand awareness could be measured by brand recognition and brand recall. Thus, this study measured brand awareness through brand recognition, brand recall, marketing and advertising activities and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Measuring Brand Image: The concept of brand awareness as one of the main critical essential determinants is adapted from Aaker (1991), Keller (1993), and Yoo and Donthu (2001). This study considers brand identity from the consideration of organisational perspectives and perceived quality from the consideration of the perceived quality of brand image from customer perspectives. Panda *et al.* (2019) have proposed three main dimensions – university heritage, trustworthiness, and service quality as primary drivers of the brand image.

The other dimension which impacts the brand is the university's trustworthiness which can be reflected by the perception of the university to its external and internal stakeholders. Trust is the feeling of security perceived by the customers in meeting their expectations (Delgado-Ballester and Lusi Munuera-Aleman, 2001). The level of service quality also reflects the level

of brand image for the university. Thus, universities cannot forget the role of providing quality service and cannot focus alone on the quality of education. A study by Walsh, *et al*., (2009) proposes that the better the university's brand image, the better the university's reputation. A university's reputation is also important to create a brand image.

After careful reviews of the literature, 1) university heritage, 2) university trustworthiness, 3) university service quality, 4) university reputation, and 5) overall assumptions toward the university are decided to use as the leading dimensions in shaping corporate image attributes.

Measuring Perceived Quality: This study was based on the belief that perceived quality comes from the brand image creation activities and the customers' perception of those brand image determinants. Thus, this concept of measuring perceived quality will use the determinants from the brand image creation concept derived from Mourad and then be tested from the students' perspectives.

Service attributes are measured through price (e.g., tuition fees), perceived quality of education, quality of lecturers (e.g., knowledge of lecturers, communication skill of lecturers, enthusiasm of lecturers, empathy of lecturers, creation of rapport, use of real-life examples in class, all of which are constructed from Gruber, *et al.*, (2012). At the same time, the responsiveness of lecturers in meeting students' expectations and the appearance of the lecturers are also added by the researcher. The author adds senior staff members and the quality of student support services. The study also considers the quality of staff service quality proposed by Nam, *et al*., (2011) and after-sale services, such as career opportunities, presented by (Nam, *et al.*, 2011) in this category. Under services attributes, staff behaviour as one of the main essential determinants is adapted from Nam, *et al.*, (2011). Later, the staff behaviour is measured with the constructed SERVQUAL Model proposed by (Parasuraman, *et al*., 1988; Kashif and Cheewakrakokbit, 2017). Under the provider attributes, location is decided to be measured with physical evidence and facilities (Nam, *et al*., 2011).

Symbolic attributes are decided and measured with personality, social image, and positioning (Mourad, *et al*., 2011). Brand personality is measured by worthiness. Social image is measured

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by the social contribution of the brand, while the brand's high quality measures brand positioning.

Measuring the Customer Ideal Self-Congruence: The concept of Customer ideal self-congruence as one of the main important determinants is adapted from Nam, *et al.*, (2011). Understanding the customer's ideal self-congruence is extremely important in creating customer-based brand equity.

Measuring Customer Satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is measured through programme management, teaching quality of the lecturers, service quality of the university staff, physical facilities, quality assurance, and overall satisfaction with perceived quality.

Measuring Brand Loyalty: Brand loyalty is one of the main essential determinants adapted from Aaker (1991; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). Brand loyalty is measured by overall student satisfaction. Students' decisions measure student satisfaction for next-level enrolment, recommendation of other students, and sharing good things about the university (Aaker, 1996).

Brand awareness
- Brand recognition
- Brand recall
- Marketing and advertising activities
- World of mouth recommendation

Brand image
- University heritage
- Trustworthiness of the University
- Service quality of the University
- Reputation of the University
- Overall attitude towards the University brand Image

Perceived quality
- Price
- Quality of Lecturers
- Quality of Education
- Student Support Services
- Quality of Senior Staff Members
- Career Opportunities
- Campus Facilites
- Brand Personality
- Social Contribution

Physical quality and facilities
- Campus facilities
- Library
- Online facilities

Customer ideal self-congruence
- University's capabilities to provide academic skills
- University's ability to fulfil the students' desire and passion
- Students' ambition and commitment to Learning,
- Students' Growth Mindset
- Understanding of the Student's Expectation by the University
- Ability to create a good impression among friends

Customer Satisfaction
- Programme Management
- Teaching Quality of the lecturers
- Service Quality of the University Staff
- Physical Facilities
- Quality Assurance
  Overall Satisfaction with Perceived Quality

Brand Loyalty
- Intention to study for further steps
- Intention to recommend to others
- Intention to share positive things to others

Figure 3. 1: A proposed conceptual framework for

Customer-Based Brand Equity in Higher Education

Proposed Questionnaire Design for the Study

Designing the research questionnaire is important to link the research purpose, questions, and research framework conceptualised from the theoretical and empirical literature. Chapter 2 discusses the detailed measurements for the brand equity determinants and the definitions of terms.

The first part was demographic information. The second part was related to the student's perception of brand equity determinants in choosing a university brand and their current perception of their recent university. The questionnaire construction was based on the

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conceptual framework and used the 5 points Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5= Strongly Agree) in measuring the level of brand equity determinants, student satisfaction, and brand loyalty. The next part of the questionnaire was about the reasons for choosing MIU and asked the participants to rank them in the order of 1 to 12 to explore the most important reason to the least important reason, which are set in the questionnaire for the ranking method. The complete questionnaire is shown in the appendix.

3.7.2: Pilot Study

It was decided that the questionnaire should be tested with a pilot study. For this purpose, undergraduate and postgraduate students at Myanmar Imperial University were invited and around 50 participants participated. The research questionnaires were distributed to all classrooms, where the students were requested to participate on a voluntary basis. After that, the questionnaires were collected by the research officer. They were distributed through various programmes to avoid biased information and misjudgments. After that, the data obtained were calculated and analysed to check whether the data could meet the purpose of the research study or answer the research questions. During the pilot study, the researcher observed the whole process and found that some of the open questions overlapped. Therefore, some open-ended questions were removed. Based on the pilot study and after careful consideration and making necessary amendments, the final research questionnaire was developed, and the final version of the questionnaire is proposed here in the appendix.

3.7.3: Qualitative Data Collection Approach with focus group discussion

Qualitative studies are increasingly popular methodological choices in business and marketing research, and researchers most often use in-depth unstructured data to gain insights into consumer behaviours (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Ting, et al., 2018; Lim, et al., 2021; Rajadurai, et al., 2021). It is also a very subjective process (Stake, 2010; Creswell, 2015). Qualitative researchers aim to explore a specific phenomenon with ill-defined research problems. One of the key challenges of the qualitative research design is managing the volume and richness of the collected data. The sample size may be small, but the amount of

data from each respondent can be considerable (Ting & Tan, 2021). It is estimated that around 8000 words can be gained from a single one-hour semi-structured interview.

Superior qualitative research recognises and details the researcher's worldview, background, and potential biases (Turner, et al., 2021). Understanding, acknowledging, and disambiguating the researcher's role and how their positionality can influence the research is considered an intrinsic instrument. Qualitative research needs to focus on four steps: focusing on the research question, justifying the qualitative research design, managing the qualitative data, and utilizing qualitative data analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). Qualitative research does not specify fixed rules for sample size as the depth of collected data is more essential than its quantity. On top of that, it is proposed that determining sample size should depend on the focus of the study, the topic of the discussion, the purpose of the inquiry, the validity of collected data and the time and resources available (Boddy, 2016; Burmeister & Aitken, 2012; Sim, et al., 2018). Additionally, Ting and Tan (2021) proposed that a misconception equates qualitative studies to fewer data. What qualitative samples lack in breadth, they make up for in-depth, allowing researchers to explore a few illustrative cases in greater detail. A detailed amount of data from a small number of eminent expert participants can provide great insights.

The arrangement of one focus group with a semi-structured focus could be seen as questionable. However, the study was based on the philosophy of pragmatism, where both the quantitative and qualitative approaches are utilized with the support of an insider researcher perspective. Additionally, the semi-structured questions were arranged based on the research question to make sure that the knowledge was covered during the focus group discussion. One focus group discussion with a semi-structured interview can fulfil the need for the researcher's understanding to answer the research question.

The aim of qualitative research was to gain a rich and thorough knowledge of the area being studied. Some researchers might advise avoiding a small sample size, and as a result, they should attempt to interview hundreds of participants who express a lack of understanding about the aim of qualitative research. However, to ensure that the questions can be answered, researchers need to focus on recruitment and questioning procedures to ensure

that the data we want is achieved. Thus, this study ensured sufficient data was obtained using an effective design for the focus group questions. This study also focused on recruitment of the focus group discussion with the sampling method, making sure that all the voices of different programmes could be heard through the focus group discussion. The main purpose of qualitative research is to relate to people's perceptions, feelings, and insights (Holloway, 1997).

A focus group discussion was arranged to gain insight into the students' perception of each programme. It is recommended to have 6 to 12 participants in focus group discussions (Morgan, 2002). Basnet (2018) proposes that focus group discussion is the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people. If it is too large, it is very difficult to handle, and if it is too small, it is very difficult to cover the study purposes (Creswell, 2012). As mentioned in the sample selection, four students from each cohort (a total of 12 participants) were requested to participate in a discussion with the information sheet to state their positive contribution to the institution's participation. The decision for qualitative data collection was made to explore their insights and perceptions of the role of brands in the higher education sector and their perception of how each brand determinant can contribute to student satisfaction. This method was also provided to balance the researcher's stance as Managing Director of Myanmar Imperial University.

Development of focus group discussion schedule

Focus group schedule: The questions were developed to explore the students' perceptions of each brand's building activity. The focus group discussion also explored what they like the most about the university and what they would like the university to improve upon.

Thematic Analysis

The researcher read, transcribed data, and noted down initial ideas. After that, the researcher systematically coded interesting highlights and collated data relevant to each code. The collated data were then put under potential themes. A thematic map of the analysis was generated. Each theme was analysed, and the researcher developed clear definitions and

names for each theme. For the final step, the selection of each theme relevant to the research questions and literature was presented for the final findings of the study in answering the research questions.

A thematic analysis was used to analyse the data for the study's findings. The thematic approach emphasizes identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data for effective findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is considered to be a foundational method for all qualitative analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King & Horrocks, 2010). A thematic research approach is to reach the answer to the research question by analysing datasets. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis has six steps: (1) becoming familiar with the data, (2) generating coding categories, (3) generating themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) d and (6) locating exemplars. This study explores the students' perceptions of the university (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Thematic analysis can be a valuable tool for collecting data and analysing the findings by interpreting the various answers into different themes.

This study used thematic analysis in the qualitative research approach as it is the foundation of qualitative research to understand the underlying problems and themes from the participant's perspective. The thematic analysis approach helps the researcher analyse the students' perceptions of the university's brand creation process, the things the students like the most about the university, and the areas they want the university to improve on in the future. The approach also helps to explore the current challenges that the students face. It allows the researcher to understand what is happening with the students' insight by analysing the diverse feedback and interpreting their patterns to identify the central theme so those areas can be focused on in the creation of stronger brand equity.

3.8: Data Analysis

3.8.1: Data Analysis for Quantitative Data

The data are collected and analysed to study the relationship of the Brand equity determinants in creating a great University brand. For this purpose, a survey questionnaire

was designed and developed to understand the relationship between brand equity determinants and brand equity determinants that students expect when choosing a private university in Myanmar. The questionnaire also includes open-ended questions to explore students' expectations, the things they like most about the University, and the things they want the University to improve in the future. The study also collected qualitative data with the support of a focus group discussion to explore their insights, such as the current challenges that they are facing now, things that they want their university to improve in the future and the way that they want to improve those areas with suggested recommendations to improve their university's brand equity.

Validity and Reliability: One of the most critical aspects of conducting research is having the right and reliable answer to solve the problem or answer the research objectives. Every researcher must check the reliability and validity of the method before conducting the main study (Bryman, 2012). The purpose of checking reliability and validity is to ensure that the data gathered will provide accurate and efficient results and detect and observe any errors or biases in the process of data collection (Zikmund, 1991). The value of the finding also depends on the reliability and validity and the data triangulation of the research design. Judd *et al.* (1991) discussed four different tests (1) Construct validity, (2) Internal Validity, (3) External Validity, and (4) Reliability.

Reliability: Reliability refers to the consistency of the data (Bryman, 2012). The purpose of reliability is to increase confidence in the research findings (Van Maane, 1983). The reliability reflects the extent to which the chosen data collection technique will ensure consistent findings (Saunders, et al., 2012) . The reliability of the data is very critical to having compelling findings. This study uses the concept of Reliability Analysis to ensure that the reliability of the data is valid. The concept of Alpha was developed by Lee Cronbach (2004) to provide the measurement of internal consistency of the test or scale, which is generally expressed as between 0 and 1 (0 < Cronbach's Alpha < 1). Reliability refers to the degree of random error in any measure and checks the instruments' internal consistency and stability (Nunnally, 1978).

Validity: Validity refers to the extent to which the chosen collection method can measure what it was designed to measure and that the findings are what they appear to be about (Bryman, 2012). For the validity of data, the correlation coefficient indicator can be used. The study uses correlation analysis for the validity of the study. Pearson's Correlation is used since there are two quantitative variables. For internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha testing is used for Construct Reliability. The collected data were summarised by using data presentation methods of tables, statistical graphs, and discussions. Various descriptive statistical methods of mean, median, modes, standard deviations, and coefficients were presented. A reliability analysis was carried out to determine the reliability of the data. To answer the study's hypothesis, a Regression Analysis was carried out to understand and explore the relationship between the brand equity determinants and the role of brand equity determinants in creating customer-based brand equity.

3.8.2: Secondary Data Analysis

The research conducted by the University for the Academic Year 2021 and annual reports are used as secondary data to validate the research study's findings with the current situation with the University in understanding the case organisation. The student satisfaction rate for the Academic Year 2021, the most commonly faced student problems, and student perceptions of the students in the previous academic year are being reviewed.

3.9: Ethical Considerations

The researcher is aware of the importance of ethical considerations in conducting research and understands the issues of confidentiality and anonymity (Yin, 2003). In this study, the quantitative and qualitative data are utilised to support the researcher's position as a Managing Director of the university.

Ethical Issues and Confidentiality: As an insider researcher, the research design must also ensure that the respondent genially and openly express their views and opinions for the survey and focus group discussion. The researcher must ensure that the researcher's positionality did not impact the students' participation and information. The researcher

ensures that the student's participation is voluntary and clearly stated in the information sheet. For the questionnaire, the researcher invited two research officers voluntarily, and the researchers put a box in front of the class. The research officer explained the purpose of the research and requested participants to participate voluntarily before the class, and they were requested to submit their suggestions in the box. After all the students had gone, the research officers collected the data and transferred the documents to the researcher. By doing that, the researcher's position did not influence how the students filled in the questionnaire. In addition, all the participants' names remained anonymous in the survey.

The researcher makes sure that participation in the research is voluntary by stating a clear statement on the front page. The purpose of conducting the study was also clearly stated in the beginning. In the end, the researcher requested approval for the consent form by asking the students to tick the approval for the consent form box. The consent forms (founded in Appendix) were provided to all the participants for both the questionnaire and focus group discussion participants. The participant's name remained anonymous in the questionnaire. Different volunteers collected the consent form and questionnaire. The researcher was not involved in the data collection process of the questionnaire. The consent form was collected and signed by a volunteer who is also an officer of the Myanmar Imperial Research Association (MIRA). MIRA has people on board who are independent members from outside the university. The researcher requested Student Support officers to distribute the questionnaire to the students as described in the previous section. There was a box at the front of the class where the participants could submit later. This way, we would not be able to know which person submitted which questionnaire. Afterwards, the questionnaires were kept in a safe place in the storeroom where the university filed documents and annual reports (Yin, 2003). The researcher also ensured that she was the sole person to access the collected data. A published management report is requested from the university's authorised personnel, and the formal approval consent form to use the report as a secondary data source is issued.

The researcher also requested a volunteer to act as an interviewer for focus group discussion to balance the insider researcher's stance and bias. When the researcher read and analysed the questionnaire and focused on group discussion, the researcher invited two volunteer researchers to balance the analysis with different perspectives (Saidin, 2017). By doing that,

there can be very limited biased thoughts in analysing the data and making the focus group discussion. Analysing the underlying issues regarding appropriate literature can support insider researchers to analyse their position better and utilise the approaches used by different insider researchers to have more valid findings (Holmes, 2020).

3.10: Insider Research and Role and Responsibilities of Insider Researcher

It is essential to explore the role of insider research to understand the benefits and challenges to ensure the best outcomes.

What is insider research?: Insider research is defined as research undertaken within an organisation, group or community where the researcher is also a member (Hockey, 1993; Hellawell, 2006; Mercer, 2007; Brannick & Coghlan , 2007; Trowler , 2011). Costley, *et al.*, (2010) said an insider researcher is considered to be a person with academic knowledge and practitioner expertise, which gives an excellent insight into analysing the problems. An insider researcher is also defined as someone with prior intimate or familiar knowledge of the group and may not necessarily be a member (Merton, 1972; Hellawell, 2006). There are disputes about the role of the researcher, whether it needs to be an insider or an outsider in conducting research (Fleming, 2019; Brannick & Coghlan , 2007). Some literature supported the concept of the researcher being an outsider in conducting research (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007). Some literature and researchers considered 'distance' necessary for proper research and to avoid biased perspectives (Fleming, 2019).

Nevertheless, it is argued by Merton (1972, p. 15) that insider researchers have a better understanding in identifying context. It is supported by Shan (2004), saying that an insider is better positioned as they know the relevant patterns of social interaction required for gaining access and making meaning. The insider-outsider distinction is a false dichotomy (Chavez, 2008). A valid and reliable research finding depends not on the insider or outsider stance but on how the research is designed and interpreted (Fleming, 2019).

3.10.1: Critical Challenges and Benefits of being an insider researcher

It is important to be aware of the challenges and benefits of being an insider. Unluer (2012) perceived one of the challenges of insider research as bias because greater familiarity can

lead to a loss of objectivity and making the wrong assumption about the study based on the researcher's prior knowledge. There are some challenges, such as developing myopia, assuming their perspective is far more widespread than it is (Brekhus, 1998), and the 'obvious' question might not be asked (Hockey, 1993), the 'sensitive' topic might not be raised (Preddy & Riches, 1988), shared prior experiences might not be explained (Powney & Watts, 1987; Kanuha, 2000), assumptions might not be challenged (Hockey, 1993), and seemingly shared norms might not be articulated (Platt, 1981).

On the side of the assets of being an insider researcher, they can benefit more easily from granted access, intrusiveness, familiarity, and rapport and from data collection being less time-consuming (Mercer, 2007). Insider researchers can also blend into situations, making them less likely to alter the research setting (Hawkins, 1990). This concept and benefit also applied in my research scenario as, being a researcher, I have easily blended in during focus group discussions. Insider research studies are also becoming common in work-integrated learning research. As more of them have examined their education practices, insider research methodologies have become more common (Mercer, 2007; Floyd & Arthur, 2012; Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). Insider research in higher education contexts can create many benefits and simultaneously generate research to deal with multiple challenges. This study decided to use the advantage of having a research insider and using the appropriate philosophy and methodology while being aware of their role and minimising the potential challenges.

What have existing researchers done to overcome the challenges: Some of the strategies employed by existing researchers to balance potential biases include arranging a Trustworthiness Committee for role conflict, requesting the participants to discuss the content which is related to the topic pretending like the researcher has no prior knowledge if you have talked about it before. Additionally, volunteers can be requested to collect the data and survey research to cover the issue of confidentiality and anatomy, request a professional researcher to act as an interviewer for focus group discussions to avoid confidentiality and anatomy, and prepare consent forms for ethical issues (Fleming, 2019; Mercer, 2007; Murray & Lawrence, 2000).

Benefits of being an insider researcher: Being an insider researcher has various benefits such as (1) having prior knowledge of creating a brand in higher education, which can lead to an

opportunity to have a better understanding of the context and provide the chance to develop research questions, (2) having access to data collection, (3) having a great relationship with students provides the insider researcher with a chance to understand the context and to have more insightful thoughts and experience sharing from the students, (4) being an insider researcher of the case study organisation can provide the best usage of the research findings better than other researchers. 20 years of experience with the university and knowing what was happening with MIU as an insider provides a huge opportunity to give meaning to implicit messages and provide clarification.

Challenges faced by the researcher: After understanding the challenges that a researcher can encounter, it was considered that the following challenges could be encountered: (1) Role duality conflict and familiarity with the context, which can provide wrong assumptions, (2) Ethical issues and confidentiality, (3) Information sharing causes the insider's stance and (4) Misassumption of some aspects because of the insiders' previous knowledge and experience.

The usage of the Triangulation method: Triangulation is the method which we can use to increase the credibility and validity of the research findings. Credibility is related to the trustworthiness of how believable the findings are. The validity is related to the extent to which the study accurately reflects or evaluates the concept, or the idea being investigated. The triangulation can also minimize the bias of the researcher. Four types of data triangulation can be used in research (Noble & Heale, 2019). They are (1) data triangulation, which includes the period of time, space and people; (2) Investigator triangulation, which includes the use of several researchers in a study (3) theory triangulation, which encourages several theoretical schemes to enable interpretation of a phenomenon and (4) Methodological triangulation, which focus on the use of several data collection methods such as interviews and observations.

This researcher decided to use Methodological triangulation, which involves quantitative data collection via a survey questionnaire and qualitative data collection with the support of focus group discussion.The researcher also used investigator triangulation, which involves having a trustworthiness committee which can provide a second opinion and minimize potential biases. To overcome the challenges, the Trustworthiness Committee was arranged by inviting

two researchers to support the study on a voluntary basis by clearly arranging a participating consent form stating that involvement was voluntary and that they were free to walk away if they did not feel comfortable. One was an expert in the teaching and academic sector, and the other was an expert in SPSS and qualitative research methods. The first committee member acted as an outsider, and perceptions were exchanged based on the process and findings to make sure that there would be very limited bias.

The same practice applied to the research officer who collected the survey questionnaire and arranged the focus group discussion. The consent forms were used for ethical issues and confidentiality and to ensure that the student's name remained anonymous. The researcher requested the students to discuss the topic pretending as though they had no prior knowledge through being aware that prior knowledge can lead to misassumptions. A volunteer was requested to collect the data and survey research to cover the issue of confidentiality and autonomy, and a professional researcher was asked to act as an interviewer for focus group discussion to avoid confidentiality and autonomy. In addition, the consent form was prepared for ethical issues concerning information sharing in relation to insider researcher roles. The ethical considerations are also discussed later in this chapter.

Chapter (4) Research Analysis and Findings

Chapter (4) Research Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to explore the role of brand equity determinants in creating customer-based brand equity and to understand the factors that influence creating customer-based brand equity through student satisfaction and brand loyalty. This study explored factors influencing brand equity and the students' perceptions of brand-building activities to propose management practices to manage a university brand in the Myanmar private higher education landscape. This thesis also explored the students' perceptions of the determinants of creating brand equity.

The following conceptual framework, developed by the literature review, is tested to explore the relationship between five brand equity determinants: brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, physical evidence, and customer ideal self-congruence to student satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Brand awareness	Brand image	Perceived quality	Physical quality and facilities	Customer ideal self-congruence
■ Brand recognition ■ Brand recall ■ Marketing and advertising activities ■ World of mouth recommendation	■ University heritage ■ Trustworthiness of the University ■ Service quality of the University ■ Reputation of the University ■ Overall attitude towards the University brand Image	■ Price ■ Quality of Lecturers ■ Quality of Education ■ Student Support Services ■ Quality of Senior Staff Members ■ Career Opportunities ■ Campus Facilites ■ Brand Personality ■ Social Contribution	■ Campus facilities ■ Library ■ Online facilities	■ University's capabilities to provide academic skills ■ University's ability to fulfil the students' desire and passion ■ Students' ambition and commitment to Learning, ■ Students' Growth Mindset ■ Understanding of the Student's Expectation by the University ■ Ability to create a good impression among friends

Customer Satisfaction

■ Programme Management
■ Teaching Quality of the lecturers
■ Service Quality of the University Staff
■ Physical Facilities
■ Quality Assurance
  Overall Satisfaction with Perceived Quality

Brand Loyalty

■ Intention to study for further steps
■ Intention to recommend to others
■ Intention to share positive things to others

Figure 4. 1: A proposed conceptual framework for the customer-based Brand equity in Higher education

First and foremost, this section highlights findings from the research survey using the quantitative research method. Initially, the research used Descriptive Analysis for the respondents' demographic information and analysed the mean scores for the determinants of brand equity. Secondly, Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the reliability and validity of data. Cronbach's Alpha was used for Construct Reliability since brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, physical evidence, customer ideal self-congruence, student satisfaction and brand loyalty are measured using Likert Scales. The Normality test was conducted. The data obtained were analysed using Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the validity of the findings. Finally, the study conducted Linear Regression analysis to test the

hypothesis for confirming the significant level of the estimated results using P-value and F-value and analyses each determinant level of student satisfaction and brand loyalty.

