



The Effects of Branding on the Renown and Reputation of Educational Institutions: A Study on the Marketing of the Education Industry

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Abstract

Organizational reputation may be conceptualized as the collective perception of stakeholders regarding an organization's capacity to generate value, which is distinguished from its competitors, despite being an inherently intangible construct. From an economic perspective, a company's reputation can be regarded as a mirror of its historical achievements and an indicator of its distinctive attributes. The prominence of brand reputation as a fundamental asset substantively augments the integration of social media strategies across diverse tiers of distribution channels. This applied research endeavors to elucidate the influence of branding on the reputation and renown of educational institutions. The statistical population of this research encompasses language learners enrolled at the leading ten language institutions in Tehran, chosen for their extensive network of branches, substantial student enrollment, the perspectives of online users across multiple platforms and, crucially, and most importantly, consultation with prominent professors in the field of TESOL in Tehran. For data collection, a Likert scale-based questionnaire was employed, yielding a compilation of 573 responses from educational institutions. Subsequent analysis was conducted utilizing the structural equation modeling technique, SPSS, and SMART PLS software. The results of this research showed that brand evidence, communication, loyalty, satisfaction, and personality have a significant effect on brand renown and organizational reputation. Moreover, while brand identity does indeed exert a discernible influence, its impact is comparatively modest and does not extend to influencing brand renown and organizational reputation within educational institutions.

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Introduction

Brand renown is cultivated through an amalgamation of communicative endeavors, ranging from structured advertising and marketing campaigns to the organic spread of its image via informal discourse and word-of-mouth endorsements (Adewole, 2024). Research indicates that such information significantly molds customer expectations prior to purchase, thereby profoundly influencing their subsequent satisfaction levels (Ashfaq et al., 2019). Brand renown, distinct from brand documentation, encapsulates the collective perception of a brand held by consumers. While structurally divergent, both brand renown and documentation are intricately linked, each playing a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions of the brand (Rudeloff & Michalski, 2023). Furthermore, consumers' perceptions of a brand's service spectrum, flagship products, and pricing structures are susceptible to alteration based on the information assimilated during the pre-purchase phase (Albari, 2020). These influences on consumers' anticipations prior to purchase are instrumental in driving them to validate these expectations throughout the consumption journey.

In the context of service-oriented enterprises, the significance of reputation is paramount. The construct of organizational reputation is delineated into three salient components: firstly, brand recognition, which signifies the extent to which the brand is discernible and esteemed within the consumer domain; secondly, the general feeling towards the organization, encapsulating the array of associations pertinent to the company; and thirdly, an ensemble of associations linked to the company, which epitomizes the acknowledgment of emotional resonances. Collectively, these elements constitute the multifaceted nature of an organization's reputation, reflecting its identity and standing in the competitive landscape (Ghosh, 2017). Prior studies have substantiated that a favorable reputation augments an organization's profitability by magnetizing customers, enticing investors, and recruiting employees (Batrancea et al., 2022). To uphold an exemplary reputation, it is imperative for management to persistently endeavor to act ethically and responsibly. A commendable organizational reputation yields a multitude of

advantages, encompassing financial gains, competitive edge, and strategic dividends, all of which are instrumental in enhancing the overall performance of the organization (Berlepsch et al., 2022). Conversely, a negative reputation is often perceived as a substantial risk to a business (Baudot et al., 2020). The significance of an educational institution's reputation cannot be overstated, given that trust is paramount within this sphere and exerts a considerable influence on individuals' futures. Education represents a substantial commitment not only for students but also for their families, and amidst a plethora of educational choices, distinguishing one institution from another becomes an ever more challenging task. Institutions that enjoy a prestigious standing tend to draw academically superior students and impose more stringent admission standards, serving as a testament to their excellence and international acclaim (Kamga et al., 2022).

Branding constitutes a deliberate sequence of actions undertaken by corporations to cultivate and disseminate a distinct perception of their offerings within the consumer psyche (Martin et al., 2024). This procedure entails the strategic employment of various media channels to communicate ideas and establish a mental image of the brand. In an increasingly interconnected global economy, it is imperative for companies to perpetually enhance their competitive faculties. Consequently, service-oriented entities accord considerable importance to understanding and addressing the needs of their clientele (Zulfikar, 2023). Financial scholars contend that a brand possesses the capacity to engender value that surpasses that of generic products (Swaminathan et al., 2022). In the initial phase of branding, an organization delineates its mission, vision, and core principles. Subsequently, the brand's unique characteristics and commonalities with its competitors are discerned. The concept of brand reputation extends beyond mere nomenclature, corporate identity, visual imagery, and other design elements (Oh et al., 2020). Enterprises have openly acknowledged the pivotal role of branding strategies in augmenting their commercial endeavors. Branding is recognized as an instrumental means to establish distinctiveness amidst market rivals (Keller, 2020). A

brand name acts as an emblem that imparts an additional facet to the product (Osmanova et al., 2023). Brands hold intrinsic worth for both the consumer and their proprietors, who are typically business corporations (Golob et al., 2022). Branding is an orchestrated methodology employed to bolster consumer consciousness and fidelity. The quintessential objective of branding lies in crafting a favorable impression and perspective of the enterprise within the consumer's mind, thereby fulfilling their requirements through association with the organization (Gorbatov et al., 2018).