A total of 230 survey questionnaires were collected, and one focus group discussion was arranged. The data responses of 230 questionnaires were entered in SPSS. The target population is the students at Myanmar Imperial University. The total population was 634, and the questionnaires were distributed to all students. Among 634, 230 answered the questionnaires. A focus group discussion with 12 participants, including four students from each programme, was arranged to understand the students' insight.

4.2: Demographic Information

Descriptive Statistics: In the descriptive analysis, demographic information of the respondents, such as the age, gender, and programme students studying at MIU, are included. The demographic profile of the participants is presented in the following table. The proportion of the sample in the programme is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1: Age of Respondents of Study

Age	Number of Respondents	Per cent
18 to 22	162	70.5
22 to 40	58	25.2
Over 40	10	4.3
Total	230	100.0

Table 4. 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents	Per cent
Female	156	67.8
Male	69	30.0
Prefer not to say	5	2.2
Total	230	100.0

Table 4. 3: Current Enrolled Programme of Respondents

Programme	Number of Respondents	Per cent
Higher National Diploma	52	22%
Bachelor	66	39%
MBA	112	49%
Total	230	100.0

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

4.3. The Normality Test and Reliability Test of the Study

4.3.1: Normality test of the study

The Normality test is done with the support of Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk statistics tests to measure the normality of the data. The data confirmed that these are normal distributions. The p-values for both tests are less than 0.05, which means that there is sufficient evidence to say the variable points are normally distributed. The Normality test result is discussed in the appendix(B).

4.3.2: Reliability and Validity of the study

Table 4. 4: Reliability Measures for customer-based Brand equity Determinant

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Importance of brand awareness	.856	6
Perception of brand awareness	.900	6
Importance of brand image	.931	7
Perception of brand image	.945	7
Importance of perceived quality	.974	23
Perception of perceived quality	.976	23

Importance of physical quality and facilities	.781	3
Perception of physical quality and facilities	781	3
Importance of student ideal self-congruence	.960	10
Perception of student ideal self-congruence	.952	10
Importance of student satisfaction	.938	6
Perception of student satisfaction	.926	6
Importance of brand loyalty	.895	3
Perception of brand loyalty	.905	3

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

In research studies, in order to have very reliable findings, high-quality tests are important to ensure the reliability of the data in the research (Mohajan, 2017). The reliability of the data is critical to having valid findings. This study uses the concept of Reliability Analysis to ensure that the reliability of the data is valid. The concept of Alpha was developed by Lee Cronbach (2004) to provide the measurement of internal consistency of the test or scale, which is generally expressed as between 0 and 1 ($0 <$ Cronbach's Alpha < 1). Reliability refers to the degree of random errors in any measure and checking the instruments' internal consistency and stability (Nunnally, 1978). The preferable alpha value is between 0.7 and 0.9, which reaches a reasonable goal, according to the calculation. The acceptable value of the alpha is also proposed as 0.70 to 0.95 (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). The high value of the Alpha test may suggest redundancies and show that the test length should be shortened. The alpha value of this study indicated that all the factors have values that are higher than 0.70, which could be considered that all the elements are considered very reliable. However, some of the alpha tests were higher than 9.5, which suggests that there are redundancies and there is some overlapping in asking the questions or that they cover a similar concept.

The data revealed a high Cronbach Alpha value ($>.9$) for perceived quality and ideal self-congruence which may be because some of the perceived quality measures and ideal congruence measures overlap each other. It also might be because the respondents provided similar responses on questions related to perceived quality and ideal self-congruence. In addition, it can be assumed that the students' responses on perceived quality and ideal self-

congruence are similar. It is considered that the high level of Cronbach Alpha rates is also acceptable (Hair, et al., 2014). There is also evidence that the other studies in brand equity also have a very high level of Cronbach Alpha rate for the determinants (LEE & SEONG, 2020; Yuanwei & Lertbuasin, 2018). The researcher is aware of that aspect. In that case, the researcher tested the validity of the study for perceived quality and ideal self-congruence dimensions for both perception and importance with the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed a positive correlation among the variables. The result of the Pearson correlation coefficient is shown in Appendix (B).

The role of importance and perception of the Brand equity determinants for the study

Table (4.5) discusses the importance of Brand equity determinants, which means what the students think the University should be doing. The perception of Brand equity determinants means what students believe the University is doing. By exploring the difference, MIU can understand what the students expect from them, and the current perception of what students think the University is doing. By understanding the difference, the proposed managerial implications can be developed to improve MIU's Brand equity.

4.3.3: Students' preference on the importance of Brand equity dimensions in Choosing a University Brand

Table 4. 5: Overall Average Mean Score Level of the Importance of Brand equity dimensions in choosing a University Brand

No.	Description	Rank	Importance Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Brand awareness	3	4.01	0.690
2.	Brand image	2	4.05	0.693
3.	Perceived quality	5	3.97	0.690
4.	Physical Quality and Facilities	3	4.01	0.924
5.	Student ideal self-congruence	6	3.93	0.885
6.	Student satisfaction	1	4.22	0.828
7.	Brand loyalty	Outcome	4.15	0.925

The study explores the importance of Brand equity determinants in choosing a University brand. Students thought that student satisfaction was the most important one (mean=4.22), brand image was the second (mean=4.05), brand awareness and Physical Quality and Facilities were the third (mean=4.01), and perceived quality was the fifth (mean=3.97). Student ideal self-congruence was the least (mean=3.93) in creating customer-based brand equity.

4.3.4: The average mean level of the importance of the student's preference for the Top (10) Brand equity Attributes that students preferred in choosing a University Brand

The following table (4.6) indicates the mean score for the Top (10) Brand equity Determinants in choosing a University Brand through the students' insight. The top 10 Brand equity determinants preferred by Myanmar students are (1) teaching quality of lecturers(4.30), (2) overall satisfaction with perceived quality(4.28), (3) service quality of the university staff(4.22), (4) programme management(4.19), (5) quality assurance(4.19), (6) physical facilities(4.16), (7) University's capabilities to provide academic skills(4.13), (8) word of mouth recommendation(4.12), (9) University heritage (4.12) and (10) overall assumption towards the brand image of the University(4.12). In this study, it is considered the brand loyalty determinants as the outcomes. So, the important determinants for brand loyalty dimensions are not considered.

Table 4. 6: The mean level of the importance of the Top 10 Brand equity Attributes that students preferred in choosing a University Brand

No.	Description	Importance Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Teaching quality of lecturers	4.30	0.729
2.	Overall satisfaction with the perceived quality	4.28	0.704
3.	Service quality of the University Staf	4.22	0.696
4.	Programme management	4.19	0.689
5.	Quality Assurance	4.19	0.716

6.	Physical facilities	4.16	0.739
7.	University's capabilities to provide academic skills	4.13	0.763
8.	Word of Mouth Recommendation	4.12	0.872
9.	University Heritage	4.12	0.793
10.	Overall Assumption towards the brand image of the university	4.12	0.846

Figure 4. 2: The mean level of the importance of the Top 10 Brand equity Attributes that students preferred in choosing a University Brand

4.4: Student's perception of the perceived Brand equity dimensions of MIU

4.4.1: The overall mean level of student perception of the Brand equity determinants of MIU

Top 10 Brand Equity Attributes that students' preferred in choosing a University Brand

■ Students' perception on the importance of the brand equity determinants
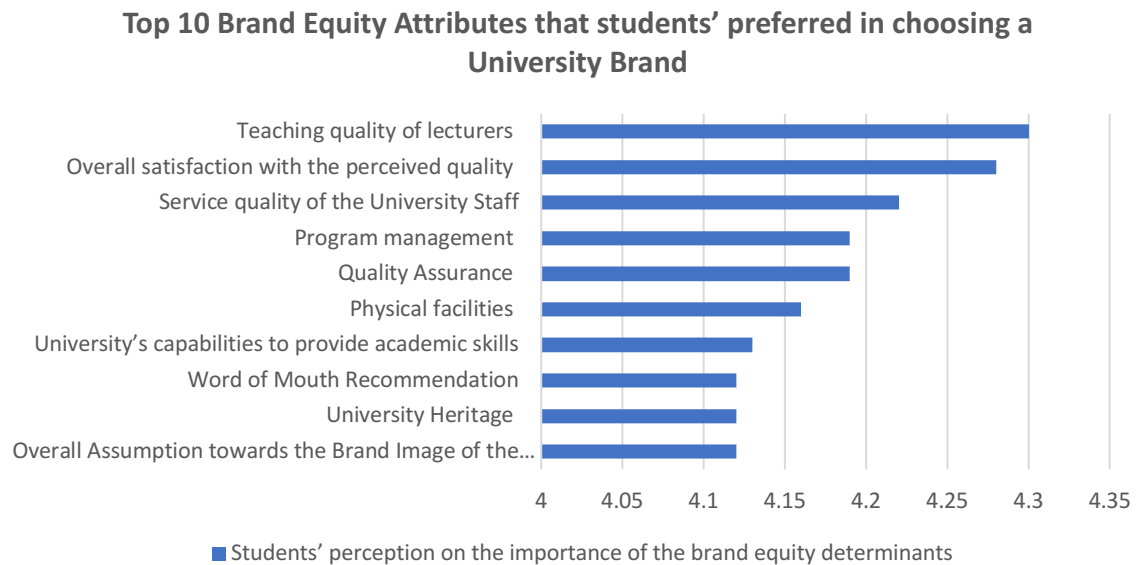
The current student perception of Brand equity determinants of MIU is presented in Table (4.7). The overall mean score of the student perception is (mean=3.90) .The brand awareness and brand image and student satisfaction have the highest mean score (mean=3.97) and indicating that students are satisfied with the university. Perceived quality is the fourth-highest level (3.90). Student ideal self-congruence is (mean=3.88), Brand Loyalty has a mean score of 3.87 and the physical quality and facilities have the lowest satisfaction (mean=3.79).

Table 4. 7: Overall Mean Score Level of the Student Perceptions of the Brand Equity Determinants of MIU

Description	Mean	Standard Deviation
Brand awareness	3.97	0.732
Brand image	3.97	0.826
Perceived quality	3.90	0.810
Physical Quality and Facilities	3.79	0.983
Student ideal self-congruence	3.88	0.966
Student satisfaction	3.97	0.867
Brand loyalty	3.87	0.945

Below 1.5 Strongly Disagreed, 1.5-2.5 Disagreed, 2.5-3.5 Neutral, 3.5-4.5 Agreed,

4.5 and above Strongly Agreed

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)
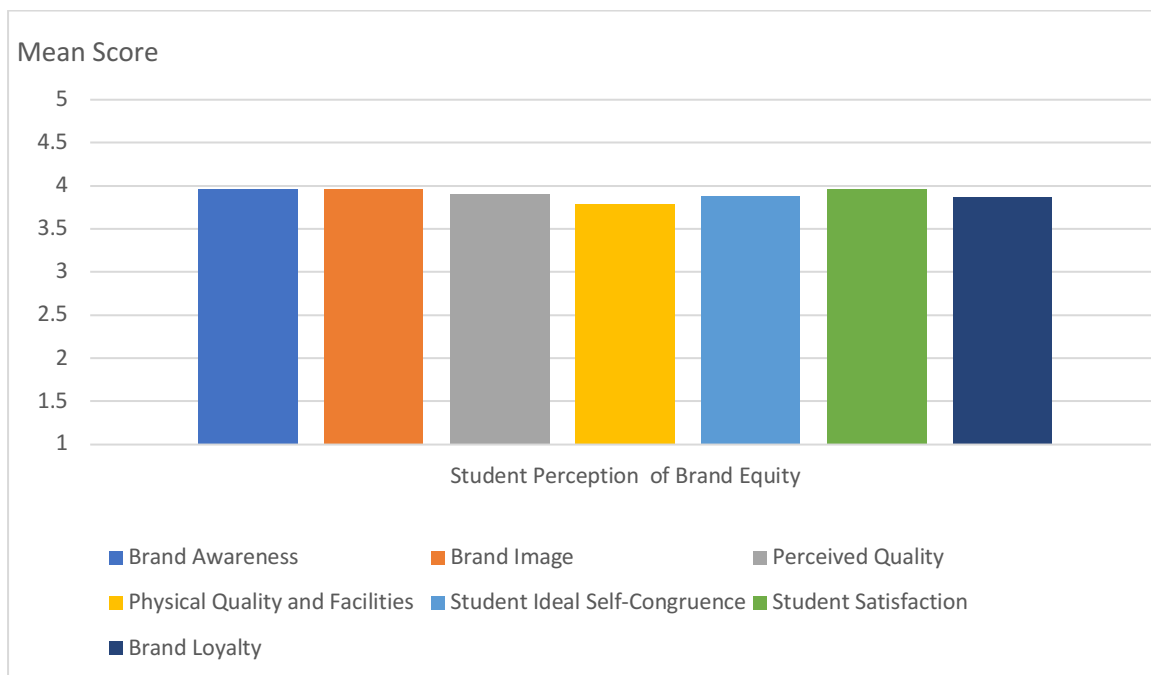
Figure 4. 3: Overall Mean Score Level of the Student Perceptions of the Brand equity determinants of MIU

4.4.2: Overall Mean level of the student's perception of the most preferred top (10) Brand equity determinants of MIU

The following table (4.8) indicates the students' perception of the most preferred top 10 brand equity determinants. The total mean score of the student perception towards the top (10) brand equity determinants is 4, indicating students are delighted with the top 10 brand equity determinants. Word-of-mouth recommendation has the highest mean score (mean=4.10), which is an excellent indicator. The teaching quality of lecturers has the second-highest mean score (mean=4.07), and it is considered the second most important determinant in choosing a University brand. The overall Assumption of the mean score of the brand image of the university is 4.06. The service Quality of the University Staff has a mean score of 3.91, which is the lowest satisfaction for the top 10 students' preferred determinants. At the same time, it is the third most preferred brand equity determinant in choosing a university brand.

Table 4. 8: The Top (10) Important Brand equity Determinants and current students'
perceptions of them

No.	Description	Importance Mean	Standard Deviation	Perception Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Teaching quality of lecturers	4.30	0.729	4.07	.837
2.	Overall satisfaction with the perceived quality	4.28	0.704	4.00	.792
3.	Service quality of the University Staff	4.22	0.696	3.91	.848
4.	Programme management	4.19	0.689	3.97	.804
5.	Quality Assurance	4.19	0.716	3.98	.783
6.	Physical facilities	4.16	0.739	3.92	.853
7.	University's Capabilities to provide academic skills	4.13	0.763	3.91	0.843
8.	Word of Mouth Recommendation	4.12	0.872	4.10	0.850

9.	University Heritage	4.12	0.793	4.02	0.870
10.	Overall Assumption towards the brand image of the university	4.12	0.846	4.06	0.836

The Top (10) Importance Brand equity determinants and the current students' perception
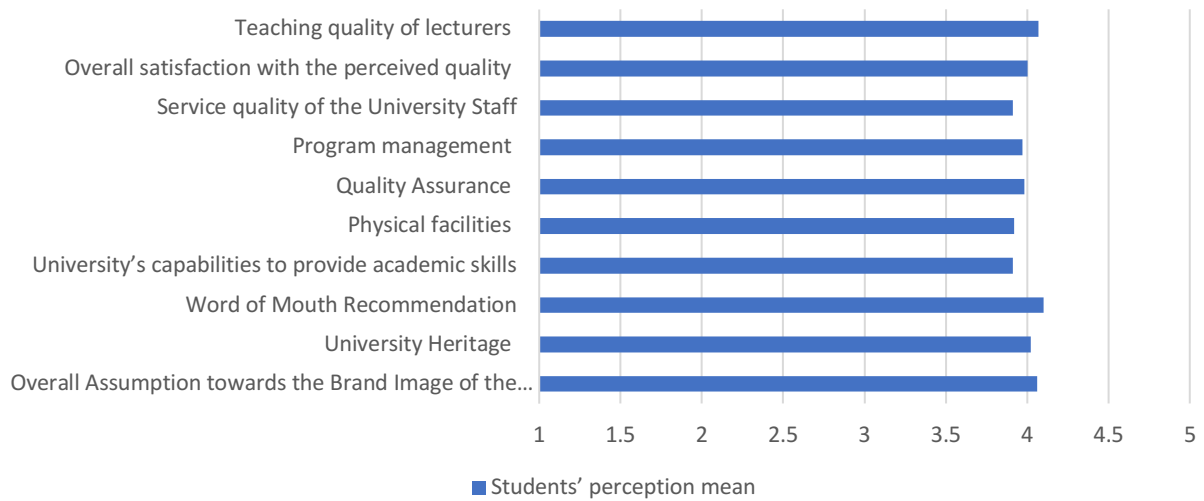
Figure 4. 4: Students' perceptions of the Top (10) Important Brand equity Determinants
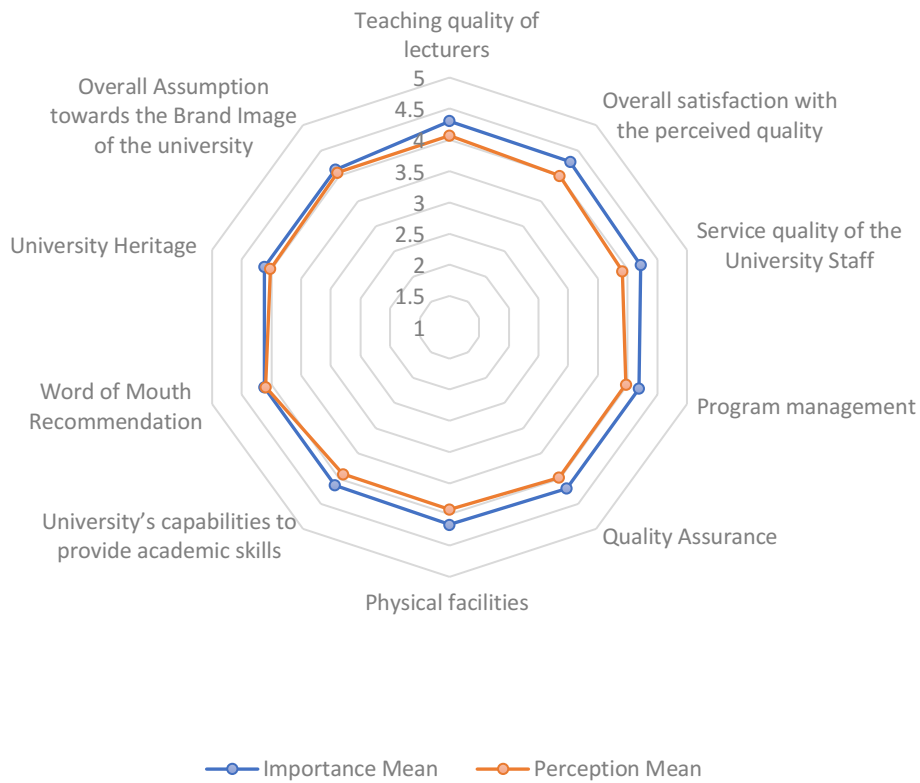
Figure 4. 5 : Top (10) Importance Brand Equity Determinants and current students'
perceptions of them

4.4.3: The detail mean level of the importance of the Brand Equity Determinants that students preferred in choosing a University brand and current students' perception of them

This study also collected the students' perceptions of current brand equity dimensions to compare with the importance of brand equity determinants in exploring managerial practices to improve MIU's brand equity.

The following table (4.9) indicates the students' perception of importance of brand equity determinants and their current perceptions. The data indicates that among brand equity determinants, Student Satisfaction has the highest importance mean(mean=4.22). The Brand Loyalty is the second highest importance mean (mean=4.15). Later, Brand Image with (mean=4.05) is followed by Brand Awareness and Physical Qualities and Facilities which have both mean (mean=4.01).

Table 4. 9: The detailed mean level of the importance of the Brand Equity Determinants that students preferred in choosing a University brand and current students' perception of them

Description	Importance Mean	Standard Deviation	Perception Mean	Standard Deviation
Brand awareness	4.01	0.690	3.97	0.732
Brand Recognition	4.09	0.680	4.03	0.738
Brand Recall	3.83	0.937	3.77	0.956
Marketing and Advertising Activities	3.90	0.850	3.93	0.797
Word of Mouth Recommendation	4.12	0.872	4.10	0.850
Brand image	4.05	0.693	3.97	0.826
University Heritage	4.12	0.793	4.02	0.870
Trustworthiness of the University	4.03	0.772	3.98	0.845
Service Quality of the University	3.93	0.879	3.92	0.908
The reputation of the University	4.00	0.805	3.95	0.878
Overall Assumption towards the brand image of the university	4.12	0.846	4.06	0.836
Perceived quality	3.97	0.690	3.90	0.810
Price	3.56	1.021	3.63	.969
Quality of Lecturers	4.05	0.718	3.83	1.103
Quality of Education	3.97	0.802	3.97	0.802
Service Quality of Senior Staff	3.92	0.811	3.98	0.786
Service Quality of Student Support	3.90	0.891	3.75	1.153
Service Quality of Non-Academic Staff	3.96	0.806	3.75	1.108
Quality of Career Opportunities	3.79	0.906	3.76	0.911
Brand Personality	3.94	0.847	3.89	0.832
Social Image Contribution	3.95	0.904	3.80	1.176
Physical Quality and Facilities	4.01	0.924	3.79	0.983
Campus Facilities	4.11	0.768	4.04	.754
Library	3.99	0.792	3.87	.818
Online Facilities	3.94	0.866	3.87	.875

Student ideal self-congruence	3.93	0.885	3.88	0.966
Understanding of the Student's Expectations by the University	3.92	0.773	3.87	0.840
Students' Growth Mindset	3.94	0.925	3.96	0.989
Students' Ambition and Commitment to Learning	4.02	0.816	3.97	0.827
University's capabilities to provide academic skills	4.13	0.763	3.91	0.843
Ability to create a good impression among friends	3.87	1.009	3.87	1.074
University's ability to fulfil the students' desires and passion	4.08	0.713	3.96	0.860
Student satisfaction	4.22	0.828	3.97	0.867
Programme management	4.19	0.689	3.97	.804
Teaching quality of lecturers	4.30	0.729	4.07	.837
Service quality of the University Staff	4.22	0.696	3.91	.848
Physical facilities	4.16	0.739	3.92	.853
Quality Assurance	4.19	0.716	3.98	.783
Overall satisfaction with the perceived quality	4.28	0.704	4.00	.792
Brand loyalty	4.15	0.925	3.87	0.945
Willingness to study with the University for the further education	4.16	0.707	3.88	.867
Willingness to recommend the University to the others	4.13	0.717	3.97	.811
Willingness to share good things about the University	4.15	0.736	4.03	.798
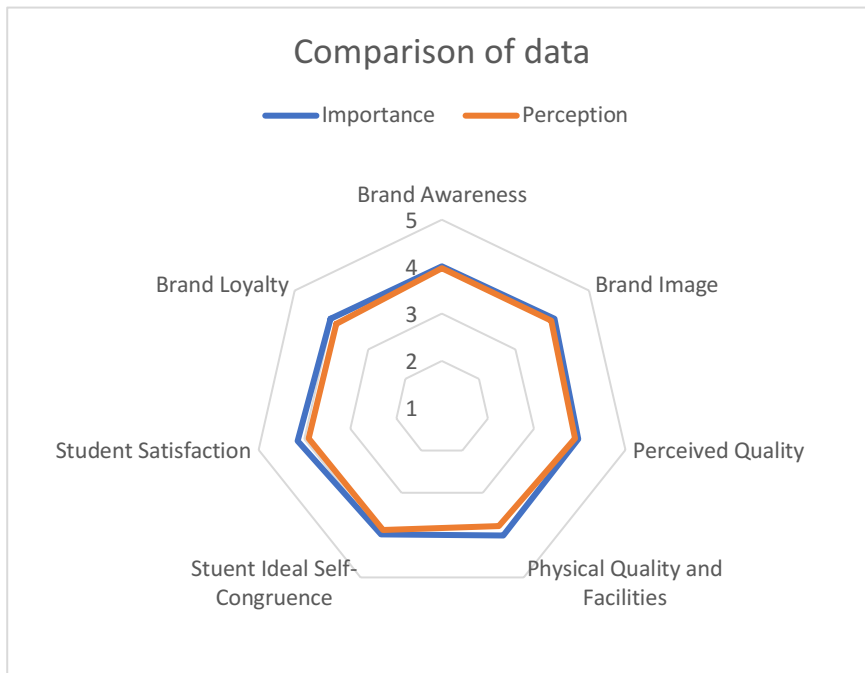
Figure 4. 6: Comparison of the mean level of the importance of Brand Equity Determinants that students preferred and current students' perception of them
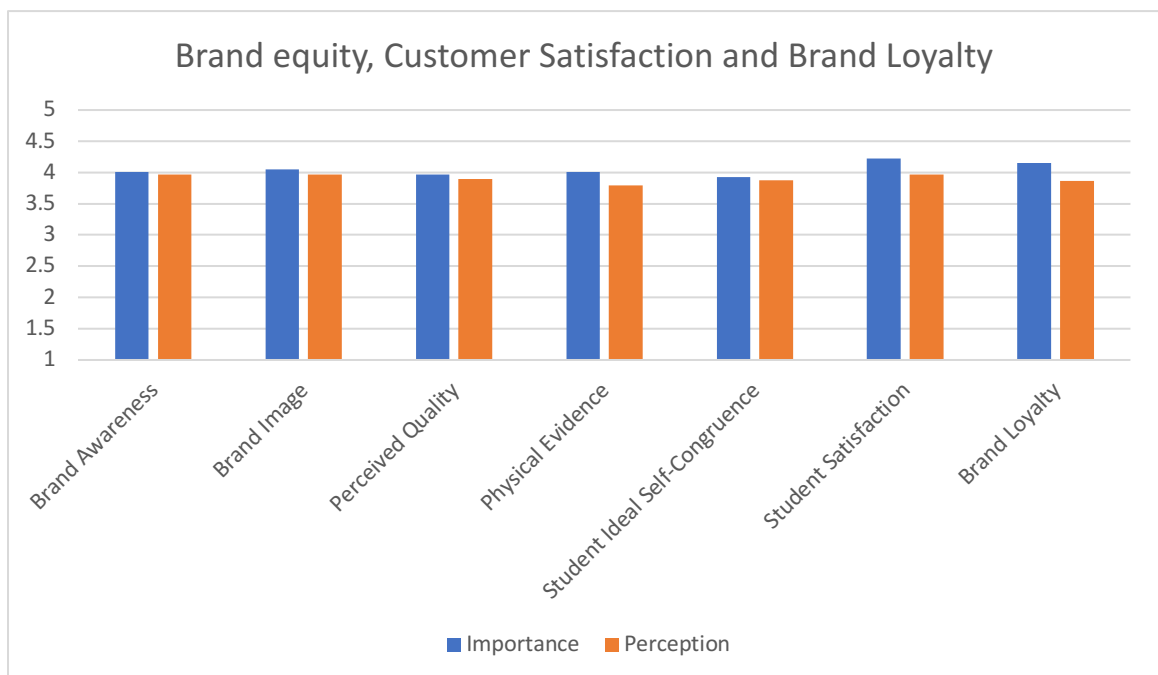
Figure 4. 7: Comparison of the mean level of the importance of Brand equity determinants that students preferred and current students' perception of them

In the figures of (4.6) and (4.7), the six determinants for Student Satisfaction also have high levels of mean importance, as observed in Programme Management with (mean=4.19),

Teaching quality of lecturers with (mean=4.30), Service quality of University Staff with (mean=4.22), Physical facilities with (mean=4.16), Quality assurance with (mean=4.19) and Overall satisfaction with the perceived quality with (mean=4.28). The student perception towards student satisfaction indicates (3.97). The six determinants for Student Satisfaction also have the following perception mean: Programme Management with (mean=3.97), Teaching quality of lecturers with (mean=4.07), Service quality of University Staff with (mean=3.91), Physical facilities with (mean=3.92), Quality assurance with (mean=3.98) and Overall satisfaction with the perceived quality with (mean=4.00).

4.5: The relationship between the Brand equity Determinants, Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty

4.5.1: Findings for the Relationship between Brand Equity Dimensions: Correlations Results

In this section, the correlation analysis is used to investigate the relationship between Brand Equity determinants, Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. The following hypotheses are proposed to be tested and analysed for this study.

H1: Brand awareness has a positive influence on customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H2: Brand image has a positive influence on customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H3: Perceived quality has a positive influence on customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H4: Physical Qualities and Facilities have a positive influence on customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H5: Students' ideal self-congruence has a positive influence on Customer satisfaction in the creation of customer-based brand equity.

H6: Brand loyalty is impacted by customer satisfaction, and the higher the customer satisfaction, the more the university has loyal students.

H7: Brand loyalty can be considered the outcome of the brand equity determinants in the customer-based brand equity creation process in the Myanmar higher education sector.

4.5.2: Pearson Correlation Result for the Relationship between Brand Equity Determinants

Pearson Correlation is utilised to explore the relationship of each determinant to brand loyalty since there are two quantitative variables. Correlation analysis can be used to find out the relationship between two or more sets of variables. In the Pearson Correlation, the Correlation Coefficient lies between "-1" to "+1". The positive value of the correlation indicated that there is a relationship between brand equity determinants. The higher the value of the coefficient, the stronger the relationship. The less negative the coefficient value, the less the relationship. The result is presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4. 10 : Pearson Correlation Result for the relationship between Brand equity determinants and Students' perception towards brand dimensions of MIU)

		Brand Awareness	Brand Image	Perceived Quality	Physical Quality & Facilities	Student Ideal Self Congruence	Customer Satisfaction	Brand Loyalty
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)							
	N	230						
Brand Image	Pearson Correlation	.661**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000						
	N	230	230					
	Pearson Correlation	.484**	.625**	1				

Perceived Quality	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
	N	230	230	230			
Physical Quality & Facilities	Pearson Correlation	.519**	.728**	.622**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000			
	N	230	230	230	230		
Student Ideal Self Congruence	Pearson Correlation	.576**	.706**	.410**	.604**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	230	230	230	230	230	
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.636**	.698**	.503**	.696**	.769**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	230	230	230	230	230	230
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.649**	.694**	.488**	.649**	.686**	.811**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	230	230	230	230	230	230	230

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

The table indicates a moderate to a high correlation between the brand equity dimensions. Customer satisfaction has the highest correlation (r = .811) with brand loyalty. The second highest correlation is between student ideal self-congruence and customer satisfaction (r = .769). The third highest correlation is brand image with physical qualities and facilities (r = .728). Student ideal self-congruence is found to have a low correlation with perceived quality (r= .410). Perceived quality is also found to have a low correlation with brand awareness (r =

.484). All the dimensions are positively correlated. It was also found that they are significantly correlated with other dimensions at a 1% significance level, indicating that all the brand equity dimensions are somehow related.

Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty have the highest relationship (0.811) and are significant at 1%. As there is the highest relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, it can be considered that the higher the customer satisfaction, the higher the loyalty.

4.5.3: Regression Analysis of the Brand Equity Determinants and Customer Satisfaction

H1: Brand awareness has a positive impact on customer satisfaction in creating customer-based brand equity. (Accepted)

The linear regression analysis tool is used to estimate the impact of brand awareness on Customer satisfaction. The estimated result is presented in the following Table (4.11) and (4.12). The ANOVA table shows the F statistic and significance value is 154.864, and 0.000 respectively. It is significant at 1 % in the study, so the regression model is fit and good.

Table 4. 11: Summary ANOVA result for the Causality between brand awareness and Customer satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	69.623	1	69.623	154.864	.000[b]
Residual	102.503	228	.450		
Total	172.126	229			

The estimated result from Table (4.12) revealed the impact of brand awareness with a strong and positive effect on Customer satisfaction at a 1 % significant level. The coefficient of the impact value for brand awareness is 0.636, the t -value for the regression is 12.444, and P-value is 0.000. The estimated results showed that they are significantly and strongly related at a 1 per cent significance level. Therefore, it is considered that the hypothesis is accepted, and brand awareness has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Brand Recognition,

Brand Recall, Marketing and Advertising Activities, Word of Mouth Recommendations are all considered important for the creation of brand awareness.

Table 4. 12: Estimated Regression Result of the Causality between Brand Awareness and Customer Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.916	.244		3.747	.000
brand awareness	.754	.061	.636	12.444	.000
n=230 R=0.636, R²=0.404, Adjusted R²=0.402, Standard Error of Estimate = 0.6705					

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction; b. Predictors: (Constant), brand awareness

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

H2: The brand image has a positive influence on customer satisfaction in creating customer-based brand equity. (Accepted)

This study continues the impact of brand image on customer satisfaction in creating customer-based brand equity in Myanmar Higher Education. The estimated results are presented in the following Table (4.13) and (4.14). The ANOVA tables show the F statistic and significance value is 216.797, and 0.000 respectively. It is significant at 1 % in the study, so the regression model is fit and good for the research.

Table 4. 13: Summary of ANOVA result for the Causality between brand image and Customer satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	83.895	1	83.895	216.797	.000[b]
Residual	88.231	228	.387		
Total	172.126	229			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction   b. Predictors: (Constant), brand image

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

Table 4. 14: Estimated Regression Result of the Causality between brand image and Customer satisfaction

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.997	.202		4.937	.000
brand image	.733	.050	.698	14.724	.000
n=230 R=0.698, R²=0.487, Adjusted R²=0.485, Standard Error of Estimate = 0.6221					

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction   b. Predictors: (Constant), brand image

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

The coefficient value of the brand image on customer satisfaction is (0.698), the t-statistics is (14.724), and the p-value is (0.000). The estimated results showed that they are significantly and strongly related at a 1 % significance level. The hypothesis is accepted, and it can be concluded that brand image has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and the material heritage of MIU, trustworthiness, service quality both in academic and non-academic aspects, reputation, willingness to recommend MIU to others.

H3: Perceived quality has a positive influence on customer satisfaction in creating customer-based brand equity. (Accepted)

The estimated results are presented in the following Table (4.15) and (4.16). The ANOVA tables show the F-statistic and significance value is 77.311 and 0.000, respectively. It is significant at 1 % in the study, so the regression model is fit and good in the research.

Table 4. 15: Summary of ANOVA result for the Causality between perceived quality and Customer satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	43.586	1	43.586	77.311	.000[b]
Residual	128.540	228	.564		
Total	172.126	229			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction   b. Predictors: (Constant), perceived quality

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

Table 4. 16:Estimated Regression Result of the Causality between perceived quality and Customer satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.806	.244		7.399	.000
perceived quality	.538	.061	.503	8.793	.000
n=230 R=0.503, R^2=0.253, Adjusted R^2=0.250, Standard Error of Estimate = 0.7509					

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction   b. Predictors: (Constant), perceived quality

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

According to the result, the coefficient value of the brand image on customer satisfaction is (0.503), the t-statistic is (8.793), and the p-value is (0.000). The estimated results showed that they are significantly and strongly related at a 1 % significance level. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and 9 items of perceived quality are important to create student satisfaction.

H4: Physical Qualities and Facilities have a positive influence on customer satisfaction in creating customer-based brand equity. (Accepted)

The estimated results are presented in the following Table (4.17) and (4.18). The ANOVA tables show the F-statistic and significant value is 214.398 and 0.000 respectively. It is significant at any level in the study, so the regression model is fit and goodness in the research.

Table 4. 17: Summary of ANOVA result for the Causality between Physical Qualities and Facilities and Customer satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	83.417	1	83.417	214.398	.000[b]
Residual	88.709	228	.389		
Total	172.126	229			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction   b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical Qualities and Facilities   Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

Table 4. 18: Estimated Regression Result of the Causality between   Physical Qualities and Facilities and Customer satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.582	.164		9.643	.000
Physical Qualities and Facilities	.614	.042	.696	14.642	.000
n=230 R=0.696, R^2=0.485, Adjusted R^2=0.482, Standard Error of Estimate = 0.6238					

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical Qualities and Facilities   Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

According to the result, the coefficient value of the brand image on Customer satisfaction is (0.696), t-statistics is (14.642), and the p-value is (0.000). The estimated results showed that they are positively significant at a 1 % significance level. The hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that physical quality and facilities have a positive and significant effect on

customer satisfaction. The university could focus on the campus facilities, library, Imperial Portal, and student satisfaction in improving physical quality and facilities.

H5: Student ideal self-congruence is a positive influence on customer satisfaction in creating customer-based brand equity. (Accepted)

The estimated results are presented in the following Table (4.19) and (4.20). The ANOVA tables show the F-statistic and significant value is 329.141 and 0.000 respectively. It is significant at any level in the study, so the regression model is fit and goodness in the research.

Table 4. 19 : Estimated Regression Result of the Causality between Student ideal self-congruence and Facilities and Customer satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	101.686	1	101.686	329.141	.000[b]
Residual	70.439	228	.309		
Total	172.126	229			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction   b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical Qualities and Facilities   Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

Table 4. 20: Estimated Regression Result of the Causality between student ideal self-congruence and customer satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.228	.152		8.067	.000
Student ideal self-congruence	.690	.038	.769	18.142	.000
n=230 R=0.769, R^2=0.591, Adjusted R^2=0.589, Standard Error of Estimate = 0.5558					

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction b. Predictors: (Constant), Student ideal self-congruence   Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

Based on the findings, overall, *student ideal self-congruence* has a positive and significant impact on the customer satisfaction of MIU. According to the result, the coefficient value of the *student ideal self-congruence* on customer satisfaction is (0.769), t-statistics is (18.142), and the p-value is (0.000). The estimated results showed that they are positively significant at a 1 % significance level. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted, and *student ideal self-congruence* has an impact on Customer satisfaction. The university can focus on understanding the students' expectations of the university, Students' Growth Mindset, Students' Ambition and Commitment to Learning, and the university's capabilities to provide academic skills, Ability to create a good impression among friends, the university's ability to fulfil the students' desire and passion in creating Student Ideal, Self-Congruence.

H6: Brand loyalty is impacted by customer satisfaction, and the higher the customer satisfaction, the more the university has loyal students. (Accepted)

The Linear regression analysis is used to explore the causal relationship of the student satisfaction, brand equity determinants and brand loyalty. Efforts have been made in recent decades to consistently investigate the causal relations between the variables. Linear Regression is a comprehensive statistical approach to test hypotheses about the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable.

The sixth hypothesis in the study is to test the impact of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty. The estimated results are presented in the following Table (4.21) and (4.22). In this hypothesis, customer satisfaction is considered the independent variable, and brand loyalty is the dependent variable. As mentioned in the following ANOVA, the estimated result for F-statistic and significant value is 439.375. and 0.000 respectively. It is significant at 1 % in the study, which means the model specification of the research fits the study. The hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4. 21: Summary of ANOVA results for the Causality between Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	134.623	1	134.623	439.375	.000[b]
Residual	69.858	228	.306		
Total	204.481	229			

a. Dependent Variable: brand loyalty   b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer satisfaction

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

Table 4. 22: Estimated Regression Result of the Causality between Customer satisfaction and brand loyalty

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.417	.169		2.470	.014
Customer satisfaction	.884	.042	.811	20.961	.000
n=230 R=0.811, R²=0.658, Adjusted R²=0.657, Standard Error of Estimate = 0.5535					

a. Dependent Variable: brand loyalty   b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer satisfaction

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

The findings revealed that overall customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the brand loyalty of MIU. According to the result, the coefficient value of customer satisfaction is (0.811), t- statistics is (20.961), and the p-value is (0.000). The estimated results showed that they are significantly and strongly related at a 1 % significance level. In this case, Hypothesis (6) is considered acceptable.

H7: Brand loyalty can be considered the outcome of the brand equity determinants in the customer-based brand equity creation process in the Myanmar Higher Education Sector. (Accepted)

In this hypothesis, brand equity determinants are considered independent variables, and brand loyalty dependent. The estimated results are presented in the following Table (4.23)

and (4.24). As mentioned in the following ANOVA, the estimated result for the F value and significant value is 336.401 and 0.000 respectively. It is significant at 1 % in the study, which means that the research's model specification fits the study.

Table 4. 23: Summary of ANOVA Results for the causality between brand equity and brand loyalty

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	121.877	1	121.877	336.401	.000[b]
Residual	82.604	228	.362		
Total	204.481	229			

a. Dependent Variable: brand loyalty   b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand equity

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

Table 4. 24: Estimated Regression Result of the causality between brand equity and brand loyalty

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.133	.222		-.601	.549
Brand equity	1.026	.056	.772	18.341	.000
n=230 R=0.772 R^2=0.596 Adjusted R^2=0.594 Standard Error of Estimate = 0.60191					

a. Dependent Variable: brand loyalty   b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand equity

Source: (Survey Data, March 2021)

According to the above result, the t-statistics of brand equity on brand loyalty is (18.341), and the p-value is (0.000). The findings revealed that overall brand equity significantly affects the brand loyalty of MIU. The coefficient value of brand equity is (0.772). The estimated results showed that brand equity and brand loyalty are significantly and directly related at a 1 per cent significance level. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. The estimated result indicated that brand loyalty is considered the outcome, and brand equity determinants impacted it since the calculated impact is positive and significant.

4.6: Exploring students' insight with open questions from the Survey Questionnaire

This session will explore the students' insight with the support of open questions from the Survey questionnaire and a focus group with students to understand the current situation of MIU. The survey findings and the regression analysis indicated that the proposed conceptual framework is accepted. The evidence indicated that brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, students' ideal self-congruence and physical facilities had impacted the creation of customer satisfaction in creating brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is considered the outcome. The survey data and focus group indicated the role and importance of customer satisfaction.

4.6.1: Students' Expectations from MIU (Survey Questionnaire)

The open-ended questions of the survey questionnaire indicated 10 expectations from their university brand.

Table 4. 25: The top 10 things that students expect from MIU (Survey Questionnaire)

The 10 things that the students expect from MIU (Survey Questionnaire)	
1	Most of the students expect to have great career opportunities and network for their future.
2	Internationally Recognized High-Quality Education
3	Great Campus Life
4	Bigger Library with a variety of books and references
5	Qualified Lecturers with real-life work experience
6	More foreign lecturers
7	More Excursion and Industrial Visit
8	Real-life Knowledge Sharing Sessions
9	Prompt Response and Information,
10	expect Good Communication Skill of the student service staffs to the students.

4.6.2: Characteristics of the Students' Ideal University Brand (Survey Questionnaire)

Understanding the students' insight about their ideal university can lead to an excellent understanding of other higher education providers. The study also explored the perfect university for the students with that purpose in mind.

Table 4. 26: Characteristics of the Students' Ideal University Brand (Survey Questionnaire)

Characteristics of the Students' Ideal University Brand	
1	Delivers very well-respected foreign degrees
2	Provides good career opportunities with extracurricular club activities
3	Has a course structure and fees which are suitable and not too expensive
4	Is highly ranked among competitors with a prestigious curriculum
5	Has good teachers with a great teaching style and delivery.

4.6.3: Characteristics of the Students' Ideal Lecturer (Survey Questionnaire)

The quantitative data also indicated that the quality of lecturers' teaching skills is the most important aspect of choosing a university brand, with the highest mean score for the importance of lecturers in choosing a university. The survey result highlighted the role of lecturers in higher education in improving student satisfaction. Thus, this study also explored the ideal teaching style of the students' ideal lecturer with the support of a focus group discussion. During the focus group discussion, the participants repeatedly highlighted the role of teaching style and lecturers.

Table 4. 27: The main Characteristics of Students' ideal University Lecturer (Survey Questionnaire)

The main Characteristics of students' ideal lecturer (Survey Questionnaire)	
1	To have excellent academic knowledge and practitioners' knowledge
2	To deliver 50% of academic knowledge strictly, and 50% of knowledge-sharing with real-world examples and practices
3	To be supportive of students' learning and provide regular feedback for assignment improvements
4	To share their personal stories
5	To express warmth and friendliness

4.6.4: Creative marketing ideas and practices from the students' perspectives to create strong brand equity (Survey Questionnaire)

Table 4. 28: Creative Marketing ideas and practices from Students (Survey Questionnaire)

Creative marketing ideas and practices from students to create a strong brand equity (Survey Questionnaire)	
1	MIU to focus on social contributions and create a positive brand image
2	Students recommend shooting video campaigns expressing MIU's success story, and interview clips of students' university experiences are recommended to express the reality of student life
3	Video and commercial campaigns can be run with internal staff, team members and management of the university expressing their humble and

	warm feelings to showcase the great working atmosphere among the MIU staff and faculty members, and the excellent working culture and environment of the university
4	Weekly knowledge-sharing posts can be uploaded on social media, positively contributing to society
5	Creating short content and more activities on social media, especially on Facebook, are recommended.
6	Suggested short interview clips from professors and sharing knowledge as a social contribution.

4.6.5: The areas in which students are satisfied with MIU (Survey Questionnaire)

Table 4. 29 : The areas in which students are satisfied with MIU (Survey Questionnaire)

The areas in which students are satisfied with MIU (Survey Questionnaire)	
1	The university's grand building and facilities.
2	The lecturers' teaching quality and styles.
3	MIU's brand image that gives good impressions on personal and professional life.
4	Course structure and modules.
5	Perfect impression of MIU Family.
6	Educational support services provided by the university, such as assignment writing support, Imperial Learning Platform, and additional academic support sessions.

7	University life with excellent campus facilities.
8	Quality education with case study approach, group work, industrial visits, networking, and tea parties.

4.6.6: The area that did not satisfy students at MIU (Survey Questionnaire)

Table 4. 30 : The areas that students are not satisfied with MIU (Survey Questionnaire)

The areas in which students are satisfied with MIU (Survey Questionnaire)	
1	Improving the university's academic quality with the support of 3-day intensive workshops, seminars, and more group activities
2	The empathy of the lecturers
3	Faster student services
4	Student Support department to inform changes and update them from time to time
5	More scholarship programmes and courses

The areas that students want MIU to focus on are to keep on improving the university's academic quality with the support of 3-day intensive workshops, seminars, and more group activities. The empathy of the lecturers should be enhanced, and faster student services should be implemented. Students expect the Student Support department to inform changes and update them from time to time. More scholarship programmes and courses are recommended, so that they can attend the course of choice.

4.6.7: Students' Challenges and Barriers to Effective Learning (Survey Questionnaire)

The survey results indicated some of the challenges that students are facing now. They are:

Table 4. 31: Students' Challenges and Barriers to Effective Learning (Survey Questionnaire)

Students' Challenges and Barriers to effective learning (Survey Questionnaire)	
1	Difficulties with online learning, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic,
2	Struggling with English proficiency and assignment writing techniques
3	Not having updated information from Student Support,
4	Difficulty getting familiar with the digital learning system,
5	Not having enough feedback and guidance from lecturers
6	Communication barriers between Student Support and students
7	Communication barriers between lecturers and students
8	The political situation in Myanmar and the pandemic situation.

4.6.8: Suggestions and Recommendations from Students to improve Student satisfaction (Survey Questionnaire)

Table 4. 32: Suggestions and Recommendations from Students to improve MIU (Survey Questionnaire)

Suggestions and Recommendations from Students to improve Student satisfaction (Survey Questionnaire).	
1	Maintain the good quality of communication at MIU with students,
2	Promote lecturers' profiles and share their videos as well as their word-of-mouth recommendations via social media channels,
3	Continue arranging the UON Summer Programme
4	Encourage students to study English skills by providing them with special value-added classes to improve their English proficiency and academic writing practices for an effective learning journey
5	Encourage students to do more presentations in classroom activities during lectures,
6	Suggest lecturers use a wide range of teaching methods, such as storytelling and relating theories with practical applications, and
7	Encourage students to make effective use of the CV template provided by MIU.