Through the provision of enhanced value, a genuine brand enables corporations to command premium pricing for their goods and services (Adewole, 2024). By assuring quality, brands contribute to revenue augmentation and the mitigation of economic downturns. A robust and renowned brand facilitates effortless recognition by customers, thereby bestowing significance and identity upon the enterprise (Ward et al., 2020). Moreover, the brand serves as a directive for the entirety of the company's operations, ranging from product creation to customer engagement. The advent of a knowledge-driven society necessitates the presence of organizations that consistently engage in branding, and it is indisputable that reaping the advantages of branding lays a solid foundation for the enhancement of both brand esteem and reputation (Purani & Jeeshia, 2021). Furthermore, the localization of international research pertinent to the subject matter and its practical application is deemed by experts as a critical endeavor that amplifies the imperative for such scholarly activity.

Previous research elucidates that brand endowed with credibility confer manifold advantages. Recognizable brands mitigate the risks and expenses linked to consumer decision-making while simultaneously bolstering brand allegiance (Thoma & Williams, 2013). Branding is acclaimed as an indispensable instrument for securing a competitive edge. Within the realm of service branding, brand documentation encompasses an array of notions that consumers encounter during the pre-acquisition and utilization stages. Notwithstanding the plethora of models and treatises on branding and reputation, a lacuna persists in the exploration of branding's influence

on the renown and reputation of educational institutions. Hence, this study aims to scrutinize the effect of branding on the renown and reputation of educational institutions, thereby facilitating the formulation of strategies to evolve into a sustainable and profitable organization. While educational institutions are incumbent to incessantly strive for reputational enhancement, the pivotal inquiry of this research remains: What impact does branding wield on the reputation of educational institutions?

Literature review

Brand renown

Brand renown is constituted by two principal components: controlled and uncontrolled communication. Controlled communication pertains to the promotional endeavors financed by organizations to present themselves to potential clients. Conversely, uncontrolled communication encompasses organic endorsements such as word-of-mouth, which incur no expense and are predicated on customer experiences and satisfaction with products or services, subsequently recommended to others (Adewole, 2024). These communicative forms are instrumental in shaping customer anticipations prior to purchase and influencing their contentment post-purchase. Brand renown is distinctly separate from brand evidence (Rudeloff & Michalski, 2023). It is the amalgamation of various brand evidences and dimensions that are transmitted to consumers via efficacious communication. These interactions not only forge the consumer's perception of the brand but also mold their pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase satisfaction. The impact of word-of-mouth advertising is particularly significant in this context due to its potent effect on purchasing attitudes and behaviors. Within the revised SBV model, brand renown is delineated into three distinct dimensions, with word-of-mouth advertising serving as a pivotal personal information source, especially crucial given the significance of communication in service delivery (Krystallis & Chrysochou, 2014).

Organizational reputation

The concept of organizational reputation, which emerged in the 1990s, is predicated on stakeholders' perceptions of an organization's capacity for value

creation and finds application across marketing, accounting, and strategic disciplines. It is intrinsically linked to a company's past achievements and its future potential. This notion, intertwined with the firm's image, identity, and ethos, is sculpted by customer perceptions of the company's societal role and conduct and is characterized as the aggregate appraisal of stakeholders derived from diverse assessments (Ghosh, 2017). A favorable reputation can yield financial, competitive, and strategic dividends, whereas an adverse reputation poses a significant threat to business, particularly within educational institutions where the premium is placed on trust. Organizational reputation is underpinned by two core elements: perception and actuality. The congruence between the company's image and its identity is vital for reputation preservation, attainable through a commitment to core values and the sustenance of employee allegiance amidst periods of flux and rivalry (Tourky et al., 2021).

Brand concept

In the contemporary business landscape, the brand transcends a mere name to become a strategic asset integral to corporate strategies, facilitating the generation of additional value for consumers and the attainment of enduring competitive leverage (Golob et al., 2022). A brand embodies an organization's commitment to its stakeholders and emerges as a beacon of distinction within the marketplace. This concept, now perceived as a psychological phenomenon, is pivotal to corporate triumphs. Brands assume a protective function in customer retention and an aggressive stance in the acquisition of new clientele. Amidst the globalized milieu, global brands, as intangible assets, endow companies with the prerogative to impose premium pricing on their offerings (Garanina et al., 2021). Brand, as a cornerstone of commercial enterprise, empowers organizations to harness it as a lever of competitive superiority, culminating in the establishment of a prosperous business.

Branding

Branding, as a pivotal strategic approach, plays a crucial role in shaping the long-term prosperity of firms, particularly in markets characterized by a multitude of consumers and vendors, coupled with minimally

differentiated offerings (Dubbelink et al., 2021). The management of a brand necessitates an all-encompassing vision that synchronizes the collective efforts of the organization's members towards the fulfillment of branding objectives. Proficient branding enhances the efficacy of marketing and pricing tactics, thereby aiding corporations in forging enduring business relations and bolstering financial outcomes. With a focus on brand-centric strategies, branding empowers companies to lay down robust cultural and strategic bedrocks for their brands through cohesive marketing communications (Lee et al., 2019). Ultimately, branding has emerged as a pervasive influence across diverse sectors including economic, social, cultural, athletic, and even religious domains, asserting itself as one of the most significant intangible assets that impact organizational performance (Rojas-Méndez & Khoshnevis, 2022). The essence of branding lies in its ability to cultivate a profound level of customer fidelity and the strategic emphasis placed by organizations on this concept, thereby employing brands as an effective mechanism to distinguish products and services, secure a competitive edge, and engender value and devotion among consumers (Khan & DePaoli, 2023).