4.7: Exploring students' insight with open questions from the Survey Questionnaire and Focus Group discussion

Focus Group Discussion Size

Table 4. 33: Focus Group Discussion Size

Student Type	Number in Group	Respondents' characteristics
HND	4	2 Male,2 Female
MBA	4	3 Female,1 Male
Bachelor	4	2 Male,2 Female

Focus Group Discussion procedure

12 students attending the HND, Bachelor and MBA programmes were included in the focus group discussion on gathering student insights for Creating a Strong Brand Equity of MIU.

It is suggested that it is ideal for the focus group to have a moderator team (Krueger & Casey, 2000).As discussed earlier, the Trustworthiness Committee performed as a moderative team. This team typically comprises a moderator and an assistant moderator. The moderator is responsible for facilitating the discussion, prompting members to speak, requesting overly talkative members to let others talk, and encouraging all the members to participate with the focus group discussion the moderator is responsible for taking notes that inform potential emergent questions to ask to further the discussion if it is needed. In this study, the moderator presented the focus group participants with a series of questions and took notes.

The focus group data was collected in the form of audiotapes of the participants and notes from the moderator. The researcher used the actual text that each of the participants stated during the focus group and which the assistant moderator transcribed (Krueger & Casey, 2000) .All of these transcribed data and notes are analysed. They stated that transcript-based analysis is the most rigorous and time-intensive way of analysing qualitative data, and the audio-taped or Videotaped will take around 50-70 pages per focus group discussion. Those transcribed data are analyzed alongside the field notes constructed by the moderator by the researcher to understand the situation and develop the theme of the findings. After that, the researcher creates a shorter version of the transcripts (abridged transcript), which allows the

researcher to pay attention to the main theme of the findings. This type of analysis is helpful because the researcher can focus on the research question and only transcribe the portions that assist in a better understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Onwuegbuzie, et al., 2009). The researcher also used note-based analysis. The researcher used the notes and the summary from the moderator and assistant moderator. The researcher coded the data and presented emergent themes derived from the findings. The researcher used classical content analysis by creating smaller chunks of the data and creating a code with each chunk. (Onwuegbuzie, et al., 2009).The findings from the focus group are discussed as follows.

Discussion Findings

Students were also questioned through semi-structured interview questions about three areas of MIU: Brand Image and awareness, Areas of Improvement, and Areas of Excellence. Each area is explained in detail below.

4.7.1: The Source of Brand Awareness (Focus Group)

Where did you hear about the University?

Table 4. 34: Sources of Brand Awareness (Focus Group)

Sources of Brand Awareness	
1.	Word-of-Mouth
2.	Facebook
3.	Local Radio

It is concluded that a majority of our students first heard about our University from personal recommendations and Word-of-Mouth. WoM is proven to be an effective and inexpensive marketing strategy as your customers spread the word about our University for us.

"I heard from Word-of-Mouth and personal networks, and then Facebook after researching different universities. I considered MIU to be the most interesting out of all." (HND Student)

"I was researching about the University's structure, campus building and culture on Facebook and found it very prestigious. Patient responses from the Student Support team attracted me to attend MIU." (Bachelor Student)

"I learned about MIU through personal networks. I also believe MIU's syllabus, subjects and lecturers fulfil my gap in education." (MBA student)

"I heard about MIU on the local radio channel in 2015. The phone number 09 73210001 was also easy to remember." (MBA student)

"I got a Word-of-Mouth recommendation from a close friend about MIU. I trusted it as I believe MIU will give me the best education possible." (Bachelor Student)

4.7.2: Students' perception on the Brand Image of MIU (Focus Group)

What do you think about the Brand Image of MIU? When you hear MIU, what comes first in your mind?

Table 4. 35: Student's Perception on the Brand Image of MIU   (Focus Group)

The student's Perception on the Brand Image of MIU	
1.	Grand campus building,
2.	Architecture,
3.	Campus Facilities
4.	Prestigious education
5.	Module teaching style and school services

After analysing these replies, we can safely believe that MIU's Brand Image is very prestigious and impressive in the eyes of many, including our students. Different aspects of our University like the physical facilities and services, faculty and team members, current students and alumni, awarding universities and career opportunities are all considered.

"I was Googling different universities, and my first impression of MIU's Brand Image stood out. The grand campus building, architecture, facilities, prestigious education, module

teaching style and school services all represent MIU. I also think of the warm, supportive relationship between lecturers and students when I hear MIU." (Bachelor Student)

"When I hear about MIU, I immediately think of my lecturers, friends, and the close community that MIU has built for us. For example, Tr. Poht and Tr. Soe are two figureheads of MIU."(Bachelor Student)

"When I went for a job interview at AYA Bank, they immediately considered me with high regard when I told them I am an MIU student. They even accepted me based on that. MIU's Brand Image truly differentiates itself from other competitors, and in my case, it grants many job opportunities at large, well-known corporations." (HND Student)

4.7.3.: Characteristics of the Students' Ideal University Brand (Focus Group)

What are the characteristics of your Ideal University Brand?

Table 4. 36: The characteristics of students' Ideal University Brand (Focus Group)

The characteristics of students' Ideal University Brand	
1.	Internationally recognised high-quality education when it is taught by experienced lecturers with real-life experience
2.	Real-life knowledge-sharing sessions
3.	Better career opportunities
4.	Good communication skills from Student Support staff to students
5.	Great campus life, a big library and great canteen
6	Up-to-date information with prompt response in dealing with issues
7.	Qualified lecturers with real-life work experience
8.	Students also expect to have a course structure and fees which are suitable and not too expensive
9.	A prestigious curriculum
10.	Excellent online learning platform
11.	University to have good teachers with a great teaching style delivery

Understanding student expectations can support higher education providers in prioritising their management functions. The data revealed that students expect internationally recognised high-quality education when it is taught by experienced lecturers with real-life experience, real-life knowledge-sharing sessions, better career opportunities, internship opportunities, good communication skills from Student Support staff to students, up-to-date information with prompt response in dealing with issues, excursion visits, excellent online learning platform, great campus life, a big library and great canteen, qualified lecturers with real-life work experience. Students also expect to have a course structure and fees which are suitable and not too expensive; they expect their university to be highly ranked among competitors, with a prestigious curriculum, and they expect their university to have good teachers with a great teaching style delivery.

Students expect their ideal university to provide well-respected foreign degrees and good career opportunities; they said,

"My ideal university is prestigious and grants me a well-respected foreign degree, even if I cannot go abroad. I want the people around me to recognise the university from which I graduate immediately. The lecturers will be supportive and expand my perspectives so that I grow more open-minded. Since I work part-time, my ideal university also gives the perfect balance between my job and studies." *(MBA Student)*

It is also supported by another student's discussions, saying,

"My ideal university gives prestigious UK degrees. The course structure and fees will also be suitable and not too expensive. The lecturers' teaching style will be student-centred and supportive of all learning needs." *(MBA Student)*

Being highly ranked among competitors and standing out from the competitors can also be a reason to choose MIU in the higher education sector. One student said,

"My ideal university is highly ranked among competitors, with a prestigious curriculum and reasonable tuition fees. It gives many career opportunities and a high percentage of job

acceptance. There will also be many extracurricular club activities and opportunities to grow my skills." (Bachelor Student)

4.7.4: Characteristics of the Students' Ideal Lecturer (Focus Group)

What are the teaching styles of your Ideal Lecturer?

Table 4. 37: Characteristics of the Students' Ideal Lecturer (Focus Group)

Characteristics of the Students' Ideal Lecturer (Focus Group)	
1.	Have excellent Academic knowledge and be able to share managerial practices for students for their business and lives
2.	Have Empathy and Love to the students
3.	Provide Regular Feedback for their improvement
4.	Sharing Personal Experiences and Stories
5.	Motivate, educate, and use student-centred approach

During the conversation, students said that lecturers are an important reason they decided to continue studying at MIU. They also stated that lecturers play a significant role in their satisfaction with the university. In this case, this study intends to explore the students' preferred teaching style of the lecturer. They said,

"My ideal lecturer is not always formal. I like it when lecturers give endearing nicknames to students and treat us with warmth and friendliness. Another aspect I like is the storytelling in lectures. The lecturer will use some lecture time to tell us stories and answer questions we want to know." (HND Student)

Inspiration can also be the fundamental cause of trusting a lecturer. They expect their lecturers to share personal stories.

"My ideal lecturer will build trust by sharing personal stories. I want them to teach theories and concepts 50% of the time and share their experiences and life stories for another 50% of the lecture." (MBA student)

They also want their lecturers to be very supportive of student learning and expect their lecturers to provide feedback on time to improve their quality of education. The student said,

"My ideal lecturer is very supportive of student learning development and always gives feedback on my assignments and my progress." (MBA student)

"Very well educated with knowledge and wisdom. "(HND student)

"The one who can express Empathy." (Bachelor Student)

"Lecturer with student-centred approach." (HND Student)

"My ideal Professor is the one who has a solid understanding of the academic theories, leads us with managerial business practices and who can be able to explain the case studies." (MBA Student)

4.7.5: Creative marketing ideas and practices from the students' perspectives to create strong brand equity (Focus Group Discussion)

Table 4. 38: Creative Marketing ideas and Practices from Students to create a stronger MIU Brand (Focus Group)

Creative marketing ideas and practices from Students to create a strong brand	
1	Commercials reflecting student life, academic quality and teaching styles
2	Students suggested using student experience - sharing ads for each programme for effective marketing
3	Sharing ads for each programme for effective marketing
4	Be visible in places where students visited frequently (e.g.: *cinemas, shopping malls, and resorts, shopping centres, movie theatres, partner shops and organisations,*
5	*Focusing on digital marketing and social media channels to improve brand awareness.*

6	A special arrangement for staff members and students as a marketing activity
7	CSR -Corporate Social Responsibility activities
8	Presenting Academic Quality and Learning Tradition

The focus group discussion also highlighted the role of the brand's contribution to society. The part played by the brand image was also brought up. Commercials reflecting student life, academic quality and teaching styles are recommended to be highlighted by the students. Students suggested using student experience-sharing ads for each programme for effective marketing. A special arrangement for staff members and students as a marketing activity could be considered. MIU could then collaborate with these venues to provide benefits and privileges for students or offer redeemable vouchers if they visit these places regularly.

"Extraordinary alumni, staff and students benefits also need to be arranged by having corporate partners and for awareness purposes." (MBA Student)

During the focus group discussion, the role of Digital Marketing arose. Apart from Digital Marketing, students also highlighted the need to be more visible in below-the-line marketing. A student said,

"As usual, apart from Digital Marketing, MIU can explore places students frequently visit, like cinemas, shopping malls, and resorts. MIU should be more visible in shopping centres, movie theatres, partner shops and organisations, focusing on digital marketing and social media channels to improve brand awareness." (Bachelor student)

It is very surprising that most students recommended that MIU focus on social marketing instead of promoting the university.

"To create a positive brand image and awareness among the public regarding the patriotic movements and contributions of MIU to society and the country." (MBA student)

4.7.6: The areas that in which students are satisfied with MIU (Focus Group)

Students consider MIU a prestigious quality education provider with grand campus facilities, and they are pleased with the faculty and brand image of the University. They feel MIU is different from other institutions, reflecting a desire to positively maintain Myanmar culture. Five main areas that students like about MIU are:

Table 4. 39: The main areas that students like about MIU (Focus Group)

The main areas that students like about MIU	
1.	University's grand building and facilities
2.	Lecturers' teaching quality and styles
3.	MIU Brand Image that gives good impressions in personal and professional life
4.	Course structure and modules
5.	Perfect impression of MIU Family

During the focus group discussion one of the students stated,

"From the time that I started to pursue my education at MIU, I have had a strong family-oriented sense of belongingness and love from the staff and faculty members, and for me, attending MIU every day, is bliss. I also improved my English and writing skills from the group presentation and a written assignment that I had to carry out at MIU. Back then, writing a 1000-word assignment was a challenging task." (Bachelor Student)

 Additionally, as a registered student at MIU,
" I can acquire access to the Imperial Portal, where I can easily submit assignments, carry out plagiarism tests, and know my results at ease online, which I am proud of as an MIU student." (Bachelor Student)

During the focus group discussion, one student said,

"MIU's facilities, architecture and building are the most stunning and best for first impressions compared to other universities." (Bachelor Student)

Students also seem to be very happy with the lecturers.

"MIU lecturers are very caring and supported me through difficult times. It is mainly because of them that I kept studying my programme." (HND Student)

Other students also support this during the discussion.

"I always remember my Lecturer quoted Brian Tracy in her lessons, so I started reading his book 'Sales Success. Now, I've read it three times and implemented his advice into my daily life. This is one of the good practices I get from lecturers' knowledge-sharing." (MBA Student)

"I like those lecturers who give detailed explanations with simple and easy-to-understand words. Lecturers also motivate me to keep working hard towards the goal I desire in life." (MBA Student)

Students are also satisfied with the brand image of the University.

"When I went for a job interview at AYA Bank, they immediately considered me with high regard when I told them I am an MIU student. They even accepted me based on that. MIU's brand image will give many job opportunities at large, well-known corporations." (Bachelor Student)

4.7.7: The area that did not satisfy students at MIU (Focus Group)

From the focus group findings, it is concluded that there are several areas that the students did not like about their university. Understanding the areas students do not like is critical, so that higher education providers can focus on those areas to improve student satisfaction. The areas that the students do not like are:

Table 4. 40: The main areas that students do not like about MIU (Focus Group)

Five main areas that students want MIU to improve.	
1.	Focus on Student Services Quality and provide more patient, warm and responsive support
2.	Focus on communication to fix the communication gap with teachers and Student Support
3.	Provide Supplementary classes to improve academic English and assignment writing
4.	Focus on Job interview and career preparations
5.	Introduction of extracurricular activities, business challenges and competitions
6.	Some lecturers not balancing academic aspects and work-related practices
7.	Not having intensive workshops and seminars for assignment writing and career preparation.
8.	Not having sufficient certificate courses

The list of responses from students are as follows:

"There is a Value Gap between Perceived and Actual Value for Student Services team. There are students like me who finished IGCSEs, O-Levels and A-Levels, but we are not given exemptions and must start from IFP. I would like regular communication and updates from Student Services, exemption from certain modules and supplementary English and assignment writing classes for students." (Bachelor Student)

"I want to suggest more in-depth coaching to support postgraduate students' thesis preparation. It would be nice if lecturers can carefully monitor and collaborate with us during thesis preparation." (MBA Student)

"There is a big communication gap with students. I'd like to suggest for MIU send newsletter emails to give updates or set up a Student Blog like UoN so they can voice their opinions. I also

want more extracurricular clubs for students." (Bachelor Student)

"When I go in for job interviews, I want the companies to immediately recognise the areas that MIU excels in. This is why I want higher Academic Quality for students. I also want more extracurriculars." (Bachelor Student)

"I want to suggest more emphasis on Mental Training and Counselling. Student Services team alone cannot care for students' wellbeing and mental health." (HND Student)

"I would like to see more self-study practices for independent learning. Different students have different learning styles and expectations, so individualised considerations must be balanced and suited." (MBA Student)

"I want more improvements in communication by sending more emails." (HND Student)

"As I was raised abroad, there is still a huge language gap between me and my classmates and lecturers. Cross-cultural differences are also present because Burmese culture is more conservative and less open about feelings than the culture that I grew up in." (HND Student)

"I would like to learn more information collecting techniques when I am finding literature and materials for my assignment. I also would like for more encouragement and support for students from other regions in Myanmar." (MBA Student)

"I would like for MIU to give recognition to us students and more networking and social opportunities." (HND Student)

"I want to suggest some MIU Portal improvements as there are errors that force you to restart from the beginning Home page sometimes. I also want to suggest some lecturers to explain slower as it is hard to process information quickly." (HND Student)

"I want to suggest preparatory English classes for students before they join programmes."

(Bachelor Student)

4.7.8: Suggestions and Recommendations from Students to Improve Student Satisfaction from Focus Group Discussion

This study explored students' insights into their recommendations and suggestions for improvement to improve the brand equity of the university. After that, all inputs were analysed and categorised thematically. The survey findings indicated seven suggestions for improvements.

The following twelve recommendations are also proposed during focus group discussions for MIU to improve in the future, regarding recommendations and suggestions from the students' perspectives.

Table 4. 41: Suggestions and Recommendations from Students to Improve MIU Brand (Focus Group)

Themes	**Suggestions and Recommendation from Students to improve student satisfaction (Focus Group)**
1.Focus on Academic Quality	Academic quality and the lecturers are essential in creating a strong brand. Academic quality is suggested to be improved with educational support, academic proficiency courses, intensive marketing courses, management courses, and the assignment writing course.
2.Focus on Service Quality	Improve the service quality of the University Staff and teaching quality of the faculty by arranging training for service and teaching quality.
3.Arrangement of Intensive classes and Seminars/short term classes	Arrange intensive workshop classes for some modules "MBA" Open short-term classes – local and overseas – for a specific subject area, especially for new students

4.Focus on Communication	Maintain the excellent quality of communication of MIU with the students
	Arrange Student Support hotline and Student Support chatbot on Imperial Learning Platform
5.Focus on inviting External Foreign Professor	Invite experienced lecturers from UON to teach some classes at MIU as supervisors to have teaching experience from foreign lecturers
6.Focus on Lecturers' quality	Academic quality and the lecturers are essential in creating a strong brand
7.Promote the University through the Faculty profile	Promote lecturers' profiles and share their videos as well as their word-of-mouth recommendations via social media channels
8.Focus in arranging Summer Programme	Continue arranging the UON Summer Programme,
9.Focus on English proficiency	Promote English proficiency requirements and academic writing practices through English classes for a compelling learning journey
10.Focus on Student Centred Approach	Encourage students to do more presentations and participate in a variety of in-class activities during lectures
11.Focus on career opportunities with the Focus on CV writing and interviewing skills	Prepare CV writing and career preparation classes at the end of programmes and encourage students to make more effective use of CV template provided by MIU

During the focus group discussion, students highlighted service quality as the most critical aspect, and this aspect is also in line with the results from the mean score level of being the highest preferred brand equity dimension. Therefore, it is indicated that student satisfaction is very important in higher education. Academic quality and the lecturers are essential in creating a strong brand. The academic quality is suggested to be improved with educational support, academic proficiency courses, intensive marketing courses, management courses, and the assignment writing course. Students also want MIU to work with partner universities to deliver short courses to improve academic performance and competencies. Students

suggested improving the university's academic quality with the support of 3-day intensive workshops, seminars, more group activities, increased empathy of lecturers, and faster student service.

Regarding assignments, students suggested having more academic support before close assignment deadlines and inviting experienced UON lecturers to teach classes at MIU as supervisors to have teaching experience from foreign lecturers. Students suggested the university have a separate study room. At the same time, it can be concluded that students expect MIU to collaborate with more western universities, and they expect short-term programmes in the future by suggesting the "Creation of opportunities to extend study / Field trips abroad". They also suggest arranging an internship programme and, at the same time, providing necessary support sessions for internship opportunities. The need for English proficiency and academic writing was raised repeatedly during the discussion.

Students also discussed the need to fill the communication gap between students and the Student Support Team. They also suggested creating a digital Student Support chatbot and Student Support hotline where they can request assistance. They also expect to have more certificate courses through collaborations with foreign partner universities. They want MIU to improve its academic delivery by recruiting more experienced staff and arranging more class activities, industrial visits, workshops, and seminars.

Students said:

"The role of English and improving students' English proficiency is very critical. Students would also like to have English classes at the university. It underlines the need for English proficiency and Academic English for students who want preparatory English classes before joining programmes." (HND student)

This statement is also supported by one of the MBA students, who said:

"The need for English proficiency is much needed for students, and once they reach a sufficient English proficiency level, our academic journey will be a lot more effective, better and easier." (MBA student)

They suggest arranging Business English classes for HND, Bachelor and MBA programmes as they can only attend general English classes now. Academic English and Assignment Writing courses must be arranged for undergraduate and postgraduate students. They also hope to have reading material lists and article lists which can be accessible from the Imperial Learning Platform. They also want MIU to provide intensive marketing courses to prepare them for the real world.

Students also suggested CV writing classes for career opportunities.

"Being MIU students, we have the privilege to be chosen for career and job positions at well-known international corporations in Myanmar." (HND Student)

"MIU should focus on career opportunities for the graduates as it prepares them to solve real-life problems."(MBA Student)

Regarding academic aspects, students agreed that MIU had qualified lecturers, but suggested MIU recruit more qualified lecturers, including male lecturers, for diversity. One student indicated:

"MIU provides good academic quality for students with excellent lecturers, but I would like to suggest MIU recruit more male lecturers because diversity is the main issue of every organisation. I can see that our institution has very few male lecturers for students." (Bachelor Student)

Chapter (5) Discussion

Chapter (5) Discussion

5.1: Chapter Introduction

The challenges of this century created complex efforts to survive and succeed for organisations and to win against the competition. Competition in the higher education sector is becoming more intense, which has led private higher education providers to develop customer-based brand equity by looking through the lens of customer expectations and preferences. Understanding customer preferences and perceptions can lead higher education providers to make the right decisions and take further steps to overcome competition. Furthermore, very limited studies have conducted brand equity creation research based on the context of a higher education facility in Myanmar.

This thesis examined the factors influencing and limiting brand equity creation through students' perspectives. The theoretical model was developed based on the previous literature, and the framework was tested through the scope of the Myanmar private higher education sector to investigate the impact of five primary constructs of brand equity dimensions: brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, physical quality and facilities, staff behaviour and customer ideal self-congruence to customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed from the students at Myanmar Imperial University through a survey and focus group discussion.

The study considers brand loyalty as the outcome of the brand equity determinants. In that case, data indicated that higher education providers should focus more on student satisfaction, brand image, brand awareness, physical quality and facilities to improve brand loyalty in creating stronger brand equity.

This chapter will address based on the research objectives:

Objective (1): To investigate the different brand equity determinants impacting the creation of customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Objective (2): To investigate customers' expectations and preferences in choosing a University Brand in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Objective (3): To investigate the relationship between the brand equity determinants, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Objective (4): To develop and propose a brand equity Conceptual Framework for Myanmar's private education sector.

Objective (5): To explore the current student satisfaction with the case university's brand equity dimensions and develop management implications and practices for creating a strong customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's higher education sector.

5.2: Discussion of Research Findings

5.2.1: Brand equity Determinants impacting the creation of customer-based brand equity

This study intended to investigate the relationship of the different brand equity determinants impacting the creation of customer-based brand equity and examined the factors influencing and limiting brand equity creation through students' perspectives. This study also investigated customers' expectations and preferences in choosing a university brand and developed management implications and practices for creating a strong customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's higher education sector. The theoretical model was developed based on previous literature (e.g., Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996; Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Nam *et al.*, 2011). The framework was tested through the scope of the Myanmar private higher education sector. This study proposed five brand equity determinants: brand image, brand awareness, perceived quality, physical quality and facilities, and student ideal self-congruence impacting student satisfaction and the outcome of brand loyalty. This study also developed (34) brand equity constructs that Higher education providers should understand when developing strong brands in the higher education sector. With the support of a carefully constructed conceptual framework, this study used quantitative and qualitative research techniques with a survey and a focus group.
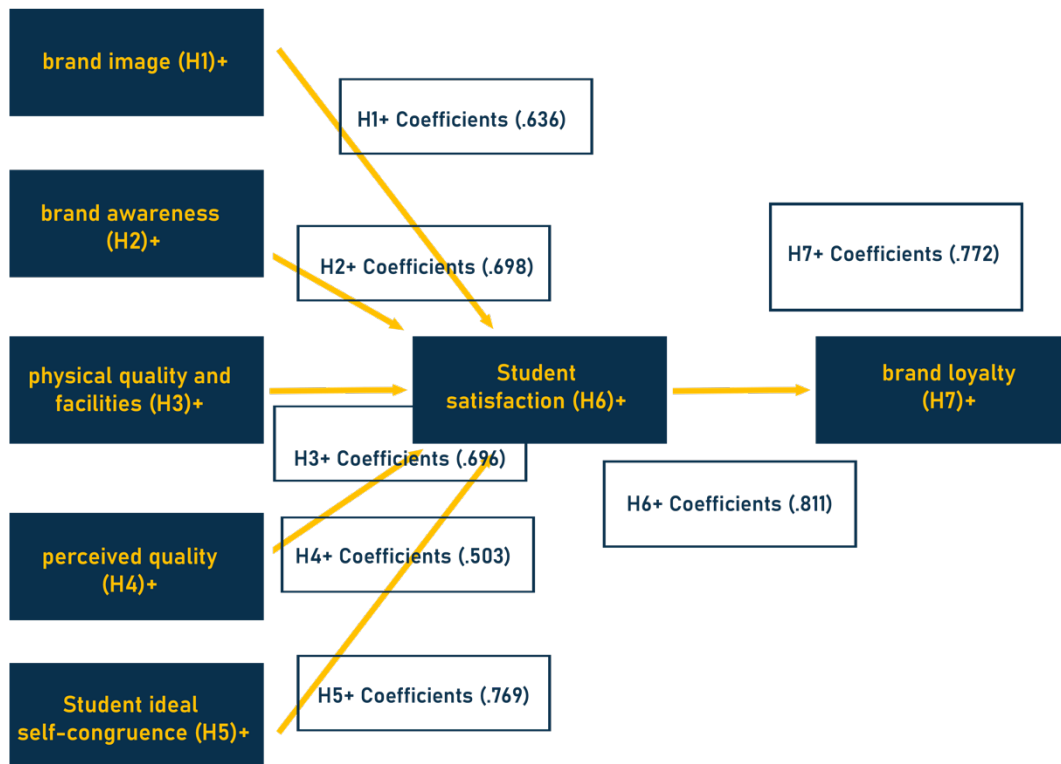
Figure 5. 1: Research Model Developed by the author

5.2.2: The relationship between the brand equity determinants, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty

The correlation analysis revealed significant relationships among the brand equity dimensions of brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, physical facilities, ideal self-congruence to Student satisfaction and brand loyalty. The findings indicated that brand equity determinants of brand awareness, perceived quality, physical quality and facilities, staff behaviour and customer ideal self-congruence positively impact customer satisfaction. Brand loyalty is considered the outcome, which is the indicator of the brand's success. The findings are consistent with the concept of Keller (2001), who viewed brand loyalty as the outcome. The highest mean score level of student satisfaction indicated the role and importance of student satisfaction, which is considered the most important aspect in creating brand equity. It is also in line with other researchers like Mattah, *et al*. (2018), Roberts and Styron (2015), Sigala, *et al*., (2006), highlighting student satisfaction as an important indicator in higher education. This is largely because students are the main stakeholders of the university, and

higher education providers are suggested to overview student satisfaction over time and ensure that student expectations are met.

The statistical result from quantitative data in Figure (5.1) indicated the strongest relationship between brand loyalty and student satisfaction. This finding is similar to the findings of Abu Hasan *et al.*, (2008) and Mattah *et al.*, (2018), and it highlights the role and importance of student satisfaction in improving brand loyalty which is considered the indicator of the strength of brand equity in higher education. It suggested that the higher the student satisfaction, the higher the brand loyalty. In that case, higher education providers need to focus on improving satisfaction over time and understand the factors impacting student satisfaction to create strong brand equity. The discovery of significant relationships between the brand equity dimensions aligns with the result of previous studies indicating universities, as complex systems of various sub-brands, require complex endeavours of brand management which employ holistic perspectives on brands and their value (Hemsley-Brown & Goonawardana, 2007). It is also in line with the statement from the student feedback from the 2020 MIU Management Report. In this report, students also considered student satisfaction the most important determinant and considered it the most critical aspect in choosing a university brand (MIU, 2021).

In improving student satisfaction, the findings of the data revealed a relationship between five brand equity determinants and student satisfaction. The data showed that brand image is the essential brand equity determinant, followed by brand awareness and physical quality and facilities in Myanmar's private higher education context impacting on student satisfaction, followed by perceived quality and student ideal self-congruence. The evidence of the role of brand awareness and brand image as the most critical determinants in creating brand equity is broadly in harmony with those of researchers such as (Aaker, 1991; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). As indicated in Figure (5.1), the linear regression statistical results reflect these five brand equity dimensions that positively impact student satisfaction.
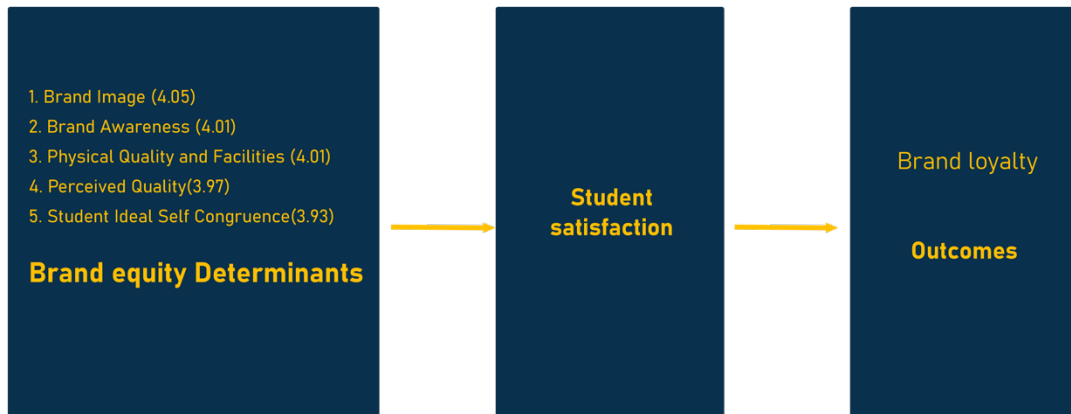
Figure 5. 2: Research Model developed by the author

The role of brand image in creating a strong brand in the higher education sector: Brand image is the most preferred brand equity determinant by Myanmar students in choosing a university brand if student satisfaction is considered a mediator. Brand image has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. It is also supported by the focus group discussion findings that brand image reputation and the amount of effort invested for individual students are key factors contributing to brand equity in the higher education industry. The focus group discussion highlighted that the role of brand image is vital. Students said the quality of the university graduates and high-quality faculty members with experience and expertise are the most critical factors for building strong brand equity in higher education as it can also create a great brand image. Both the results from statistical results and the focus groups proved that students consider the role of lecturers to be very important. In that case, educational providers should not ignore the part of high-quality faculty in producing high-quality graduates, which can also create a perfect brand image.

Students repeatedly highlighted the role of the brand image during the discussion. Among different factors contributing to brand equity, student satisfaction and brand image are critical factors in choosing a brand for higher education students. One HND student also highlighted the role of brand image and customer satisfaction: *"Both the brand image and satisfaction in the University are important in creating a strong, consistent brand."* According to Mourad, *et. al's* (2011) research, the brand image dimension has a positive impact on brand equity. The result is also in line with Keller (2013), saying that managers must ensure

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that their brand meets customers' expectations while being reliable and consistent over time. The findings of the mean level of the importance of brand equity determinants in Table (4.5) from Chapter (4) indicate that brand image is more important than brand awareness. It is also in line with Clarke's (2014) belief that brand performance and brand image seem to be the most important factors in creating strong brand equity. The significant role of brand image in driving brand equity is also highlighted by Vukasovic (2015) and Mourad *et al.* (2011). However, this goes against the findings of Pinar *et al.,* (2014), who proposed that perceived quality is more important than brand image in the higher education sector. The resulting differences might be derived from cultural differences between the two research contexts and based on the perceptions of MIU students. Furthermore, Myanmar students and parents decide the choice of university based on word-of-mouth recommendations, which depend on the university's brand image.

Brand image is very important in higher education, which is consistent with the findings of Vukasovic (2015), who revealed that brand image has a higher impact than the other brand equity determinants on brand equity. Other research also proposed similar findings of brand image having a higher impact than brand awareness (Aaker, 1991; Keller and Lehmann, 2006; Mourad, et al., 2011). Specifically, brand image determinants are more important than brand awareness, but brand awareness is needed for creating customer-based brand equity. Based on this understanding, the brand image construct is assumed to be one of the essential aspects of creating customer-based brand equity in higher education.

However, brand image cannot be created without brand awareness activities. Therefore, higher education providers in Myanmar's private higher education should focus on both brand image and brand awareness creation processes. The importance of brand awareness and brand image is also highlighted by Keller (2013) and Mourad *et al.,* (2011). Thus, brand image and brand awareness are areas that higher education providers cannot ignore in creating strong brands in the context of this sector in Myanmar.

The role of brand awareness in creating a strong brand in higher education: The study's findings revealed brand awareness to be the second most important determinant, which is considered the same concept as Aaker (2000), considering brand awareness an important

factor in creating a brand. During the focus group discussion, students said brand awareness is one of the essential and critical attractions when choosing the MIU brand. At the same time, the findings concluded that brand awareness and brand image are essential determinants, so higher education providers should focus on these aspects to create a strong brand. Developing a positive brand image is more important than creating brand awareness. The correlation analysis also indicated that brand awareness significantly impacts brand loyalty. The students in the focus group shared that they came from word-of-mouth recommendations and advertising activities. In the focus group discussion, some participants discussed the role of brand awareness and highlighted that strong brand awareness had influenced them to choose a university in higher education. Some participants of the focus group also considered brand awareness to be one of the essential aspects. The role of brand awareness and brand image is also highlighted in the study (Vukasovic, 2015), stating that brand awareness and brand image are essential determinants in creating brands in the higher education sector. In building strong brand awareness, students suggested the university should use Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a strategy, as students preferred brands which also assume social responsibility.

Higher education providers spend most of their marketing expenses on newspaper and journal advertising. The focus group discussion highlighted that MIU's brand awareness activities caught the attention of students and the public. Likewise, social media plays a key role both directly (MIU) and indirectly (students) in MIU gaining brand awareness from different types of stakeholders and informing them of MIU's events and activities through social media. Accordingly, it can be concluded that marketing practices, such as billboard advertising, journal advertising and social media advertising are very popular in Myanmar's higher education industry. Brand awareness can create focus on 1) word-of-mouth recommendations, 2) brand recognition and 3) marketing and advertising activities. Thus, word-of-mouth recommendations are an essential consideration for higher education providers.

Universities should design a well-structured marketing plan to promote brand awareness and create a brand image. In addition, universities can use word-of-mouth marketing advertisements on social media and referral marketing activities. Student blogs and

experiences must be recorded and used in marketing activities to create brand awareness. Brand recall is considered the least important aspect. The participants also highlighted the importance of social media in the higher education industry. Social media plays a key role in creating brand awareness among students. The focus group discussion discussed some of the brand activities to promote brand awareness of MIU as (1) Commercials reflecting student life, academic quality and teaching styles (2) Students suggested using student experience-sharing ads for each programme for effective marketing, (3) Arranging ads for each programme for effective marketing(4) focusing on digital marketing and social media channels to improve brand awareness (5) CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility activities (6) Presenting Academic Quality and Learning Tradition (7) Be visible in places where students frequently visited (e.g., cinemas, shopping malls, resorts, shopping centres, movie theatres, partner shops and organisations. Among them some students highlighted that higher education should focus on the Digital Marketing channels and around commercials reflecting the role of Student life, Academic quality, and Teaching Style of the University. It is also highlighted that it contributes to CSR in creating a positive brand image.

The role of physical facilities in creating a strong brand in higher education: The role of physical quality and facilities cannot be ignored in the higher education sector. According to Table (4.9) from Chapter 4, the high mean score of all three dimensions: Campus Facilities, Library, and Online Facilities, revealed that physical quality and facilities play an important role in creating a strong brand in Myanmar's higher education. The highest mean score of the Campus Facilities among the three dimensions (Table 4.9) revealed that campus facilities are the most important determinant in choosing a university brand. According to Table (4.5), the mean score of the importance of the brand equity dimensions, physical quality and facilities is considered the third most important. It is also in line with Nam, *et al.*, (2011) and Ekinci, *et al.,* (2008), who suggest that physical facilities are essential to creating strong brands. It is also proven that physical quality positively impacts customer-based brand equity *(*Nam*, et al.,* 2011). Tangible assets and facilities for higher education institutions give an excellent portrayal of a university's physical appearance (Musa and Ahmad, 2012). The role of physical quality and facilities cannot be ignored in higher education; infrastructures are physical assets that affect teaching and learning effectiveness and can give the appropriate visuals and

atmosphere for conducive teaching and even point out the quality of an academic institution (Okorie & Uche, 2004). Al-Fattal (2010) also asserted that a university must offer attractive facilities and services to entice potential students and retain current ones.

The role of physical qualities and facilities are important in the higher education sector as these are essential to providing a good learning journey for the students and offer an excellent portrayal of the university's physical evidence, which is also a very important aspect in creating a positive brand image. Physical quality and facilities are also supportive dimensions for creating positive brand awareness. Therefore, it is concluded and suggested that physical quality and facilities are also considered important aspects of creating a strong brand in the context of Myanmar's private higher education.

The role of perceived quality in creating a strong brand in higher education: It was unexpected to find out that perceived quality is considered the second least important by students in choosing a university brand. This factor is contradicted by the finding of Vukasovic (2015) and Mourad *et al.,* (2011), who proposed perceived quality as one of the most critical aspects of creating brands in the higher education sector. It is also against the findings of Yoo and Donthu (2001), who proposed perceived quality as the most important aspect of higher education. Aaker (1991) also recognised and highlighted the role of perceived quality as one of the most important components of brand equity. The difference in the findings might be based on the different research contexts and the cultural difference. Student satisfaction is considered the most important as Myanmar students choose a university brand based on brand image and brand awareness. After that, they make a decision based on their student experience.

Perceived quality can be created with the support of the Nine Dimensions. Among the nine dimensions, the three most preferred dimensions are 1) Quality of Lecturers, (2) Quality of Education, and (3) Service Quality of Non-Academic Staff. In that case, the related academic attributes are critical in creating a strong brand in the higher education sector. Price is considered the least important aspect, but other studies, such as those from Vukasovic (2015) and Trapp and Boyt (2014), proposed price as a significant aspect in choosing a university

brand. It is posited that the possible reason may be that student recruitment for MIU attracts those of a high socio-level which is not necessarily applicable to other organisations.

The table indicated that social image and contribution are the most crucial aspects. In that case, it can be assumed that students preferred to have a high trust level in a university brand with high expectations for academic quality and good service quality provided by non-academic staff members. It is extraordinary to discover that career opportunities are not considered necessary when choosing a university brand under Table (4.6), with the low mean level for the importance of career opportunities after graduation. This could be the result of the country's current situation, which is in the middle of the pandemic, and an unstable political situation. At the same time, it may be the result of the different research contexts and the cultural differences as previously discussed. In most cases, career opportunities are considered an indicator of the success of the university, which is contradicted by this finding. It may also arise from the perception of Myanmar students and their parents having different expectations for the academic path and career journey.

The role of ideal congruence in creating a strong brand in higher education: The role of student ideal congruence is the least important dimension in Myanmar's private higher education sector. The correlation result indicated a positive relationship to customer satisfaction, indicating that ideal self-congruence positively impacts brand equity creation practices. Universities need to provide the same relevant self-congruence to the targeted students. This outcome is in line with the finding of Levy (1959), that customers buy not only the product's utility but also for what it means and what it symbolises (Levy, 1959). He presumed that consumers preferred goods with a perceived image that matched theirs. The students' ideal congruence is considered unimportant apart from the university's capabilities to provide academic skills. The findings also indicated that the ideal self-congruence positively impacts job engagement, psychological well-being, and positive citizenship behaviour (Martinez, et al., 2021). The study of Icon *et al.* (2021), which is based on the influence of self-congruence and relationship quality on student educational involvement, indicated that ideal self-congruence is positively related to relationship quality (i.e., satisfaction, trust, commitment, and social benefits) interestingly, while ideal self-congruence influences educational involvement positively. It highlights the role of student ideal self-congruence,

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involving student participation and ensuring that the brand can create relevance to the student desire and reflect their self-image with the university's brand image. Thus, activities such as art, sport, music, and positive attitude training need to be arranged to stimulate the desire of the students and to create relevance.

The role of student satisfaction: Study findings highlighted the role of student satisfaction in creating strong brands in the higher education sector. Data findings with the high mean score level of the importance of student satisfaction in choosing the university brand with the highest correlation between student satisfaction and brand loyalty indicated that higher education providers should focus on student satisfaction in creating a strong brand in Myanmar. The highest mean score level of students' perception of the importance of brand equity also indicated student satisfaction as the highest-ranked important dimension (refer to Table (4.9)). The qualitative data from students also highlighted student satisfaction as the most critical determinant. During the focus group, the participants repeatedly highlighted customer satisfaction and informed higher education providers to focus on customer satisfaction in improving brand equity. Customer satisfaction is a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively a company achieves key business objectives (Klipfolio, 2013).

The data evidence suggested that brand image has the highest impact on student satisfaction. Later, this is followed by brand awareness and physical quality and facilities. The data also indicate that student satisfaction has the highest impact on creating brand loyalty. The findings suggest that brand awareness, brand image and physical quality and facilities are vital in creating brands in the higher education sector. It is in line with the concept of Aaker and Keller, stating that brand equity is the integration of brand image and brand awareness (Aaker, 2010; Keller, 2003). This finding appears to be due to the cultural context of Myanmar and the influence of social media in this specific context. Thus, educational providers should pay attention to the social image and contributions by creating positive impacts for students and society and ensuring they are shared through marketing and social media activities. Higher education providers should make sure that the physical quality and facilities are good and ensure they are used in marketing activities in creating brand awareness and brand image as Myanmar students consider physical quality and facilities an important aspect in choosing a brand in the higher education sector.

In the 21st century, competition between organisations has grown significantly as organisations try to fulfil their customers' needs and wants. As a result, customer satisfaction becomes an essential indicator of the organisation's success. Thus, this study recommends university management to focus on student satisfaction to create stronger brand equity. Findings also indicate that the university can improve student satisfaction by providing quality education, a great campus, and facilities, having good lecturers, and good communication channels with good student service support. According to the World University rankings 2014/2015, the higher the students' satisfaction rates, the higher the university ranking (Times Higher Education, 2015). Therefore, it can be assumed that education quality and student experiences can be considered the most critical factors of student satisfaction. With respect to this aspect, this study explored the factors influencing student satisfaction in creating brand equity. The best way to ensure continued growth for every organisation is to concentrate on the customers' needs rather than selling products (Maung, 2019). Thus, in this case, the higher education providers should focus on the role of students' satisfaction in creating a strong brand. Accordingly, student satisfaction can be considered the leading indicator of performance in the higher education industry. Lecturers' quality also needs to be improved with the support of a training and development programme while not forgetting the role of providing exemplary service quality from non-academic staff. The role of student satisfaction and lecturers is important because students are the main stakeholders of universities and lecturers are the ones whom they need to communicate every day in shaping their student journey.

Factors influencing Student Satisfaction: In improving student satisfaction, it is essential to understand student expectations. The high importance means score (Table 4.9) indicated that all six constructs: 1) Teaching quality of lecturers, 2) Overall satisfaction with the perceived quality, 3) Service quality of the University staff, 4) Programme Management, 5) Quality Assurance, and 6) Physical Facilities, are important to improve student satisfaction. Among them, lecturers' teaching quality at the university, overall satisfaction with perceived quality, and service quality of the university staff are considered more important. During the Focus group discussion, the role of Lecturers is highlighted again and again by the participants. One of the students said that academic quality and lecturers are essential to creating a strong brand. Thus, higher education providers should focus on student satisfaction by putting more

emphasis on those three areas. The focus group discussion also explored the things that they wanted from the university brand, and 11 things were proposed. Among them, the top 5 things are (1) internationally recognised high-quality education when it is taught by experienced lecturers with real-life experience (2) Real-life knowledge-sharing sessions (3) Better career opportunities (4) Good communication skills from Student Support staff to students (5) Great campus life, a big library and great canteen.

The role of teaching quality of the lecturers and characteristics of lecturers in improving student satisfaction: Findings indicated that lecturers' teaching quality has the strongest impact on creating student satisfaction and brand loyalty. It is in harmony with the outcome of other research, which says that the quality of the Lecturers is one of the most critical factors in the provision of higher education (Gruber, et al., 2012). Perceived quality of facilities has the highest impact on brand equity (Pinar, *et al.,* 2014). It is also strengthened by the findings of Vukasovic (2015) and Mourad *et al.* (2011), saying that among service attributes, the perceived quality of educational services has the highest impact. The role of lecturers appeared to be the most important aspect in creating student satisfaction among Myanmar students. During the discussion, students focused on lecturer quality and assessment quality as key players in creating the brand meaning of higher education providers. The findings are also consistent with Greg Clark, the former UK Universities Minister, who said that it is essential for higher education to enhance teaching quality and improve the student experience. He also stated that it is encouraging to see students' satisfaction rated with their university experience continuing to rise in 2014 (The Guardian, 2014). The role of lecturers can be very important to Myanmar students as, in Myanmar culture, the role and power of the lecturers ensure they are already dominant in making decisions. Students are the main primary stakeholders as customers, and lecturers are the primary key stakeholders of the organisation. Lecturers are also the ones who can influence students as they are more familiar with them, and they are the ones who deliver quality education. This study's findings supported the work of other researchers presented in this discussion. They contribute to the academic industry and literature by highlighting the role of lecturers in creating a great brand and the capabilities to improve teaching quality. As the role of faculty members is being highlighted, higher education providers must consider investing in establishing strong academic faculty to create high-quality education in order to satisfy students. The findings on

the ideal characteristics of professors are also considered knowledge contributions to the literature of the Myanmar private higher education sector.

The role and characteristics of the lecturers in improving student satisfaction: The data indicated that teaching quality of the lecturers is the most important aspect in creating student satisfaction, and in improving customer-based brand equity, lecturer characteristics are considered the primary determinants. The impact of professors is among the most influential factor in students' perception of service quality (Hill, *et al.,* 2003). Thus, understanding the ideal characteristics of professors at the university is becoming critical.

This paper explored the students' preferred characteristics of the lecturers. The Survey findings revealed that students expected their lecturer: 1) to have excellent academic knowledge and practitioners' knowledge, 2) to deliver 50% of academic knowledge strictly and 50% of knowledge-sharing with real-world examples and practices, 3) to be supportive of students' learning and provide regular feedback for assignment improvements, 4) to share their personal stories, and 5) to express warmth and friendliness. The Focus Group discussion's findings also indicated that having excellent academic knowledge and being able to share their knowledge with the students is critical. Having empathy and providing regular feedback are also important.

The findings indicated that lecturers could not focus only on the academic aspect, as sharing the practitioner's aspect is very much needed for MIU students. For the brand leaders of higher education, the role of lecturers cannot be ignored, and providers should look to arrange capabilities training development programmes to improve teaching quality with real-life experiences. The expectations of MIU students also support the findings of Gruber, *et al.,* (2012), who examined the influence of professor characteristics on student satisfaction and found that the preferred personalities of lecturers are 1) Communicative, 2) Enthusiastic, 3) Empathetic, 4) Rapport-building, 5) Use of real-life examples in class. It is also proposed that knowledgeability, empathy, friendliness, helpfulness, reliability, responsiveness, and expressiveness are the students' preferred characteristics in their Lecturers (Swanson, *et al.,* 2005).

The role of creating communication channels in improving student satisfaction: The focus group discussion highlighted the importance of social media, quality education, lecturers' roles, and the role of communication for universities. The aspect of creating communication channels with the students and the university was highlighted repeatedly during the discussion. The importance of communication channels should encourage higher education providers to focus more on developing communication channels with the students, making sure that they update present communication channels and providing students with a flexible and appropriate medium to meet their needs.

This finding suggests that higher education providers should create activities to improve customer satisfaction and brand equity. University brands are influenced by the students' perceptions and shaped by how universities manage their students' relationships (Dennis *et al.*,2016). Thus, maintaining student satisfaction is critical for the university to create customer-based brand equity. It is also consistent with Pinar, *et al.,* (2014) who suggested that brands can deliver greater customer value by creating an ecosystem that includes value networks and interaction of these networks at each stage of brand value-building to improve customer satisfaction. Most previous studies on brand equity in higher education have focused on promoting university branding. Some research suggested that students' experience should be at the core of higher education branding (Ng & Forbes, 2009; Pinar, et al., 2020).