Internal branding performance

Internal branding emerges as a fundamental strategy in corporate management, playing a vital role in fortifying a company's identity and market distinction. This strategic approach encompasses a suite of processes designed to align employees with the brand's ethos, thereby enabling them to deliver consistent and positive customer experiences (Barros & Cali, 2021). These processes span internal communication, training support, recognition and reward initiatives, and recruitment endeavors. The efficacy of brand performance is gauged by metrics such as sales volume, customer fidelity, and brand prestige (Molinillo et al., 2019). Effective branding necessitates harmonization with both environmental and organizational stratagems, as well as integration across all facets of company operations. Given the absence of a universal benchmark for branding assessment, employees, serving as brand champions, are imperative to this evaluative process. Internal branding, as a strategic choice, empowers

employees to craft positive customer experiences, thereby augmenting customer loyalty and dedication to the brand (Schmidt et al., 2021).

Brand positioning

Brand positioning is conceptualized as a strategic process whereby product-related information is aligned with the audience's comprehension of the subject matter, thereby distinguishing the product from its competitors and securing a unique niche in the marketplace (Saqib, 2020). By embedding the strategic essence of the brand within the audience's mindset, a firm can forge a robust identity or persona for its brand. Viewing the "brand" as the cornerstone of product strategy essentially aims to ensure that all organizational endeavors culminate in a gratifying consumer experience. For an organization to reap the benefits of brand-centric strategies, it necessitates the presence of brand-focused leadership—individuals who regard the brand as the foundation of their strategic vision and exhibit unwavering commitment to it. The branding process may encompass activities such as gathering and scrutinizing market data, competitor analysis, brand introduction with a marked distinction, elucidating the brand and its identity to the audience, fostering a brand-centric culture within the firm, ongoing brand evaluation in the market, and revisiting and reinvigorating brand-related issues (Keller, 2020). The challenges encountered by firms in the realm of branding may involve capturing consumer attention, recalling, altering consumer perceptions, reinforcing attitudes, and cultivating profound customer relationships (Golob et al., 2020).

Brand Identity

Brand identity, epitomized as the persona companies craft for their offerings, is pivotal to the triumph of a brand. The fidelity of this persona to the actual performance and promotional representation of the product amplifies the likelihood of brand prosperity. Distinctive messaging through taglines and pledges is instrumental in forging and refining brand identity, mirroring the company's envisioned message and ethos (Bhargava & Bedi, 2021). Diverse theoretical frameworks posit that brand identity is multifaceted, encompassing the brand as a product, organization, person, and symbol. These facets necessitate

consistency, cohesion, and authenticity to cultivate a credible and cogent brand perception among consumers (Ward et al., 2020). Brand identity ought to be articulated in a manner that carves out a definitive and exclusive mental space for the brand, precluding extraneous influences. This identity, integral to strategic branding, is designed to foster profound customer engagement, spurring purchase behavior and brand loyalty. The essence of brand identity, showcasing the brand's distinctive attributes, is intended to be eternal and long-term (Erjansola et al., 2021). Ultimately, brand identity, conceived from an exhaustive comprehension of customers, competitors, and the commercial milieu, should resonate with consumers, fostering an affinity that propels them towards brand patronage—a critical determinant of brand success (Bhargava & Bedi, 2021).

Brand image

Brand image encapsulates the conceptions and qualities consumers attribute to a brand, encompassing their subjective evaluations and dispositions, which can sway their purchasing choices. The genesis of a brand image is a tripartite endeavor commencing with the articulation of brand identity, followed by the cultivation of the brand theme, culminating in the establishment of the brand image (Plumeyer et al., 2019). The brand image mirrors the present essence of the brand, whereas brand identity embodies the portrayal that managers aspire to manifest. Disparities between these two facets may furnish competitors with strategic openings. Thus, brand management should strive for congruence between brand identity and image to preclude such discrepancies. The formulation of a brand image is similar to the communicative process of message reception and comprehension, wherein the audience interprets the conveyed messages, shaping their mental construct of the brand accordingly (Gómez-Rico et al., 2022).

Brand reputation

Brand reputation, engendered by individuals' interactions and connections with the brand, exerts a profound influence on consumer purchasing behavior and constitutes a strategic asset. This distinctive reputation, challenging to replicate, can bolster brand equity and foster consumer devotion. The judicious

governance of brand identity and reputation, as intangible assets, is critical for achieving market prominence (Kovalova et al., 2021). Brand reputation serves as a pivotal element in sculpting a favorable corporate image, thereby facilitating market expansion and competitive advantage. This reputation, cultivated through the firm's historical engagements and pledges, impacts the perceived caliber and buying decisions of consumers and, as a long-term accomplishment, molds their anticipations of the brand (Adewole, 2024). Companies should endeavor to cultivate robust brands that not only satisfy customer necessities but are also perceived as attentive, trustworthy, and proactive entities.

Research background

In their 2023 study, Zhang and Liu delved into the influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on financial outcomes. Their findings suggest that both reputation and competitive advantage may serve as intermediary factors that enhance corporate efficacy via the implementation of socially responsible practices (Zhang & Liu, 2023).

In their 2021 research, Mu and Zhang explored the impact of vendors' marketing prowess and brand reputation on consumer experiences within e-commerce environments. Their investigation highlighted the affirmative and amplifying influence of marketing proficiency across the spectrum of the customer's purchasing journey, encompassing the search, purchase, and post-transaction reflection phases. Additionally, the study illuminated the nuanced effects that brand reputation may exert on customer experiences (Mu & Zhang, 2021).

In their 2020 study, Mahmood and Bashir examined the conversion of brand reputation into brand equity via corporate social responsibility (CSR). Their analysis probed into CSR's efficacy in augmenting brand valuation within the fast-food sector, revealing that CSR initiatives are instrumental in reinforcing both brand reputation and equity (Mahmood & Bashir, 2020).

In 2020, Gupta and his colleagues scrutinized the influence of brand equity on competitive advantage. Their research concluded that brand equity could bolster business competitiveness indirectly via a marketing

orientation. Furthermore, they underscored that brand differentiation might exert a direct and favorable impact on competitive prowess (Gupta et al., 2020).

In their 2020 research, Liu and her colleagues delved into the interplay between brand knowledge and brand attitude within the context of green restaurant brand efficacy. Their findings indicate that a favorable brand attitude may serve as a mediating factor, reinforcing the nexus between brand knowledge and brand performance (Liu et al., 2020).

In their 2019 article, Alizadeh and colleagues investigated the influence of internal branding on the potency of brand value at Iran Insurance Company. Their research demonstrated that employee feedback, internal brand communication, and the organization's degree of brand commitment significantly and positively contribute to the enhancement of brand equity (Alizadeh et al., 2019).

In the same year, Mohammadian and colleagues embarked on a pathology of the branding challenges within Iran's pharmaceutical sector. Employing the Delphi method, their objective was to pinpoint and rank the detrimental elements affecting branding. The study was executed via comprehensive semi-structured dialogues with 16 connoisseurs in marketing and branding specific to the nation's pharmaceutical industry. Through content analysis, they distilled 53 concepts into 17 principal components. Moreover, the stratification of these issues was refined through three iterative Delphi rounds, culminating in a validated model (Mohammadian et al., 2019).

In 2018, Sanayei and colleagues conducted an analysis on the impact of brand evidence and brand reputation in motivating patients' selection of healthcare facilities. The study concluded that both brand evidence and reputation significantly influence brand trust, which in turn, shapes the brand image (Sanayei et al., 2018).

In their 2018 study, Rasouli and Esfandiarpour examined the determinants influencing brand performance within the food industry's manufacturing sector. Their findings indicated that human and informational capital positively contribute to managerial competencies, whereas communication and organizational capital do not. Additionally, the research

revealed that both customer orientation and internal marketing positively impact market orientation, which in turn, positively affects brand performance (Rasouli & Esfandyarpour, 2018).

In 2018, Jalalzadeh and colleagues developed a conceptual framework for assessing brand performance predicated on brand equity as perceived by customers within Iran's banking sector. The outcomes of their study indicated that while brand equity does not exert a direct influence on market performance from the customers' perspective, it does have an indirect impact via the mediation of customer relationship equity (Jalalzadeh et al., 2018).

Research hypotheses

The main hypothesis

Branding has a significant impact on the renown and reputation of educational institutions.

Brand, Branding, Brand Renown, Organizational Reputation, Educational Institutions:

- 1) Brand evidence has a significant impact on the brand renown of educational institutions.
- 2) Brand communication has a significant impact on the brand renown of educational institutions.

3) Brand identity has a significant impact on the brand renown of educational institutions.

4) Brand loyalty has a significant impact on the brand renown of educational institutions.

5) Brand satisfaction has a significant impact on the brand renown of educational institutions.

6) Brand personality has a significant impact on the brand renown of educational institutions.

7) Brand evidence has a significant impact on the reputation of educational institutions.

8) Brand communication has a significant impact on the reputation of educational institutions.

9) Brand identity has a significant impact on the reputation of educational institutions.

10) Brand loyalty has a significant impact on the reputation of educational institutions.

11) Brand satisfaction has a significant impact on the reputation of educational institutions.

12) Brand personality has a significant impact on the reputation of educational institutions.

Conceptual model of research

The conceptual model of this research was compiled based on the articles of Mabkhot et al (2016), Abbaszadeh et al. (2019), Samadi et al. (2009).