The role of brand loyalty and the relationship between student satisfaction and loyalty: According to the findings, customer satisfaction strongly impacts brand loyalty. The regression analysis indicated that the higher the customer satisfaction, the higher the brand loyalty. It is consistent with the literature of Sigala, *et al.,* (2006), who revealed that students are the key stakeholders. Similarly, Li (2013) suggested that brand loyalty is created by student satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations. He also discussed that it is essential for higher education to enhance teaching quality and improve the experience offered to students. Hence, student satisfaction is essential to generate institutions' revenue, and customer satisfaction positively impacts brand equity and highlights student satisfaction as the primary determinant contributing to customer loyalty.

Higher education providers cannot ignore the role of brand loyalty and the relationship between student satisfaction and brand loyalty in building strong brands. Thus, higher education providers should develop strategies to improve brand loyalty through customer satisfaction. The university should understand students' expectations and try to fulfil their needs by having a research culture which conducts surveys two or three times a year while asking open questions and focus group discussions about their expectations and their difficulties during the academic journey to improve student satisfaction. In that case, higher education providers should develop strategies to enhance brand loyalty through customer satisfaction to create stronger customer-based brand equity.

The findings indicated that brand loyalty is the outcome of creating customer-based brand equity in the Myanmar higher education sector. It is also consistent with the findings of Pinar. *et al*. (2020) who indicated brand loyalty as the outcome of the brand equity creation process. Their findings found that brand association, brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand trust, learning environment, emotional environment, and university reputation all impacted the creation of brand equity in higher education. This finding confirms the significance of the relationship between the antecedent brand equity dimensions with brand loyalty in creating solid brands (Pinar, *et al.,* 2020). It is backed up by students' perceptions from the MIU Annual 2021 Report. The report said students considered brand loyalty essential for students, and MIU should explore several ways to nurture loyal students (MIU, 2021). The finding of statistical data indicated that brand loyalty is very important in the Myanmar higher education sector, with a mean score of (4.04). All the participants seem to have brand loyalty toward MIU. One of the students stated that she is willing to come back to MIU for further studies. The focus group discussion highlighted the importance of brand loyalty in creating a great university brand. The focus group discussion also indicated that the lecturers are critical in creating student satisfaction which is very important in creating brand loyalty.

Hence, it can be concluded that in creating brand equity in higher education, rather than focusing on all the brand equity factors, higher education providers must focus more on student satisfaction. Improving student satisfaction can stimulate brand loyalty, and it can also improve word-of-mouth recommendations, which is very important for Myanmar's

higher education landscape. In improving student satisfaction, as the lecturer quality seems to be very important from students' perspectives, educational providers should focus on teaching quality and improving the skills and capabilities of lecturers and faculty members. Universities also need to ensure that student service quality is supported with a sound communication system, as the focus group and survey findings highlighted communication as one of the key aspects of creating a strong brand in Myanmar.

Therefore, in managing student satisfaction, it is critical to focus on lecturers' teaching quality and capabilities in delivering quality education, creating perceived quality, and not forgetting the role of service quality of the university staff.

5.2.3: The Proposed Conceptual Framework after the Findings

After analysing the findings, the evidence indicated that the proposed conceptual framework for creating brand equity in higher education in Myanmar is valid. The five brand equity determinants of brand image, brand awareness, perceived quality, students' ideal self-congruence, physical quality and facilities all created student satisfaction. Brand loyalty is the outcome.

The data indicated that all 34 brand equity constructs seem to impact creating brand loyalty in creating customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector. Customer satisfaction is very important in higher education. Six constructs (programme management, teaching quality of the lecturers, service quality of the university staff, physical qualities, quality assurance, and overall satisfaction with perceived quality) can be utilised to measure and improve customer satisfaction (Figure 2.10).

Brand awareness	Brand image	Perceived quality	Physical quality and facilities	Customer ideal self-congruence
■ Brand recognition ■ Brand recall ■ Marketing and advertising activities ■ World of mouth recommendation	■ University heritage ■ Trustworthiness of the University ■ Service quality of the University ■ Reputation of the University ■ Overall attitude towards the University brand Image	■ Price ■ Quality of Lecturers ■ Quality of Education ■ Student Support Services ■ Quality of Senior Staff Members ■ Career Opportunities ■ Campus Facilites ■ Brand Personality ■ Social Contribution	■ Campus facilities ■ Library ■ Online facilities	■ University's capabilities to provide academic skills ■ University's ability to fulfil the students' desire and passion ■ Students' ambition and commitment to Learning, ■ Students' Growth Mindset ■ Understanding of the Student's Expectation by the University ■ Ability to create a good impression among friends

Customer Satisfaction

■ Programme Management
■ Teaching Quality of the lecturers
■ Service Quality of the University Staff
■ Physical Facilities
■ Quality Assurance
Overall Satisfaction with Perceived Quality

Brand Loyalty

■ Intention to study for further steps
■ Intention to recommend to others
■ Intention to share positive things to others

Figure 5. 3 : A proposed conceptual framework for the customer-based-brand equity in Higher education - developed by the author

5.2.4: Understanding Students' expectations in choosing a University Brand in creating customer-based Brand equity

Top 10 Brand Equity Dimensions preferred by Myanmar Students in choosing a University Brand and their current perceptions

One of the purposes of this study is to explore the most preferred brand equity dimensions of Myanmar students in private higher education in Myanmar. The study revealed that 34 dimensions impacted brand equity determinants in choosing a university brand through the students' insights. The top 10 brand equity dimensions preferred by Myanmar students are: (1) Teaching quality of lecturers, (2) overall satisfaction with the perceived quality, (3) service quality of the University Staff, (4) programme management, (5) quality assurance, (6) physical facilities, (7) University's capabilities to provide academic skills, (8) Word-of-mouth recommendations, (9) University heritage and (10) Overall assumption towards the brand image of the university. In this study, brand loyalty determinants are considered the outcomes. Therefore, the important determinants for brand loyalty dimensions are not considered. Most of the preferred brand equity dimensions come from student satisfaction, which indicates that at MIU, student satisfaction seems to be the most important aspect in choosing a university brand. Thus, it is strongly suggested that MIU and private higher education providers in Myanmar focus on student satisfaction and these ten constructs in creating a strong brand.

The study explored the students' perception of the Top 10 Brand Equity Dimensions that the students preferred. The total mean score of students' perception towards the top (10) Brand equity determinants is 4, indicating that students are delighted with the top 10 Brand Equity Determinants. The word-of-mouth recommendation has the highest mean score of (4.10) which is an excellent indicator. The teaching quality of lecturers has the second-highest mean score of (4.07) and is considered the second most important determinant in choosing a university brand. The overall assumption of the university's brand image mean score is (4.06). The mean score of the Service quality of the university staff is (3.91), which is the lowest satisfaction for the top 10 students' preferred determinants. Thus, it is considered that the university should urgently improve the service quality of the university staff (3.91).

The focus group discussion also highlighted that internationally recognised high-quality education taught by experienced lecturers with real-life experience is very important. The data also indicated that student wants Real-life knowledge-sharing sessions and better career opportunities from their University Brand. A good campus with great facilities and good communication skills from the Student Support staff to students are expected by students.

5.2.5: Exploring Students' perception of MIU and proposing management practices for creating a strong customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar's Higher education Sector

Understanding Students' Perception of the Brand Equity Determinants of MIU: Students at MIU seem to be very satisfied with the university. The overall satisfaction with MIU is considered great, with a mean score of (3.90), which is satisfactory. The data findings showed that students have the highest satisfaction with the brand image and brand awareness and Student satisfaction, which indicates a perfect sign. Perceived quality is the fourth most satisfying dimension. Physical quality and facilities are the least satisfied determinant. Brand loyalty is considered second least satisfied determinant. The ideal congruence has the lowest satisfaction. The perceived quality has the third-highest level (mean=3.90). Since Student satisfaction also has (mean=3.97), it revealed that through brand awareness, brand image practices and perceived quality practices, students are satisfied with MIU.

Among the students' perceptions, word-of-mouth recommendations and the teaching quality of the staff had the highest positive perception, while students considered word-of-mouth recommendations as the most critical determinant in choosing a university brand. This finding suggests that the students seem satisfied with MIU's brand equity determinants. The teaching quality of the lecturers is also essential in choosing a university brand, and students have a very high level of satisfaction regarding teaching quality with a very high mean score level. It is a positive sign, and it might also be a reason for having realistic satisfaction with their academic learning journey and word-of-mouth recommendations. In this case, the university should maintain and improve the teachers' teaching quality. The focus group discussion concluded that students had heard about MIU from Word-of-Mouth, Facebook, and local radio channels for brand awareness. For brand image, the focus group discussion highlighted that MIU's brand image is considered very prestigious and impressive in the eyes of many,

including the students. The focus group revealed that students considered the brand image of MIU to be a grand campus building, with architecture, campus facilities, and prestigious education.

The role of brand loyalty is considered in the outcomes, and the student's perception from Table (4.9) indicated that students are loyal to MIU, and they are willing to share positive things and recommend the university to others. Students also found university marketing activities suitable but were not very satisfied with their promotion activities. The university's brand recognition is very satisfying, especially with proper digital marketing channels. Students recommended that the university improve the use of digital media and invest vast amounts of money in creating brand awareness. Brand image, brand awareness and student satisfaction are considered the most satisfactory determinants, which are also good indicators (mean=3.97). The findings also indicated student satisfaction as an essential aspect of creating brand loyalty; thus, this study explored ways to generate higher satisfaction at MIU. Therefore, the main areas that students are satisfied with and those with which they are less satisfied, together with their expectations and recommendations for their university, were explored.

Students' perception of the student satisfaction determinants of MIU: In the student satisfaction criterion, the teaching quality of lecturers has the highest mean score, which is also considered the most critical determinant in choosing a university brand in the student satisfaction Criteria. The service quality of the university staff and the university's capabilities to provide academic skills have the lowest satisfaction rate.

The finding indicates the need to urgently improve the service quality of the university staff and the university's capabilities to provide academic skills with the lowest perception among all the determinants. In this case, the university should urgently focus on university staff by providing training and development, conducting research surveys and focus group discussions, and creating immediate actions to improve service quality. The university could also arrange a service training programme for the heads of departments and staff members. At the same time, students expect their university to open additional programmes, like assignment writing and English proficiency classes, to improve the university's capabilities to

provide academic skills for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Findings indicate that MIU needs to improve student satisfaction and brand loyalty to improve customer-based brand equity. It can be enhanced by focusing on three main brand equity dimensions: brand image, brand awareness, and teaching quality. The lecturers should also focus on improving the quality of the university's service. Whilst MIU also maintains and enhances the professors' teaching quality by integrating the knowledge among themselves through a series of training and developments, at the same time, the university should invite faculty from UON and other partner universities for knowledge integration. The university management should maintain brand awareness and brand image to improve the university's customer-based brand equity. The focus group findings revealed MIU to (1) Focus on Academic Quality, (2) Focus on Service Quality (3) Focus on the Arrangement of Intensive classes and Seminars/short-term term classes, (4) Focus on Communication(5) Focus on inviting External Foreign Professor(6) Focus on Lecturers' quality, (7) Promote the University through the Faculty profile, (8) Focus on English proficiency and (9) Focus on career opportunities with the Focus on CV writing and interviewing skills.

Chapter (6) Conclusion

Chapter (6) Conclusion

6.1: Chapter Introduction

This study researched the importance of brand equity determinants and their relationship to student satisfaction and brand loyalty in Myanmar's private higher education sector. This study also explored the current student perceptions of brand equity determinants of their university brand. A summary of the research findings related to the research objectives and main points of the discussions will be presented in this Conclusion chapter. The implication of the research for academic knowledge and implications for the field of practice, together with the limitations of this thesis, will also be discussed in this chapter. The further areas that other researchers may wish to conduct in advancing the understanding of the area of branding in higher education are also recommended in this chapter.

The objectives of the research are:

Objective (1) To investigate the different brand equity determinants impacting the creation of customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Objective (2) To investigate customers' expectations and preferences in choosing a university brand in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Objective (3) To investigate the relationship between the brand equity determinants, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

Objective (4) To develop and propose a brand equity conceptual framework for Myanmar's private education sector.

Objective (5) To explore the current student satisfaction with the case university and develop management practices for creating strong customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

6.2: Summary of the main research findings

The summary of the research findings is stated here in this discussion.

The brand equity determinants impacting the creation of customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector

The findings indicated that five brand equity determinants, namely brand image, brand awareness, student ideal self-congruence, perceived quality, physical quality and facilities, were revealed to be the determinants impacting student satisfaction. Brand loyalty is the outcome. Among the five brand equity determinants, brand image has the highest impact, followed by brand awareness and physical quality and facilities. Student satisfaction is considered the most important determinant and is impacted by five brand equity determinants. Brand loyalty is the outcome.

The relationship between the brand equity determinants, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

The interrelationship of the brand equity determinants revealed that in higher education, brand loyalty is considered the most critical dimension and the outcome. Among the Brand equity dimensions, student satisfaction has the highest impact. There is the highest relationship between student satisfaction and brand loyalty, indicating that the higher the student satisfaction, the more loyalty the university gains. Five brand equity determinants have an impact on student satisfaction. Thus, higher education providers should focus on monitoring student satisfaction to improve brand loyalty. Brand image has the highest impact on student satisfaction, brand awareness, and physical quality and facilities have the second highest impact in creating student satisfaction; after that, perceived quality and student deal self-congruence.

The other finding is related to marketing activities that emphasise digital activities and social impacts to create brand awareness. Regarding marketing activities, students want MIU to focus on social contributions and create a positive brand image. Video and commercial

campaigns showcasing MIU's success story and interviews on student experiences are recommended to express student life. Video and commercial campaigns with staff expressing humility and warmth are advised to create a robust public relationship with society. Extraordinary alumni, staff, and student benefits need to be arranged by having corporate partners and brand awareness purposes. MIU should focus on digital marketing and social media channels to improve brand awareness by being more visible in shopping centres, movie theatres, partner shops and organisations.

Focusing on student satisfaction is the most important aspect to be considered in Myanmar's Private Higher Education Sector.

The statistical result showed the strongest relationship between brand loyalty and student satisfaction. It suggests that the higher the student satisfaction, the higher the brand loyalty. With student satisfaction as the most critical determinant, Higher education providers should focus on improving this aspect over time. In improving student satisfaction, brand image and brand awareness have to be more focused as they have a very high level of impact towards satisfaction. In improving student satisfaction and in creating strong brands, the lecturers, perceived quality and service quality of staff are the most important determinants for Myanmar's private higher education sector.

This study explored the top brand equity determinants in choosing a university brand, and it was revealed these dimensions also come from student satisfaction determinants. They are revealed as: 1) the teaching quality of lecturers, 2) overall satisfaction with perceived quality, 3) the service quality of university staff, 4) programme management, 5) quality assurance, 6) physical facilities, 7) university's capabilities to provide academic skills, 8) word-of-mouth recommendations, 9) university heritage, and 10) overall assumption towards the university's brand image. In addition, the role of brand image, brand awareness and physical quality and facilities cannot be ignored by higher education sector management in Myanmar.

The role of lecturers and the role of service quality are required to focus on creating brands in Myanmar's private higher education.

The other highlighted findings are related to the role of lecturers. This study revealed that among different dimensions, lecturers' teaching quality has the highest impact on creating brand equity. Among all the constructs, it is revealed that the role of lecturers is the most important construct preferred by Myanmar students. As students' experience is also a very important aspect in higher education, the lecturers are the main key stakeholders in dealing with the students in delivering quality education. Satisfaction towards their lecturers can lead to brand loyalty, which can also encourage students to recommend their university to others. Focusing on the lecturers in developing a brand in the higher education sector can lead to strong student satisfaction and can have an indirect impact on brand image and brand awareness.

Thus, higher education providers should focus on improving the teaching quality over time. This study also explored lecturer characteristics preferred by students through focus group discussions. It revealed that students preferred lecturers: 1) to have excellent academic and practitioner knowledge, 2) to deliver 50% of academic knowledge strictly and 50% of knowledge sharing of real-world examples and practices, 3) to be supportive of students' learning and provide feedback regularly for assignment improvements, 4) to share their personal stories and 5) to express warmth and friendliness.

The customers' expectations and preferences in choosing a University Brand

In creating brand awareness, MIU and Myanmar private higher education providers can focus on the rise of digital marketing and the role of word-of-mouth marketing to create a stronger brand.

The rise of technological advancement and the emergence of social media have had a high impact on Myanmar's higher education sector. The cultural aspect of Myanmar is already focusing on social media influence, and it is leading the higher education providers to focus on creating brand awareness through social media and digital marketing. It can also create word-of-mouth marketing activities. This thesis study also highlights the importance of the

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requirement to create social impact in creating a strong brand in Myanmar's private higher education sector.

In Myanmar, brand image has the highest impact in choosing a university brand. However, it is still important to focus on brand awareness as brand image cannot be created without creating brand awareness. The role of word-of-mouth recommendation is also considered an important aspect of creating brand image and brand awareness because of the hyperconnected culture of Myanmar and the high level of attention given to social media usage in the country. The role of social media and providing a social contribution to the brand is also highlighted by Myanmar students. Evidence indicated the role of brand awareness and brand image as the most important determinants in creating brand equity. These findings are in harmony with those of researchers such as Aaker (1996) and Yoo and Donthu (2001). Brand loyalty is found as the outcome and the indicator of the brand's success, and the findings are consistent with previous research by Keller (2003), who considered brand loyalty the outcome.

Top 10 Brand Equity Determinants to Create Brand Equity

The other implication is related to the most preferred brand equity dimensions that higher education providers need to focus on to create strong brand equity. In creating CBBE, brands need to understand students' preferences in choosing a university brand. This thesis proposed the Top (10) brand equity determinants to create brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector. the Top 10 are: 1. teaching quality of lecturers, 2. overall satisfaction with perceived quality, 3. service quality of the University Staff, 4. programme management, 5. quality assurance, 6. physical facilities, 7. university's capabilities to provide academic skills, 8. word-of-mouth recommendations, 9. university heritage, and 10. overall assumption towards the university's brand image. Among them, the teaching quality of the lecturers, overall satisfaction with perceived quality, and service quality of the university staff have the highest impact.

Most of the preferred brand equity dimensions come from student satisfaction. Among them, the role of the lecturers, overall satisfaction with perceived quality and the service quality of

the university staff has the strongest influence. Thus, higher education providers should focus on those three aspects in creating a strong brand in the Myanmar context.

The current student satisfaction with the case university and development of management practices for creating a strong customer-based brand equity in Myanmar's private higher education sector

6.3: Managerial Implications of the Study for the field of practice

The empirical findings of this study do offer an academic contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the brand equity area by proposing five management implications: (1) the interrelationship between brand equity determinants, (2) the role of student satisfaction as the most important aspect in creating brand equity in Myanmar higher education context and creating student satisfaction and ways to improve it, (3) the role of lecturers and their preferred characteristics, (4) the role of digital marketing, word-of-mouth marketing and creating social impact in creating brand awareness, (5) the Top 10 brand equity dimensions preferred by Myanmar students in choosing a university brand.

This study explored the proposed managerial implications of enhancing brand equity in the higher education sector. The survey findings indicated that lecturer teaching quality is the most critical dimension in improving the customer-based brand equity of the university. It is also supported by the result of the focus group discussion stating the role of the quality of academic faculty team members as the most crucial aspect. It is suggested that lecturers use a variety of delivery methods, including storytelling and theories with practical implications. The need to improve English proficiency is also considered very critical. More transparent communication is also considered very important. As the role of faculty members is highlighted repeatedly, higher education providers are required to consider investing time and money in establishing strong academic faculty to create high-quality education to satisfy students and invest time and money in creating brand awareness.

Education quality is the most critical determinant in creating student satisfaction, which is backed up by focus group results repeatedly highlighting this determinant. Thus, higher

education providers should monitor and improve teaching quality. Based on the findings, the following recommendation is proposed as the managerial implications of the study.

Managerial Implication (1): Focusing on improving student satisfaction in creating strong brands which can be done through the support of brand image and brand awareness, and physical quality and facilities in creating strong brand equity.

As student satisfaction is the most important brand equity dimension, universities need to focus on this and measure it over time. It is revealed that the higher the student satisfaction, the higher the brand loyalty. By doing so, the university can gain more loyal students. It is proven that student satisfaction is impacted by brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, student ideal self-congruence, physical quality, and facilities. The mean score and linear regression revealed that brand image and brand awareness have the highest impact. Thus, higher education providers should focus on improving brand image, brand awareness, and physical quality and facilities. Brand awareness is the highest impacted determinant, and findings revealed that higher education providers should focus on word-of-mouth marketing, digital marketing, and social contribution activities to raise brand awareness.

Managerial Implication (2): Research the student satisfaction level with the university every two months and listen to student feedback on a regular basis to improve student satisfaction.

The need to listen to the students' feedback is highlighted by the students themselves and measuring the student satisfaction for every term is compulsory for the management as student satisfaction is the most important indicator. It is recommended for management to arrange regular feedback system and Student Support tickets which can be used to understand the students' needs. The management is recommended to respond to the Student Support ticket request within seven working days and make sure that the outcome is formally recorded for every student support ticket and student feedback results for every semester.

Managerial Implication (3): Focusing on the service quality and marketing capabilities of the staff members of the university and providing a development programme for staff members to improve marketing effectiveness.

As brand image attributes have the highest relationship in fulfilling MIU student satisfaction, the university's management must make sure that all team members understand the relationship marketing concept and develop ways to implement the departmental SOPs to ensure the university's brand image is maintained over time. They should also provide training for branding and marketing, the concept of service marketing and how to implement SOPs to ensure that the staff members have a marketing and branding culture and the capabilities to perform the marketing and branding functions.

Managerial Implication (4): Developing communication channels with students to express management's concern for the students to improve student satisfaction.

Top-level management should communicate and show considerate concern by holding welcoming days twice a year at the Imperial Hall. Simultaneously, management should arrange a greeting session for students three times a year by visiting each cohort to create excellent relationships with them. In addition, MIU Management should prepare an announcement letter to let students and staff know there will be a transparent communication channel with management. Students can submit a "Request to Express" form to discuss their difficulties with the approved signature of 15 classmates. All the programme managers must prepare an evaluation report six times a year (for each term, to management). The programme management and Student Support team must visit each cohort once every term (6 times a year) to review their needs. The survey will be collected every term (6 times a year), the resulting data will be discussed at the end of the term, and all results will be distributed to each departmental head and member.

Managerial Implication (5): Focusing on teaching quality and academic quality of the university by improving the quality of the faculty and arranging teachers' training developments for academic faculty members on a regular basis.

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The students' perception indicated that students are satisfied with the university's perceived quality. Among the service attribute factors, academic faculty members have the highest satisfaction rate. However, the academic faculty's willingness to support students has the lowest mean score of 3.34. Accordingly, the programme manager should suggest faculty members provide more support to the students. As MIU is an institution, the knowledge of faculty members is essential. Students are satisfied with the knowledge and accessibility of faculty members. Even though the students are happy with the perceived quality of education, the perceived quality still needs improvement to meet Management's expectations. Students are not fully satisfied with the academic faculty's willingness to support them.

The university should consider arranging training and development activities together with the partner university to ensure high levels of academic knowledge of the staff and faculty team. The university should set up a training programme with the partner university on "How to deliver and assess the module in producing high-quality academic outputs". Simultaneously, it is recommended to arrange a four-day training titled "Quality assurance and peer-assessment practices to improve the quality of education" in upcoming academic years. Development Training for Undergraduate programme faculty members is recommended to arrange with Postgraduate faculty members' support to improve their theoretical knowledge. It is recommended to have 1-week intensive Quality Improvement Training for every 6 months for all the faculty members. All the teachers who join the university should have 2 weeks training (Things you need to know about MIU and Academic Regulation and expectation), one examination and one assignment submission for Marketing Module (or) Organisational Leadership Module.

Managerial Implication (6): Strategic marketing and branding training for all managers and assistant managers.

Strategic marketing and branding training for two months is suggested for all university managers every two months. This ensures that they understand how to manage a brand and how top-level management is implementing brand management practices. It is also recommended that one week of training be provided every six months.

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Managerial Implication (7): Arrangement of the assignment discussion time slots and marking days in each lecturer's academic plan to express the faculty's willingness to support the students.

When the service attributes factor is reviewed, the most significant factors affecting student services are academic faculty members' accessibility of the highest relationship (r=0.309, p=0.000) and MIU's after-sales courtesy (r=0.302, p=0.000). Thus, the programme management team must ensure that faculty members are accessible when students need them. However, due to faculty workload, it is recommended they include student consultation time for discussions in their schedule (16 sessions for MBA, 14 tutor-led discussions, and two sessions for discussion).

Managerial Implication (8): Improving the after-sales services of the university by arranging the Career Preparation programme.

The service attributes indicated that the accessibility of the faculty members and the alumni services of the University has the highest impact on student satisfaction. Hence, management should also focus on alumni services. The alumni services can be improved by arranging two alumni gathering events and networking dinners at MIU by inviting all university alumni, arranging at least two professional skill developments yearly, setting up a Facebook account for alumni, keeping them updated with the university's activities and providing 15% benefits as discounts for alumni if they are willing to join the next academic level at the university.

Managerial Implication (9): To arrange English Programme for four months and six months to improve the English proficiency of the students.

A new English Programme to improve the English proficiency of the students at the university can be developed. Students need to sit for the entrance exam before they join the programme and a further exam after four months. Attendance of 80% is compulsory for every student.

Managerial Implication (10): To arrange three days of intensive workshops and seminars with experienced professors and professionals to balance the academic aspects and professional aspects of some modules to improve academic quality.

The need to balance the academic and professional aspects and have solid inputs to write assignments are required. It is suggested to arrange three days of intensive workshops and seminars with experienced professors and professionals. The university can also regularly invite the faculty members from the partner University, management of the university with solid academic backgrounds and working professionals from the partner organisation for specific modules.

6.4: Contribution of Study to the field of knowledge

This study contributes to the academic theoretical framework by developing a new integrated CBBE model for higher education by adding different perspectives that previous models failed to consider. A significant contribution of this thesis is the development of a conceptual model for creating customer-based brand equity, especially in Myanmar's private higher education context. This suggested model is presented in Figure (5.1) under section (5.2.3).

Another contribution of this thesis is the extension of the deeper understanding of the students' choice in choosing a university brand which appears as student satisfaction in creating a strong brand in the Myanmar higher education sector. The importance of knowing students' preferred brand equity determinants and aspects students do not like are the contributions that the practitioners can use in leading a university brand.

This thesis contributed to the knowledge by exploring the role of lecturers in creating a strong brand in higher education and proposed the five most preferred lecturer characteristics as discussed above. In addition, this research contributes to knowledge by exploring customer insights into student brand equity dimensions for Myanmar's private higher education providers. Understanding that insight can lead brand leaders of Myanmar's private higher education providers to construct and develop marketing strategies and tactics. This study also explored the role of lecturers in delivering quality education. Thus, understanding the role of

preferred traits for professors can create positive change for students and universities. At the same time, this study will also contribute to practitioners by exploring what they dislike most about a university brand so that Myanmar's private higher education providers can avoid mistakes in creating customer-based brand equity.

6.5: Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was designed to explore students' perceptions of supporting MIU and Myanmar private higher education providers to create strong brands from the customer perspective. The organisational perspective is very limited in this study. The findings of this study are restricted to the context of the case study of Myanmar Imperial University. However, the findings and the newly proposed Brand Equity Model can be transferable for Myanmar's private higher education. The coverage of public sectors and the enormous population is limited. The findings should not be taken as evidence for the higher education sector of European countries as the culture varies. This study was conducted based on a case study only in Myanmar. Its main limitations are its lack of generalisability and its applicability to other service sectors as it is based in the Myanmar private higher education context. This study also provides the opportunity for other private higher education providers to utilise the newly developed model and the findings to improve their educational brands.

Moreover, the researcher's stance as an insider could also become a limitation as some analysis and proposed managerial implications may be based on the researcher's interest in improving MIU's brand equity and a strong desire to provide managerial implications for Myanmar's private higher educational context. Even though this study cannot be generalised as the whole picture, it will be of special benefit to Myanmar Imperial University in creating brand equity. The conceptual framework is adapted from the six different brand equity models and proposed five determinants to investigate the effect of those factors on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in creating strong brands in the Myanmar higher education sector.

The focus group's following data analysis significantly helped the researcher to understand student responses and conceptualisations of how choices are influenced. However, one of the study's other limitations is the data collection timing, which was in the middle of the

pandemic and turbulent political situations. These factors can lead to an imbalance in respondent rates for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. An additional qualitative component would have significantly increased the robustness of results, including an in-depth student interview to explore their insightful thoughts and an interview with international and national experts to explore their concepts and beliefs about creating stronger brand equity and Improving student satisfaction.

6.6: Recommended studies for further research

The possible areas for further investigation include the role of dynamic capabilities of the employees as the findings of the study highlighted the role of lecturers and service capabilities of team members in creating strong CBBEs, and in this study, dynamic capabilities of the employee have been ignored. The research based on the dynamic capabilities for marketing and branding skills of the employees has been ignored in the higher education sector in creating brand equity. Thus, future research into dynamic capabilities and customer-based brand equity is suggested for the higher education sector. The primary purpose of higher education providers is to promote dynamic capabilities for people to transform lives. The role of dynamic capabilities and leadership in building strong brand equity should be explored, as employees are considered one of the main stakeholders in delivering brand promises. The communication flow of the organisation, training and development, and leadership are the main determinants in developing dynamic capabilities. In developing strong brands, fulfilling customer expectations is important, which has already been supported by different authors. At the same time, creating dynamic capabilities through training and development, having good leadership, and having an excellent flow of internal communication as a brand equity creation process are also worth being conducted (Rufaidah, 2016). Hence, in that case, having excellent training and development is crucial for developing capabilities. Developing excellent internal communication and having the right leaders with leadership capabilities are very critical in the creation of great brands. Dynamic capabilities and the development of branding strategies in the Myanmar higher education sector are factors which have yet to be researched. No study has measured dynamic capabilities in creating brand equity.

Further research can be undertaken using multiple regression analysis. Since student satisfaction seems to be the connection between brand equity and loyalty, it can be tested whether student satisfaction mediates the relationship between brand equity and brand loyalty because this study only explored the casual relationship. One avenue for further study would be research into the context of CSR in creating strong brands. This study also revealed CSR as one of the most important channels for creating strong brands. This is supported by the findings of Daboul (2019). Another recommended area for further research is to extend the generalisation of this conceptual framework by extending the sampling group with wider aspects for a wider generation.

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Appendices

Appendix (A)

Consent Form for Survey Questionnaire

"Creating customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar Private Higher Education Sector"

Please read each statement below and then confirm that you agree or disagree by placing your initials in the appropriate box.

	Yes	**No**
I have read and understood the information provided in the information sheet.		
I have had an opportunity to ask questions about this research.		
I understand that I can withdraw and stop my participation in answering the questionnaire in part or complete it before submitting the questionnaire to the officer.		
I understand that I can decline to answer any questions.		
I agree to anonymised quotations being used in any academic presentations or publications of this work.		
I agree to my data being used in any subsequent work that builds on this current project.		

Tick the box below to give your consent ☐

Signature and date of the person obtaining consent (the officer).

Information Sheet for the Participants

Type of Participation: Survey Questionnaire

Study title: "Creating customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar Private Higher Education Sector: Empirical Investigation on Creating Customer Brand equity, Student satisfaction and brand loyalty".

Research Purpose: The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors influencing the Brand equity creation process at Myanmar Imperial University. The study will investigate the factors influencing the Brand equity creation process of MIU while studying the students' perceptions towards the Brand equity creation process and propose management practices to create stronger Brand equity for MIU. The study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by examining how Brand equity determinants contribute to students' satisfaction and brand loyalty in the Private Higher education Sector in Myanmar.

This research is based on the perspective of the undergraduate and postgraduate students of Myanmar Imperial University. The participants' responses, along with the data, details and personal information, will strictly be kept confidential and anonymous from any others.

A volunteering officer will collect the questionnaires to ensure that the respondents' anonymity is valid. Your kind contribution is highly appreciated by the researcher and the society of the Higher education sector in Myanmar. Your participation will consist of filling up an online questionnaire. The Survey Questionnaire will take 15/20 minutes to finish.

Why have I been invited?

You are being invited as we believe that you have experienced student life at Myanmar Imperial University (MIU). This research would like to explore the students' perception towards MIU to create a stronger Brand equity of MIU. We strongly believe that your contribution can positively contribute to the creation of a better MIU. In addition to that, the study's findings and your participation can be a significant impact on MIU and the Myanmar Higher Education Sector and the Youth of Myanmar. Before you decide whether you wish to

participate, it is important for you to understand why the study is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take some time to read the information provided and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been asked to take part in the study because, in this study, we would like to investigate the students' perceptions towards the Brand equity of MIU, and we believe that your experience in MIU can contribute to creating stronger Brand equity of MIU.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part is entirely voluntary. The Survey Questionnaire will take 10 minutes to finish. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to tick the box to confirm that you understand the project and are happy to participate. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the study or withdraw any data before submitting the survey questionnaire to the officer.

What will my participation involve?

Once you have agreed to participate in the study, the participant expects to keep the information confidential; your inputs will be analysed for the primary data to support the study's findings.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The possible benefits of taking part will be your contribution to creating a better Academic Society for the better Brand equity creation of Myanmar Imperial University. By doing that, the MIU students will benefit from experiencing a better student journey with MIU, and your fellow students can also receive positive impacts from your contribution. On top of that, your contribution can benefit the creation of a better society in the Myanmar Higher education Sector. We cannot promise that the study will help you. The information that the University gets from your data will help increase the understanding and importance of the Brand equity determinants and the relationship in creating great brands in the Myanmar Higher education

Sector. Your participation can also create Brand Management Practices for Myanmar Higher education Sector to create great brands.

What are the possible risks or disadvantages of taking part?

The possible risks or disadvantages of taking part will be spending 15-20 minutes of your time as your contribution. There is a very minimum risk that you will be having. Your suggestion and feedback will remain anonymous. This will take the form of a statement in the consent form asking for consent for suitably anonymised research data to be shared for research purposes.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during this study, then contact

Contact address of the Research Committee: Myanmar Imperial University (Myanmar Imperial Research Association) (MIRA) - No(1) Zay Myauk Road, Yangon, Myanmar.

Contact Person: Wint Wah Aung

Contact Email Address: wintwahag@gmail.com

Contact Number: 095102840

Will my information be kept confidential?

The participant's name will remain unknown in this study. All the information collected for this study will be anonymised and stored securely on a Password-protected computer and an external hard drive.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results from this study will be used in the following ways: to complete the formal submission of the research paper for the title of Doctor of Business Administration for Northampton University. The finding will also use as the background foundation for building stronger Brand equity at MIU too. If you would like to receive a summary of the findings, then please indicate this on the consent form or contact the lead researcher at

Wint Wah Aung: wintwahag@gmail.com

Contact Number: 095102840

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the research committee members of the University of Northampton.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions about this study or your possible involvement, please contact me using the contact details below.

Poht Poht Kyi: pohtpoht@gmail.com

Contact Number: Ph:095135115

Wint Wah Aung: wintwahag@gmail.com

Contact Number: 095102840

Kathleen Mortimer: Kathleen.Mortimer@northampton.ac.uk

University of Northampton

Thank you for considering taking part in this study.

Consent Form for Survey Questionnaire

"Creating customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar Private Higher Education Sector"

Please read each statement below and then confirm that you agree or disagree by placing your initials in the appropriate box.

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the information provided in the information sheet.		
I have had an opportunity to ask questions about this research.		
I understand that I can withdraw and stop my participation in answering the questionnaire in part or complete it before submitting the questionnaire to the officer.		
I understand that I can decline to answer any questions.		
I agree to anonymised quotations being used in any academic presentations or publications of this work.		
I agree to my data being used in any subsequent work that builds on this current project.		

Tick the box below to give your consent ☐

 Signature and date of the person obtaining consent (the officer).

Creating customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar Private Higher education Sector

"This is the student study focusing on Creating customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar's Private Higher education Sector. The purpose of this survey is to improve the Brand equity of Myanmar Imperial University (MIU) through the student's perception to ensure the quality of

education and services can meet the student's expectations. You are kindly requested to fill out the survey as a contribution to creating changes and management practices that can lead to a better Brand equity creation process for MIU. Your contribution is considered a very positive contribution towards MIU and the Higher education Sector of Myanmar, and your input will be anonymised.

By ticking providing box, you grant me your informed consent to use your opinion to improve the Brand equity of Myanmar Imperial University (MIU)☐.

I declare that I am over 18 years☐."

Part (A)

The demographic background of the participants

Please tick the following statement.

1. Age

8-22	
22-40	
over 40	

2. Gender

Male	
Female	
I prefer not to say	

3. Your current enrolled Programme.

Programme	
Doctor of Business Administration	
Master of Business Administration	
Bachelor of Business and Management	
Bachelor of Marketing Management	
Bachelor of International Hospitality and Tourism Management	
Higher National Diploma in Business	
Higher National Diploma in Marketing Management	
Higher National Diploma in Hospitality and Tourism Management	
Diploma in Strategic Leadership	
Diploma in Marketing and Brand Management	
Diploma in Operation Management	
Certificate in Marketing and Digital Marketing	

3. Your Programme Batch Code :_____

1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5= Strongly Agree

Section (A) brand awareness of Myanmar Imperial University (MIU)

	Importance kindly answer the importance of each criterion in choosing a University Brand to agree on the level of 1 to 5					Perception: Kindly answer your perception of each statement to agree on the level of 1 to 5.				
Importance: is linked to when you were choosing the University and not Now. **Perception**: is linked to your current perception of each statement under your current experience with MIU.										
1. MIU is a well-known brand in Myanmar Private Higher Education Sector.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. MIU uses social media effectively and efficiently.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. The promotion activities of MIU are effective and can convince the student to choose the brand MIU.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. MIU is the first brand that I think about when considering Myanmar Private Higher Education Sector.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. The marketing activities of MIU are effective and can convince the student to choose the brand MIU. (MIU Marketing activities include Promotion, Social Media Marketing and Traditional marketing activities)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. The word-of-mouth recommendation can create brand awareness for MIU.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Section (B)   brand image of Myanmar Imperial University (MIU)

	Importance					Perception				
1. The Material heritage of the MIU, such as university buildings, libraries, stories, etc., is impressive.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. The University's Material heritage, such as the intellectual heritage, culture, values and ethics, ceremonies etc., are impressive.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. MIU is a trustworthy institution.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. MIU is a University with great service quality both in academic and non-academic aspects.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Importance					Perception				
5. MIU is a University with a good reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. MIU is a Good brand to recommend to others.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. MIU is a Great University with a Great brand image.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Section (C) perceived quality of Myanmar Imperial University (MIU)

	Importance					Perception				
1. The tuition fee of MIU is reasonable and appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. The Academic Faculty members of MIU have strong academic knowledge and experience.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. The Academic Faculty members of MIU have good communication skills.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. The Academic Faculty members of Myanmar Imperial University use real-life examples in classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. The Academic Faculty members of Myanmar Imperial University have Empathy.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. The Academic Faculty members of MIU create a prompt response in meeting students' expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. The Academic Faculty members of MIU have a high level of enthusiasm in supporting students regarding their effective learning.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. The Appearance of the Academic Faculty members of MIU is professional.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. The Assessment Quality of MIU is Good and systematic.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. The Study Materials of MIU are Good and supportive in regard to effective learning.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. The Curriculum of MIU is very updated, practical and useful for real life.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12. The Leadership and Management Capabilities of Senior Staff Members of MIU are Great.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13. The Student Support Services of MIU are good.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14. The Academic/Tutoring Support Services of MIU are good.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Importance					Perception				
15. The dress code of staff appearance at MIU is professional.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16. The staffs of MIU express Empathy for the students.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17. The staffs of MIU are responsive in dealing with the student's needs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18. The staff of MIU create trust in dealing with the students in developing Quality Assurance.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19. The staffs of MU are reliable, and they provide reliable information.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. The career opportunities after graduation at MIU are Good.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. When you hear of MIU, the personality of trustworthiness comes to your mind.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22. MIU is a reliable institution.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23. MIU has a positive social impact on society.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Section (D) Physical Qualities and Facilities of Myanmar Imperial University

	Importance					Perception				
1. The Campus and the facilities of the University are good.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. The Library of the University is good.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. The Online Learning Platform of the University is good.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Section (E) Student's ideal self-congruence of Myanmar Imperial University

	Importance				
1. MIU understands the expectations of the students.	1	2	3	4	5
2 . Students' passion for lifelong learning has an impact on choosing a University Brand.	1	2	3	4	5
3 . Students' commitment to achieving the desire and learning abilities for Success is important in choosing a University brand.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Having great life goals have an impact on choosing a University brand.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Students' attitude to Challenges and failures as ways to succeed in life has an impact on choosing a University Brand.	1	2	3	4	5

6. Being an ambitious student and committed to working very hard to achieve academic goals in choosing a University brand.	1	2	3	4	5						
7. The University's ability to provide academic capabilities to have a good academic performance for students is very important in choosing a University brand.	1	2	3	4	5						
8. Being an MIU student would make a good impression on other people is important in choosing a University brand.	1	2	3	4	5						
9. Having a Great University's brand image is very important in choosing a university brand.	1	2	3	4	5						
10. The University's ability to fulfil the students' desires and passion is very important in choosing a university brand.	1	2	3	4	5						

	Perception				
11. MIU understand the expectations of the students.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have a passion for lifelong learning.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I always try my best to achieve my desire and learn new things for Success.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I have great life goals.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I believe that Challenges and failures as ways to succeed in life.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I am an ambitious student who works very hard to achieve academic goals in life.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am doing very well with my academic performance.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am proud to express myself as an MIU student among my friends and family.	1	2	3	4	5
19. The University's brand image of MIU is Good.	1	2	3	4	5
20. MIU can fulfil the desire and passion of the students.	1	2	3	4	5

Section (E) Customer satisfaction

	Importance					
1. The Programme Management of the University is important in choosing a university.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. The teaching quality of lecturers at the University is important in choosing a university.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. The service quality of the University is important in choosing a university.	1	2	3	4	5	

4. The physical facilities of the University are important in choosing a university.	1	2	3	4	5					
5. The University's Quality Assurance University is important in choosing a university.	1	2	3	4	5					
6. The University's overall satisfaction level is important in choosing a university.	1	2	3	4	5					

	Perception				
7. I am satisfied with the Programme Managers of the University.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am satisfied with the teaching quality of the lecturers.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am satisfied with the service quality of the staff of the University.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am satisfied with the physical facilities of the University.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am satisfied with the Quality Assurance of the University.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am satisfied with the University's overall satisfaction level of the University's perceived quality.	1	2	3	4	5

Section (F) brand loyalty

	Importance				
1. Students' willingness to study with the University for further education is important.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Students' willingness to recommend the University to others is important.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Students' willingness to share good things about the University is important.	1	2	3	4	5

	Perception				
4. I am willing to study with MIU for my further education.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am willing to recommend the brand MIU to others.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am willing to share good things about MIU.	1	2	3	4	5

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Part (B) Students' perceptions towards the Brand equity dimensions (brand awareness, perceived quality, Physical Quality and Facilities, Staff Behaviour, ideal self-congruence, brand loyalty)

For each of the questions below, circle the response that best characterises how you feel about the statement, where: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Suggestions for Improvement of MIU (You can suggest your ideas either in English or Myanmar.)

1. Can you share some(or) 3 of your Creative Marketing Ideas or Brand management Practices to improve the organisational brand of MIU?

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2. List some of the challenges and barriers to effective learning in your academic journey at MIU.

----

3. What are the three things that you feel satisfied with most about MIU and Discuss? Why, if necessary?

----

4. What are the three things you want MIU to improve in the Future? And Discuss How. (You can suggest your ideas either in English or in Myanmar.)

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5. Can you please share three things you expect from MIU? (You can suggest your ideas either in English or in Myanmar.)

1)--

2)--

3)--

6. Can you kindly provide your overall suggestions and recommendations for MIU to improve the University?

Thank you very much for your time and valuable contribution to creating changes and management practices to create customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar's Private Higher education Sector.

MIU is always trying to fulfil the expectations of the students.

Consent form for Focus group discussion

"Creating customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar Private Higher education Sector"

Please read each statement below and then confirm that you agree or disagree by placing your initials in the appropriate box.

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the information provided to me in the information sheet.		
I have had an opportunity to ask questions about this research.		
I agree to record the focus group discussion		
I understand that I can decline to answer any questions.		
I agree to anonymise quotations being used in any academic presentations or publications of this work.		
I agree to my data being used in any subsequent work that builds on this current project.		
I agree not to disclose information from the group of others.		

Signature and date of the person giving consent (the participant).

Signature and date of the person obtaining consent (the officer).

Focus group schedule: The questions were developed with the direction of exploring the student's perception of each brand's building activity. Semi-structured interview questions covering four main areas, such as brand awareness, brand image, student satisfaction, and brand loyalty, were developed. The focus group discussion also explored the area they like the most about the university and the area that they would like the University to improve.

Focus group discussion schedule.

Moderator: Research officer

Preamble: Permission to record

Opening of the focus group discussion: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for **"Creating the customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar private Higher education"**- a case study of a leading private Higher education provider in Myanmar. The researcher would like to focus on the insight into customer perception regarding Brand equity in the Higher education industry. Your contribution towards this study will be a valuable asset not only for Myanmar Imperial University in creating Brand equity but also for the academic society of Myanmar in delivering quality education for creating Brand equity. The discussion should take 45 minutes, approximately. The researcher would like to request to record the discussion for further clarification, at the same time, and note down the participant's answers.

<u>**Questions**</u>

brand awareness: Questions for brand awareness. Questions exploring the common types of marketing activities of the institution from students' perspectives, popular marketing activities in the Higher education landscape and, eventually, students' perception towards the brand identity activities were developed.

- Where did you hear about the University?
- What kind of marketing and advertising activities of MIU influenced you to lead the reason to choose MIU?
- Do you think that MIU is a well-recognized brand in Myanmar, and can you suggest activities to increase the brand awareness of MIU to attract more students?

perceived quality: Questions for perceived quality

- What do you think of the Quality of Education at MIU?

- Do you think that the price is reasonable at MIU?

- Do you like the Quality of the Professors? If yes, please share your reasons. If NO, please share your reasons.

- Are you satisfied with the Student Support Services of MIU?

- Are you happy with the Career Opportunities provided by MIU?

- Are you satisfied with the MIU's positive impacts towards society?

- When you hear the brand MIU what kind of brand personality comes to mind?

Physical Qualities and Facilities: Questions for Physical Qualities and Facilities

- Are you satisfied with the facilities of MIU, and can you suggest ways that MIU can improve the facilities of the University?

- Are you satisfied with the Online facilities of MIU, and can you suggest ways that MIU can improve the facilities of the University?

Brand image: Questions for   brand image

- What do you think about the brand image of MIU? Do you like the brand image of MIU?

- Is there any recommendation you would like to give regarding having a better brand image for MIU?

Self-Congruence: Questions for Self-Congruence

- What are the main 3 Values you expected from MIU?

Student satisfaction: Questions identifying factors shaping student satisfaction and the current student's satisfaction were developed. Especially this focus group discussion mainly focuses on exploring insights into student satisfaction.

Questions for student satisfaction

- Are you satisfied with the student journey with MIU?

- Which attracts you the most among factors such as marketing and word of mouth recommendation, school fees, perceived quality of education, alumni services, facilities of the University, quality of the staff members, the personality of the

University, social impact of the University, positioning of MIU such as being the best quality education provider. Can you explain why?

- Do you think there is a direct relationship between student satisfaction and brand loyalty in Myanmar's Higher education industry?
- Can you discuss and share your recommendation for the areas that MIU is to be focused on to improve Student satisfaction?
- What are the three things that you are satisfied with most about MIU, and what are the three things you want MIU to be improved?

Brand loyalty: Questions leading to knowing the student's willingness to continue the study with the institution that he or she's currently studying at and willingness to recommend the institution to others will be arranged.

Questions for brand loyalty

- If you have any chance to continue your study in Myanmar, will MIU be the chosen place or not, and why?
- Will you recommend MIU to others? Why?
- What are the most important areas that MIU need to be focused on to be creating strong Brand equity in Myanmar's private Higher education industry?