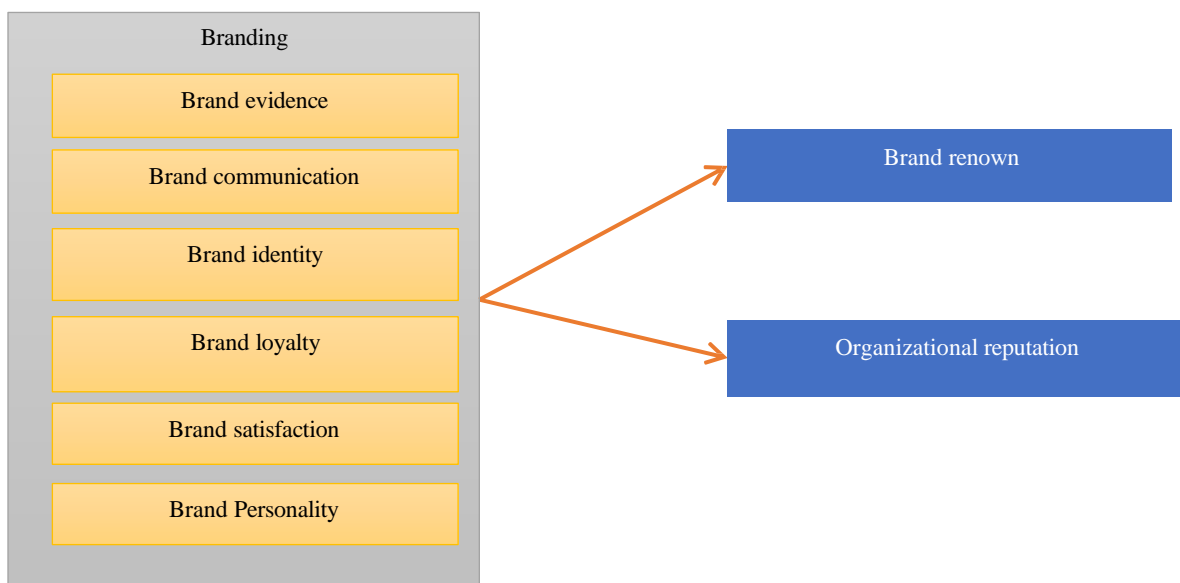


Figure 1: Conceptual model of research based on theoretical and experimental background

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is characterized as descriptive survey research in nature. Descriptive research endeavors to comprehend and describe the current condition of the subject matter, entailing the collection of data to evaluate hypotheses or respond to research inquiries. Concurrently, this investigation utilized a survey technique as a means of data collection.

The statistical population of the research includes language learners across the branches of the top ten language schools in Tehran (Speakon, Exir Language Academy, Iran Europe, Iran Cambridge, Iranmehr, Safir Gofman, Allame Ghotb Ravandi, Iran Language Institute, Kish, Gama). This selection is predicated on the number of branches, the number of language learners, feedback from internet users across various platforms, and, notably, consultations with distinguished English teachers in Tehran. It is noted that the total number of this community is uncountable, thus categorizing it as unlimited. Through the diligence of the researcher and notwithstanding extant obstacles, a total of 573 questionnaires were ultimately collected from these educational institutions.

Data collection tool

In the context of this study, data were collected via the distribution of questionnaires. The theoretical framework was underpinned by an extensive review of scholarly articles and authentic books. Due to the absence of a standardized instrument in this domain, a bespoke questionnaire, predicated on the Likert scale, was employed for the field part.

In this research, the reliability of the questionnaire was examined through a pre-test including 30 questionnaires, and the questions with Cronbach's alpha less than 0.7 were excluded. Considering that all Cronbach's alpha values were greater than 0.7, it can be said that the structures used in this model have high internal consistency.

Results

In scientific research, data are subjected to both statistical and non-statistical methodologies to derive

substantive conclusions. The infusion of creativity plays a pivotal role in the selection of a research theme, as well as in the systematic collection, organization, and scrutiny of data. The process of data analysis is integral, encompassing both descriptive and inferential dimensions, thereby steering the investigation from its inception to the elucidation of final results. Pertaining to this study, a comprehensive examination of the data garnered from the questionnaires was conducted. This entailed a descriptive analysis utilizing variables such as mean, frequency, frequency percentage, standard deviation, and number, alongside an inferential analysis employing single linear regression and a stepwise approach (structural equation modeling) for variable assessment. The findings of the current research are as follows:

The key findings of this research showed that brand evidence, including consumer experiences before and after purchase, has a significant impact on brand renown. This evidence includes factors such as brand name, price, service quality, and overall consumer experience. Research revealed that brand communication, including paid advertising and word-of-mouth recommendations, plays an important role in shaping customer expectations and, as a result, brand renown.

In the present analysis, brand identity—constituting the array of elements that delineate the corporate persona to consumers—demonstrated a diminished effect. These findings suggest that educational institutions ought to prioritize the cultivation of a robust brand identity that not only endures in the consumer's memory but also garners their contentment.

Brand loyalty, epitomized by consumer dedication and favorable feelings towards a brand, was identified as a pivotal element in the augmentation of brand renown. Students who exhibit such loyalty can serve as ambassadors of the brand, thereby amplifying its reputation and contributing to the attraction of new clientele.

Brand satisfaction, emerging from customers' positive evaluation of service quality compared to expenditures, was recognized as a salient determinant in

elevating consumers' willingness to incur higher expenses, thereby enhancing the institution's income.

Finally, brand personality—characterized by distinctive and appealing attributes tailored to a particular customer segment—was identified as a crucial contributor to the enhancement of both brand equity and renown. The cultivation of a distinctive brand personality is posited as a strategic asset, potentially fortifying the brand's position in the market.

Descriptive statistics of research

Descriptive statistics of school distribution

According to table 1, the highest frequency with 86 and 15.0 percent is related to Kish school and the lowest frequency with 20 and 3.5 percent is related to Gama school.

Descriptive statistics of school history

According to Table 2, the highest frequency with 212 and 37 percent is related to the option of 11-15 years and the lowest frequency with 3 and 0.5 percent is related to the option of 1-5 years. According to the statistics of the above table, the school staff have more experience and therefore have the most skills in their activities and knowledge in this field.