Thank you so much for giving me your time to support my paper. Your kind support is much appreciated and is such a contribution not only to my academic research paper but also to the academic society of Myanmar.

Open Question for their Feedback: Question for Questions for their Feedback

Kindly provide your feedback.

"During the Focus group discussion, A4 Papers and Flip Charts will be provided in case they would like to use them as materials".

Conclusion Remark: Saying Thank you to all the participants for the discussions and their commitment time as well as their willingness to improve Myanmar's Higher education sector and Myanmar Imperial University.

University of Northampton

Contract of Agreement

This agreement is to confirm that the moderators do agree to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. As the requirement of Ethics needs to maintain the confidentiality of the participants and the as a moderator of the focus group discussion, I do aware of the requirement. I agree to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

Name of the Moderator:

Signature   :

Date   :

Appendix (B)

Normality Test Result

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
IBA	.138	230	.000	.864	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PBA	.151	230	.000	.876	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
IBI	.147	230	.000	.901	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PBI	.160	230	.000	.854	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
IPQ	.120	230	.000	.897	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PPQ	.181	230	.000	.791	230	.000

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
IPQF	.171	224	.000	.927	224	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PPQF	.207	230	.000	.798	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
ISISC	.198	230	.000	.797	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PSISC	.193	230	.000	.772	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
ICS	.254	230	.000	.726	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PCS	.175	230	.000	.822	230	.000

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
IBL	.297	230	.000	.725	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PBL	.241	230	.000	.801	230	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The p-values for both tests are less than 0.05, which means that sufficient evidence to say the variable **points are** normally distributed.

Validity Test Result

Correlation Coefficient between Importance of perceived quality

Table :Correlation Coefficient between the importance of perceived quality

		IP Q1	IP Q2	IP Q3	IP Q4	IP Q5	IP Q6	IP Q7	IP Q8	IP Q9	IPQ 10	IPQ 11	IPQ 12
IPQ 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.515**	.427**	.549**	.491**	.441**	.467**	.509**	.473**	.518**	.483**	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 2	Pearson Correlation	.515**	1	.757**	.748**	.768**	.781**	.680**	.777**	.703**	.650**	.669**	.660**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

IPQ 3	Pearson Correlation	.427**	.757**	1	.645**	.685**	.686**	.693**	.728**	.679**	.632**	.627**	.639**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 4	Pearson Correlation	.549**	.748**	.645**	1	.757**	.732**	.690**	.727**	.659**	.661**	.667**	.664**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 5	Pearson Correlation	.491**	.768**	.685**	.757**	1	.795**	.795**	.796**	.702**	.698**	.680**	.654**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 6	Pearson Correlation	.441**	.781**	.686**	.732**	.795**	1	.764**	.797**	.715**	.726**	.687**	.712**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 7	Pearson Correlation	.467**	.680**	.693**	.690**	.795**	.764**	1	.797**	.735**	.721**	.702**	.688**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 8	Pearson Correlation	.509**	.777**	.728**	.727**	.796**	.797**	.797**	1	.760**	.742**	.727**	.682**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000

IPQ 9	Pearson Correlation	.473**	.703**	.679**	.659**	.702**	.715**	.735**	.760**	1	.744**	.767**	.725**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
IPQ 10	Pearson Correlation	.518**	.650**	.632**	.661**	.698**	.726**	.721**	.742**	.744**	1	.795**	.713**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
IPQ 11	Pearson Correlation	.483**	.669**	.627**	.667**	.680**	.687**	.702**	.727**	.767**	.795**	1	.752**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
IPQ 12	Pearson Correlation	.520**	.660**	.639**	.664**	.654**	.712**	.688**	.682**	.725**	.713**	.752**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
IPQ 13	Pearson Correlation	.359**	.569**	.605**	.557**	.500**	.646**	.609**	.598**	.620**	.578**	.607**	.735**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 14	Pearson Correlation	.414**	.699**	.661**	.645**	.694**	.652**	.669**	.695**	.662**	.646**	.658**	.758**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

IPQ 15	Pearson Correlation	.411**	.592**	.602**	.605**	.669**	.586**	.641**	.701**	.610**	.647**	.620**	.611**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 16	Pearson Correlation	.417**	.658**	.627**	.627**	.677**	.664**	.681**	.655**	.625**	.615**	.602**	.653**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 17	Pearson Correlation	.409**	.570**	.555**	.545**	.519**	.637**	.588**	.620**	.589**	.609**	.602**	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 18	Pearson Correlation	.424**	.648**	.693**	.618**	.617**	.647**	.668**	.673**	.651**	.659**	.677**	.676**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 19	Pearson Correlation	.383**	.619**	.638**	.540**	.502**	.631**	.578**	.605**	.607**	.584**	.616**	.654**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 20	Pearson Correlation	.474**	.578**	.527**	.587**	.573**	.622**	.606**	.590**	.628**	.645**	.627**	.626**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

IPQ 21	Pearson Correlation	.458**	.612**	.532**	.584**	.636**	.701**	.635**	.663**	.724**	.675**	.630**	.637**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 22	Pearson Correlation	.459**	.711**	.615**	.568**	.652**	.666**	.609**	.658**	.689**	.627**	.603**	.631**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 23	Pearson Correlation	.435**	.666**	.647**	.653**	.629**	.617**	.627**	.650**	.642**	.674**	.594**	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table :Correlation Coefficient between Important of perceived quality (Cont.,)

		IPQ 13	IPQ 14	IPQ 15	IPQ 16	IPQ 17	IPQ 18	IPQ 19	IPQ 20	IPQ 21	IPQ 22	IPQ 23
IPQ 1	Pearson Correlation	.359**	.414**	.411**	.417**	.409**	.424**	.383**	.474**	.458**	.459**	.435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 2	Pearson Correlation	.569**	.699**	.592**	.658**	.570**	.648**	.619**	.578**	.612**	.711**	.666**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 3	Pearson Correlation	.605**	.661**	.602**	.627**	.555**	.693**	.638**	.527**	.532**	.615**	.647**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

IPQ 4	Pearson Correlation	.557**	.645**	.605**	.627**	.545**	.618**	.540**	.587**	.584**	.568**	.653**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 5	Pearson Correlation	.500**	.694**	.669**	.677**	.519**	.617**	.502**	.573**	.636**	.652**	.629**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 6	Pearson Correlation	.646**	.652**	.586**	.664**	.637**	.647**	.631**	.622**	.701**	.666**	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 7	Pearson Correlation	228	226	227	228	.588**	.668**	.578**	.606**	.635**	.609**	.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.609**	.669**	.641**	.681**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 8	Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	.620**	.673**	.605**	.590**	.663**	.658**	.650**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.598**	.695**	.701**	.655**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 9	Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	.589**	.651**	.607**	.628**	.724**	.689**	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.620**	.662**	.610**	.625**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 10	Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	.609**	.659**	.584**	.645**	.675**	.627**	.674**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.578**	.646**	.647**	.615**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

IPQ 11	Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	.602**	.677**	.616**	.627**	.630**	.603**	.594**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.607**	.658**	.620**	.602**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 12	Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	.614**	.676**	.654**	.626**	.637**	.631**	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.735**	.758**	.611**	.653**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 13	Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	.801**	.649**	.679**	.560**	.588**	.597**	.577**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.645**	.517**	.599**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 14	Pearson Correlation		.000	.000	.000	.609**	.727**	.630**	.591**	.605**	.626**	.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.645**	1	.633**	.686**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 15	Pearson Correlation	.000		.000	.000	.538**	.602**	.471**	.526**	.578**	.516**	.654**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.517**	.633**	1	.603**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 16	Pearson Correlation	.000	.000		.000	.657**	.734**	.677**	.538**	.578**	.563**	.648**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	227	225	227	227	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 17	Pearson Correlation	.599**	.686**	.603**	1	1	.714**	.751**	.567**	.615**	.657**	.622**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000			.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

IPQ 18	Pearson Correlation	.801**	.609**	.538**	.657**	.714**	1	.751**	.596**	.633**	.648**	.675**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 19	Pearson Correlation	.649**	.727**	.602**	.734**	.751**	.751**	1	.521**	.602**	.639**	.592**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
IPQ 20	Pearson Correlation	.679**	.630**	.471**	.677**	.567**	.596**	.521**	1	.743**	.630**	.588**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
IPQ 21	Pearson Correlation	.560**	.591**	.526**	.538**	.615**	.633**	.602**	.743**	1	.750**	.661**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
IPQ 22	Pearson Correlation	.588**	.605**	.578**	.578**	.657**	.648**	.639**	.630**	.750**	1	.714**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
IPQ 23	Pearson Correlation	.597**	.626**	.516**	.563**	.622**	.675**	.592**	.588**	.661**	.714**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table :Correlation Coefficient between Perception of perceived quality

		PP Q1	PP Q2	PP Q3	PP Q4	PP Q5	PP Q6	PP Q7	PP Q8	PP Q9	PP Q10	PP Q11	PP Q12
PP Q1	Pearson Correlation	1	.461**	.410**	.505**	.480**	.480**	.401**	.436**	.470**	.467**	.511**	.487**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q2	Pearson Correlation	.461**	1	.655**	.652**	.733**	.699**	.650**	.706**	.705**	.648**	.668**	.632**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q3	Pearson Correlation	.410**	.655**	1	.688**	.710**	.701**	.648**	.655**	.656**	.578**	.647**	.673**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q4	Pearson Correlation	.505**	.652**	.688**	1	.737**	.695**	.699**	.641**	.736**	.623**	.682**	.696**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q5	Pearson Correlation	.480**	.733**	.710**	.737**	1	.740**	.777**	.674**	.743**	.687**	.686**	.718**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

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PPQ6	Pearson Correlation	.480**	.699**	.701**	.695**	.740**	1	.726**	.755**	.749**	.693**	.755**	.714**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PPQ7	Pearson Correlation	.401**	.650**	.648**	.699**	.777**	.726**	1	.686**	.768**	.738**	.667**	.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PPQ8	Pearson Correlation	.436**	.706**	.655**	.641**	.674**	.755**	.686**	1	.745**	.724**	.704**	.683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
PPQ9	Pearson Correlation	.470**	.705**	.656**	.736**	.743**	.749**	.768**	.745**	1	.735**	.727**	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
PPQ10	Pearson Correlation	.467**	.648**	.578**	.623**	.687**	.693**	.738**	.724**	.735**	1	.752**	.728**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
PPQ11	Pearson Correlation	.511**	.668**	.647**	.682**	.686**	.755**	.667**	.704**	.727**	.752**	1	.732**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000

PPQ12	Pearson Correlation	.487**	.632**	.673**	.696**	.718**	.714**	.705**	.683**	.774**	.728**	.732**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
PPQ13	Pearson Correlation	.406**	.479**	.538**	.499**	.539**	.617**	.557**	.521**	.581**	.634**	.669**	.696**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PPQ14	Pearson Correlation	.444**	.677**	.593**	.686**	.694**	.684**	.680**	.649**	.717**	.692**	.714**	.706**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PPQ15	Pearson Correlation	.420**	.636**	.653**	.625**	.676**	.676**	.646**	.699**	.688**	.653**	.677**	.656**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PPQ16	Pearson Correlation	.354**	.612**	.561**	.598**	.633**	.614**	.649**	.599**	.653**	.573**	.616**	.654**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PPQ17	Pearson Correlation	.441**	.571**	.597**	.588**	.616**	.648**	.659**	.579**	.636**	.661**	.683**	.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

PP Q18	Pearson Correlation	.385**	.545**	.579**	.615**	.619**	.677**	.592**	.633**	.626**	.588**	.639**	.719**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q19	Pearson Correlation	.334**	.569**	.634**	.574**	.608**	.607**	.624**	.582**	.605**	.606**	.617**	.702**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q20	Pearson Correlation	.475**	.516**	.497**	.516**	.541**	.608**	.509**	.614**	.616**	.600**	.610**	.605**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q21	Pearson Correlation	.443**	.618**	.551**	.625**	.647**	.708**	.647**	.682**	.758**	.639**	.620**	.660**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q22	Pearson Correlation	.470**	.683**	.587**	.667**	.712**	.678**	.705**	.698**	.759**	.630**	.650**	.719**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q23	Pearson Correlation	.420**	.699**	.633**	.625**	.673**	.671**	.631**	.685**	.698**	.617**	.644**	.697**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table :Correlation Coefficient between Perception of perceived quality (Contd.,)

		PP Q13	PP Q14	PP Q15	PP Q16	PP Q17	PP Q18	PP Q19	PP Q20	PP Q21	PP Q22	PP Q23
PP Q1	Pearson Correlation	1	.461**	.410**	.354**	.441**	.385**	.334**	.475**	.443**	.470**	.420**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q2	Pearson Correlation	.461**	1	.655**	.612**	.571**	.545**	.569**	.516**	.618**	.683**	.699**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q3	Pearson Correlation	.410**	.655**	1	.561**	.597**	.579**	.634**	.497**	.551**	.587**	.633**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q4	Pearson Correlation	.505**	.652**	.688**	.598**	.588**	.615**	.574**	.516**	.625**	.667**	.625**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q5	Pearson Correlation	.480**	.733**	.710**	.633**	.616**	.619**	.608**	.541**	.647**	.712**	.673**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PP Q6	Pearson Correlation	.480**	.699**	.701**	216	216	217	216	217	217	216	216

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	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.614**	.648**	.677**	.607**	.608**	.708**	.678**	.671**
PP Q7	Pearson Correlation	.401**	.650**	.648**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.649**	.659**	.592**	.624**	.509**	.647**	.705**	.631**
PP Q8	Pearson Correlation	.436**	.706**	.655**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.599**	.579**	.633**	.582**	.614**	.682**	.698**	.685**
PP Q9	Pearson Correlation	.470**	.705**	.656**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.653**	.636**	.626**	.605**	.616**	.758**	.759**	.698**
PP Q10	Pearson Correlation	.467**	.648**	.578**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.573**	.661**	.588**	.606**	.600**	.639**	.630**	.617**
PP Q11	Pearson Correlation	.511**	.668**	.647**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.616**	.683**	.639**	.617**	.610**	.620**	.650**	.644**
PP Q12	Pearson Correlation	.487**	.632**	.673**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.654**	.705**	.719**	.702**	.605**	.660**	.719**	.697**
PP Q13	Pearson Correlation	.406**	.479**	.538**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.634**	.787**	.724**	.740**	.489**	.533**	.552**	.534**
PP Q14	Pearson Correlation	.444**	.677**	.593**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.731**	.599**	.669**	.692**	.544**	.620**	.636**	.653**
PP Q15	Pearson Correlation	.420**	.636**	.653**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.600**	.633**	.599**	.599**	.503**	.600**	.603**	.622**
PP Q16	Pearson Correlation	.354**	.612**	.561**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	1	.691**	.709**	.777**	.441**	.589**	.656**	.721**
PP Q17	Pearson Correlation	.441**	.571**	.597**		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.691**	1	.756**	.783**	.503**	.603**	.618**	.614**
PP Q18	Pearson Correlation	.385**	.545**	.579**	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.709**	.756**	1	.809**	.589**	.686**	.653**	.656**
PP Q19	Pearson Correlation	.334**	.569**	.634**	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.777**	.783**	.809**	1	.485**	.580**	.643**	.648**
PP Q20	Pearson Correlation	.475**	.516**	.497**	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.441**	.503**	.589**	.485**	1	.735**	.647**	.621**
PP Q21	Pearson Correlation	.443**	.618**	.551**	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.589**	.603**	.686**	.580**	.735**	1	.829**	.780**
PP Q22	Pearson Correlation	.470**	.683**	.587**	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	217	217	218	217	218	218	217	217
PP Q23	Pearson Correlation	.420**	.699**	.633**	.656**	.618**	.653**	.643**	.647**	.829**	1	.800**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table : Correlation Coefficient between Important of ISIC

		ISIC 1	ISIC 2	ISIC 3	ISIC 4	ISIC 5	ISIC 6	ISIC 7	ISIC 8	ISIC 9	ISIC10

ISIC1	Pearson Correlation	1	.639**	.654**	.611**	.661**	.551**	.612**	.569**	.561**	.531**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
ISIC2	Pearson Correlation	.639**	1	.804**	.697**	.735**	.707**	.713**	.628**	.685**	.766**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
ISIC3	Pearson Correlation	.654**	.804**	1	.758**	.788**	.728**	.758**	.649**	.766**	.765**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
ISIC4	Pearson Correlation	.611**	.697**	.758**	1	.827**	.777**	.701**	.706**	.685**	.706**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
ISIC5	Pearson Correlation	.661**	.735**	.788**	.827**	1	.808**	.727**	.714**	.702**	.707**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
ISIC6	Pearson Correlation	.551**	.707**	.728**	.777**	.808**	1	.732**	.725**	.659**	.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
ISIC7	Pearson Correlation	.612**	.713**	.758**	.701**	.727**	.732**	1	.683**	.765**	.770**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
ISIC8	Pearson Correlation	.569**	.628**	.649**	.706**	.714**	.725**	.683**	1	.662**	.656**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
ISIC9	Pearson Correlation	.561**	.685**	.766**	.685**	.702**	.659**	.765**	.662**	1	.788**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
ISIC10	Pearson Correlation	.531**	.766**	.765**	.706**	.707**	.731**	.770**	.656**	.788**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table :Correlation Coefficient between Perception of ISIC

		PSIC1	PSIC2	PSIC3	PSIC4	PSIC5	PSIC6	PSIC7	PSIC8	PSIC9	PSIC10
PSIC1	Pearson Correlation	1	.556**	.569**	.587**	.556**	.585**	.576**	.704**	.676**	.697**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PSIC2	Pearson Correlation	.556**	1	.809**	.677**	.672**	.765**	.674**	.634**	.609**	.618**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PSIC3	Pearson Correlation	.569**	.809**	1	.695**	.722**	.737**	.736**	.617**	.683**	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PSIC4	Pearson Correlation	.587**	.677**	.695**	1	.705**	.703**	.629**	.638**	.621**	.621**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
PSIC5	Pearson Correlation	.556**	.672**	.722**	.705**	1	.659**	.596**	.601**	.625**	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

PSIC 6	Pearson Correlation	.585**	.765**	.737**	.703**	.659**	1	.812**	.690**	.671**	.650**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
PSIC 7	Pearson Correlation	.576**	.674**	.736**	.629**	.596**	.812**	1	.632**	.659**	.654**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
PSIC 8	Pearson Correlation	.704**	.634**	.617**	.638**	.601**	.690**	.632**	1	.811**	.759**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
PSIC 9	Pearson Correlation	.676**	.609**	.683**	.621**	.625**	.671**	.659**	.811**	1	.817**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
PSIC 10	Pearson Correlation	.697**	.618**	.614**	.621**	.521**	.650**	.654**	.759**	.817**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix (C)

Improving customer-based Brand equity in Myanmar Higher education sector

Based on the Findings of the study and the Ten Recommendations Things to Make checklist, which is commended for creating strong Brand equity, are proposed as managerial implications of the study.

1. To improve student satisfaction by focusing on the teaching quality of the lectures, Overall satisfaction with the perceived quality, and Improving the University Staff members and Physical facilities.

2. To improve the service quality and practice service-oriented culture at the University by arranging service quality training for all the HODS and all the staff members.

3. To arrange service, quality audits must be conducted regularly. To provide service quality improvement training and quality assurance process for service quality.

4. To fix the communication gap between students and team members by building a Communication Frame. A weekly or bi-weekly newsletter will update students on upcoming intakes, deadlines, and events.

5. To provide internship opportunities for the students and arrange special skill enrichment classes and support classes for internship opportunities.

6. To prepare alum CV Writing and resume writing templates like Marketing Kit.

7. To promote to use of the student support ticket if they need support and assistance.

8. To create communication channels to voice out their needs to the student support team.

9. To share updated information about the University's activities via Newsletters and Announcements with the students via email and social media platforms.

10. To promote the research culture among the University staff members and students by asking the Head of the departments, especially the Programme Management team, Academic team, and Management team, to arrange focus group discussions once every Six months and prepare a formal research paper with effective practitioners' practices to solve the problems by understanding students' insights.

11. To arrange a student support ticket for students to request additional support and submit it to the student service desk or imperial learning portal. The support will be provided within five working days.

12. To improve the quality of education by providing lecturers' training for current lecturers, recruiting internal professors for knowledge integration, and working more closely with

the University of Northampton and Partner Universities to provide quality education and invite professors for knowledge integration.

13. To improve the quality of the inputs and quality of knowledge as well as the quality of education by asking lecturers to provide assignment explanation days, record the movie, and upload it on the imperial learning platform, to ask lecturers to give the Assignment Guidance template. And to ask lecturers to offer two-day feedback sessions for every module and provide formal written feedback.

14. To invite lecturers from UON and arrange classes for them at MIU. so that students can experience the western teaching techniques with the new experience.

15. To recruit good English lecturers for potential programmes.

16. To keep providing Academic support services as usual but also arrange more intensive academic support classes when the deadlines of the assignments are getting closer.

17. Arrange English proficiency courses and Business English classes for HND, BAM and MBA programmes.

18. To introduce more extracurricular activities, networking sessions, knowledge-sharing sessions and industrial visits, business challenges and competitions.

19. To open intensive 5-day workshops or programmes on Marketing, Leadership and Business Communication.

20. To have a Quality Assurance Process for improving the quality of education over time.

21. To arrange a training programme for Teachers' Training for all the lecturers.

22. Arrange a training programme for the Imperial learning platform and online learning for lecturers, staff, and students.

23. To focus on Campus Facilities by Maintaining and controlling the campus facilities with standard solid operational procedures is compulsory as students consider campus facilities as an essential aspect in creating an excellent brand image,

24. To focus on creating social contributions and creating a positive brand image.

25. Organise video and commercial campaigns expressing the student's success story with interview clips and tips.

26. To arrange Video and commercial with staff members' interview

27. To be visible in shopping centers, movie theatres, partner shops and partner examinations

28. To Focus on digital media to have more brand awareness.

Measuring Brand equity determinants

Brand awareness is created with four brand equity constructs, and they are (1) Brand Recognition, (2) Brand Recall, (3) Marketing and Advertising Activities, and (4) Word of word-of-mouth recommendation. The three most important constructs are (1) Word of Mouth recommendations, (2) Brand Recognition and Marketing and Advertising Activities.

Brand image is created with five primary constructs. They are (1) University Heritage, (2) Overall Assumption towards the brand image of the University, (3) Trustworthiness of the University, (4) The reputation of the University, and (5) Service Quality of the University. Among them, the most critical three constructs are (1) Overall Assumption towards the brand image of the university, (2) University Heritage and (3) Trustworthiness of the University.

Perceived quality is created with nine constructs. They are (1) the Quality of Professors/Lecturers, (2) Social Image Contribution, (3) Brand Personality, (4) the Quality of Career Opportunities, (5) Service Quality of Non-Academic Staff,(6) Service Quality of Student Support, (7)Quality of Education,(8) Service Quality of Senior Staff, (9)Price. Among them, the essential constructs are the Quality of Professors/Lecturers, Quality of Education and Service Quality of Non-Academic Staff.

Physical Quality and Facilities are created by three aspects (1) Campus Facilities, (2) Library, and (3) Online Facilities.

Student Ideal Self-Congruence: Five constructs create Student ideal self-congruence. They are (1) the University's capabilities to provide academic skills, (2) the University's ability to fulfil the students' desire and passion, (3) the student's ambition and Commitment to Learning, (4) the Students' Growth Mindset, Understanding of the Student's Expectation by the University, (5) Ability to create a good impression among friends. Among them, the three most essential constructs are (1) University's capabilities to provide academic skills, (2) University's ability to fulfil the students' desire and passion, and (3) the student's ambition and Commitment to Learning.

Student satisfaction is created by six primary constructs 1) Teaching quality of lecturers, 2)Overall satisfaction with the perceived quality,3) Service quality of the University Staff, 4)Quality Assurance, 5) Program management, and 6) Physical facilities. Among them, the three most important aspects are (1) the Teaching quality of lecturers, (2) Overall satisfaction with the perceived quality and (3) the Service quality of the University Staff.

Brand loyalty is considered the outcome of this study, and it can be measured with three aspects (1) Willingness to study with the University for further education, (2)A willingness to recommend the University to others and (3), A willingness to share good things about the University.

The study developed 34 brand equity constructs to create customer-based brand equity in the Higher education Sector, where brand loyalty is considered the outcome.