Descriptive statistics of community variables

Based on the results of the analysis from Table 3, it can be asserted that the average of the variables has a normal distribution and the standard deviation has less dispersion than the average; The value of skewness observed for the variables is negative and close to zero and is in the range (2, -2). That is, in terms of skewness, the variables are more inclined to the left, their distribution is somewhat asymmetric, and the value of the variables' elongation is in the range (2, -2), which, because it is positive, shows that the distribution of the variable has a longer normal elongation.

Data normality test

Based on statistical analysis, if the Sig value in the table of these tests is greater than 0.05, then the data is normal, and if it is smaller than 0.05, the data distribution

This satisfaction further serves to brand promotion by students, culminating in an elevated brand renown.

is not normal. According to the statistics obtained from Table 4, we can see that for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the Sig value of the variables is greater than 0.05, so the data is normal.

Analyzing the structural equation model

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) represents a formidable analytical technique within the realm of multivariate statistical analysis. This method is employed to scrutinize the intricate interplay between observed and hidden variables, facilitating the concurrent examination of both measurement and structural models. Within the framework of SEM, latent constructs are operationalized via observed variables, and the interrelations among variables are articulated through structural equations. SEM harnesses statistical constructs such as variance, covariance, and regression to provide a general model of the data, which may encompass path analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and models of covariance structure. In essence, SEM empowers researchers to rigorously test complex hypotheses about causal relationships between variables, thereby enriching their comprehension of the data and its hidden structures. This technique finds widespread application across diverse disciplines, including social sciences, psychology, marketing, and beyond.

According to diagram 1, the path coefficient of evidence, communication, loyalty, satisfaction, and brand personality is significant (0.000), while the brand identity variable with a value of 0.098 is also significant, but it has less effect than other variables.

According to diagram 2, the path coefficient of evidence (0.003), communication (0.000), loyalty (0.034), satisfaction (0.000), brand personality (0.000) has significance whereas the brand identity variable with a value of 0.748 is not significant and could not have an impact on the school's organizational reputation

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the distribution of the studied schools

| | | Frequency | Percentage | Valid percentage | Cumulative percentage |
|--------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Number | Speakon | 63 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 11.0 |
| | Exir Language Academy | 21 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 14.7 |
| | Iran Europe | 68 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 26.5 |
| | Iran Cambridge | 17 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 29.5 |
| | Iranmehr | 78 | 13.6 | 13.6 | 43.1 |
| | Safir Gofteiman | 81 | 14.1 | 14.1 | 57.2 |
| | Allame Ghotb Ravandi | 79 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 71.0 |
| | Iran Language Institute | 60 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 81.5 |
| | Kish | 86 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 96.5 |
| | Gama | 20 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 573 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the distribution of school history in the studied community

| | | Frequency | Percentage | Valid percentage | Cumulative percentage |
|-------|-------|-----------|------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Years | 1-5 | 3 | .5 | .5 | .5 |
| | 6-10 | 81 | 14.1 | 14.1 | 14.7 |
| | 11-15 | 212 | 37.0 | 37.0 | 51.7 |
| | 16-20 | 144 | 25.1 | 25.1 | 76.8 |
| | +20 | 133 | 23.2 | 23.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 573 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

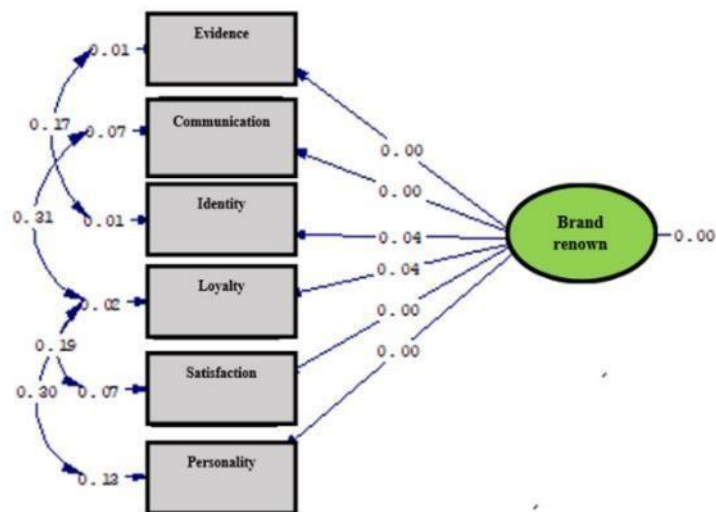
Table 4: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

| | | Brand evidence | Brand communication | Brand identity | Brand loyalty | Brand satisfaction | Brand personality | Brand renown | Organizational reputation |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Number | | 573 | 573 | 573 | 573 | 573 | 573 | 573 | 572 |
| Normal Parameters a,b | Mean | 13.2077 | 12.4538 | 14.0366 | 10.9372 | 13.2269 | 12.7784 | 13.4956 | 12.7920 |
| | Standard Deviation | 1.33556 | 1.77198 | 1.32764 | 2.08296 | 1.38959 | 1.30280 | 1.22848 | 1.25981 |
| Differences | Absolute | .242 | .177 | .317 | .165 | .267 | .304 | .197 | .260 |
| | Positive | .153 | .142 | .234 | .153 | .267 | .304 | .171 | .260 |
| | Negative | -.242 | -.177 | -.317 | -.165 | -.189 | -.223 | -.197 | -.163 |
| Test Statistic | | .242 | .177 | .317 | .165 | .267 | .304 | .197 | .260 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | | .200c | .200c | .200c | .200c | .200c | .200c | .200c | .187c |

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

**Diagram 1: Structural equation model in significance state****Table 5: Estimates of direct effects**

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | Indirect Estimation | | Impact or effect |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------|---------------------|
| | | Significance | Standard | |
| Brand evidence | Brand renown | 0.000 | 0.1 | Confirmed |
| Brand communication | | 0.000 | 0.7 | Confirmed |
| Brand identity | | 0.098 | 0.1 | Confirmed |
| Brand loyalty | | 0.004 | 0.2 | Confirmed |
| Brand satisfaction | | 0.000 | 0.7 | Confirmed |
| Brand personality | | 0.000 | 0.13 | Confirmed |

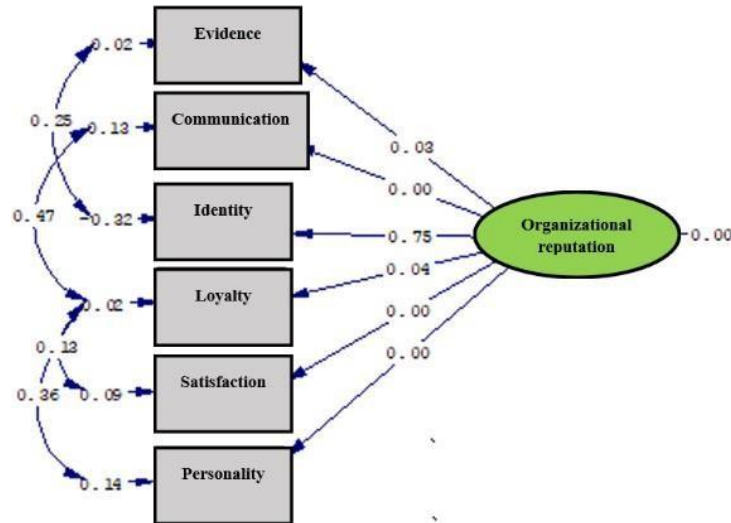


Diagram 2: Structural equation model in significance state

Table 6: Estimates of direct effects

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | Indirect Estimation | | Impact or effect |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------|------------------|
| | | Significance | Standard | |
| Brand evidence | Organizational reputation | 0.003 | 0.2 | Confirmed |
| Brand communication | | 0.000 | 0.13 | Confirmed |
| Brand identity | | 0.748 | -0.32 | Not confirmed |
| Brand loyalty | | 0.034 | 0.2 | Confirmed |
| Brand satisfaction | | 0.000 | 0.9 | Confirmed |
| Brand personality | | 0.000 | 0.14 | Confirmed |

Conclusion

The findings of this research elucidated that brand evidence profoundly influences the brand renown of educational institutions. Brand evidence, encompassing the totality of a consumer's interaction with the brand, both before and after a purchase, exerts a direct impact on customer anticipations and satisfaction. This encompasses the brand's name, pricing, service quality, and the overall consumer experience. Brand renown, constituted by controlled communications (such as compensated advertising) and uncontrolled endorsements (such as word-of-mouth), plays a pivotal role in shaping customer expectations. In educational institutions, the enhancement of brand evidence and the strengthening communicative strategies are instrumental in augmenting brand renown. These findings are in line

with the research results posited by Sanayei et al. (2018), wherein the significance of brand evidence was similarly underscored.

It was found that brand communication exerts a substantive influence on the brand renown of educational institutions. Brand communication is instrumental in augmenting brand awareness and fostering positive connotations within the consumer psyche, thereby catalyzing enhanced purchase rates and engendering satisfaction and trust in the brand. The strategic development of brand communication, particularly within the educational sector, is associated with an escalation in their renown and the allure of a greater number of applicants. These findings are congruent with the research conducted by Rasouli and

Esfandiarpour (2018), Alizadeh et al. (2019), and Mahmoud and Bashir (2020).

The investigation of this study indicated that brand identity does not wield a significant sway on the brand renown in educational institutions. Notwithstanding its pivotal role in fostering differentiation and the success of a brand, brand identity must be meticulously crafted to secure a lasting impression and elicit satisfaction among consumers, thereby bolstering brand renown. Educational institutions should strategically forge their brand identity with an emphasis on delivering distinct and superior services, aiming to enhance both their renown and attraction of the brand. Nonetheless, the findings suggest that educational institutions necessitate further endeavors in brand identity development, underscoring that, despite its acknowledged importance, more efficacious strategies are imperative for the advancement of brand development. These conclusions stand in contrast to the research assertions made by Jalalzadeh (2018), Rasouli and Esfandiarpour (2018), and Liu et al. (2020).

Furthermore, the empirical evidence of this study substantiates that brand loyalty significantly influences the brand renown in educational institutions. Brand loyalty, characterized by customers' favorable perceptions and allegiance to a brand, engenders a propensity for repeated and consistent purchases. Particularly within educational contexts, such loyalty serves as an efficacious promotional instrument, with devoted students acting as brand ambassadors, thereby enhancing the institution's renown and reputation. These observations are congruent with the research conducted by Zhang and Mu (2021), Alizadeh et al. (2019), and Mohammadian et al. (2019).

Additionally, customer satisfaction with the brand, stemming from a comparative assessment of service value against cost, was shown to increase their propensity to expend additional funds, consequently augmenting the institution's revenue. This satisfaction not only fosters student advocacy but also amplifies the institution's brand renown, thus reinforcing its competitive stance in the marketplace. These findings are in alignment with the research presented by Alizadeh et al., and Gupta et al. (2020).

Our research indicated that brand personality exerts a pronounced influence on the brand renown of educational institutions. The cultivation of a distinctive brand personality, characterized by unique and appealing attributes tailored to a particular cohort of learners, is instrumental in enhancing both the value and the reputation of the brand. This phenomenon, which strengthens the emotive bond with customers, may serve as a strategic advantage, thereby ameliorating the brand's market position. These insights are congruent with the findings of Mahmood and Bashir (2020), and are in harmony with the research of Mohammadian et al. (2018).

Within the Iranian context, the concept of branding for educational institutions has not garnered requisite focus. It is imperative for these institutions to discern their perceived standing amongst consumers and to accordingly sculpt their brand evidence and their reputation. The implementation of revised protocols and the formulation of innovative strategies aimed at brand reputation enhancement are pivotal in bolstering their market presence. These conclusions are in alignment with the research done by Sanayei et al. (2018).

Brand communication, when leveraged as a strategic asset, enables brands to distinguish themselves within the competitive marketplace and secure the trust and loyalty of consumers. Such communications, characterized by their respect to the audience, contribute significantly to the enhancement of the brand's reputation and credibility in educational institutions, thereby fostering deeper connections with the clientele. These findings are congruent with the research finding of Rasouli and Esfandiarpour (2018), Alizadeh et al. (2018), and Mahmood and Bashir (2020).

Brand identity, which encapsulates the elements that articulate the corporate image to consumers, is pivotal in facilitating swift recognition and fostering loyalty. The evolution of brand identity is imperative for educational institutions aiming to amplify their brand's reputation and value. The respondents found the brand identity weak, thereby necessitating its fortification to enhance the institution's reputation. These findings diverge from the research outcomes of Mohammadian et al. (2019), Rasouli and Esfandiarpour (2018), and Liu et al. (2020).

This research indicated that brand loyalty significantly influences the reputation of educational institutions. For such institutions, brand loyalty precipitates the expansion of the audience base and decreases the necessity for extensive advertising expenditures. Students, when imbued with loyalty, inherently assume to be the brand ambassadors, thereby augmenting the institution's reputation. The strategic development of brand identity, coupled with the provision of high quality services, strengthens both the allegiance and the reputation of the institution. These conclusions are consistent with the scholarly findings of Zhang and Mo (2021), Alizadeh et al. (2018), and Jalalzadeh et al. (2017).

The results of this research indicated that brand satisfaction markedly impacts the reputation of educational institutions. Brand satisfaction engenders customer loyalty and enduring business engagements. This contentment bolsters word-of-mouth marketing, prompting patrons to recommend the brand to peers, thereby facilitating the enhancement of the institution's reputation. These findings are congruent with the research conducted by Alizadeh et al. (2017) and Gupta et al. (2020).

Additionally, the supplementary findings of this research depicted that brand personality substantially influences the reputation of educational institutions. Brand personality facilitates a resonant connection between consumers and the brand. Within the educational sector, institutions that cultivate a robust brand personality, thereby aligning with the expectations of prospective students, can achieve a reduction in customer attraction costs. The development of brand personality strengthens the relationship and loyalty among consumers, which, in turn, contributes to the elevation of the institution's reputation. These insights are consistent with the empirical findings presented by Liu et al. (2018) and Mohammadian et al. (2019).

These findings emphasize that educational institutions should consider branding as a key strategy for growth and success, and based on the results of this research, develop more effective strategies to strengthen their reputation. These findings are in line with previous research in this field and emphasize the importance of

brand evidence, brand communication, brand loyalty and brand satisfaction in increasing the reputation of educational institutions.

Recommendations

Our research makes a valuable contribution to the field of educational branding by providing clear evidence on how various branding elements affect the reputation and recognition of educational institutions. It highlights the vital roles of brand evidence, communication, loyalty, satisfaction, and personality in shaping a brand's market position. Our study offers practical insights and recommendations that educational institutions can use to improve their branding strategies, thereby gaining a competitive edge in the marketplace. Additionally, this research sets the stage for future studies, offering a solid foundation for further exploration into branding strategies across different contexts.

Our study provides a foundation for future research and can serve as a guide for educational institutions to improve their branding performance. Through this, the institutions will have better direction in branding that will allow them to differentiate themselves from other boarding schools in the market. Consequently, they will receive wide acclamation, and the competitive advantage in the educational market will also be achieved. Our study not only underscores the importance of branding in the educational sector but also opens up new avenues for research, encouraging a deeper understanding of how effective branding can lead to institutional success and sustainability.

Future research could delve into the differences in branding strategies between public and private educational institutions, examining how these strategies vary based on the type and location of the institution. Additionally, investigating the long-term effects of branding on student enrollment, retention, and overall satisfaction could provide valuable insights. It is recommended that comparative analyses be conducted between public universities and private educational institutions, extending across various urban and provincial contexts, and including the perspectives of different student demographics. Moreover, it is advised to investigate the impact of variables such as brand

evidence, communication, identity, loyalty, and brand satisfaction on the reputation of organizations within various sectors with a more specialized focus. Additionally, the influence of brand personality on the renown and reputation of scientific and research institutions should be given particular emphasis.

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