Corporate Identity Management and Employee Brand Support: Enhancing Marketisation in Higher Education Sector

BAHTIAR MOHAMAD
Universiti Utara Malaysia
mbahtiar@uum.edu.my

AHMED RAGEH ISMAIL
Curtin University, Miri, Malaysia
ahmed.r@curtin.edu.my

ROSMIZA BIDIN
Universiti Putra Malaysia
rosmiza@upm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Marketing literature has recognized Corporate Identity Management (CIM) in higher education sector as an important area of research. Moreover, current research trend within the continuum of CIM has indicated some ambiguities surrounding corporate identity in higher education. In fact, there is paucity of empirical studies on corporate identity from a higher education perspective. Consequently, the objective of this study is to examine the relationships between university's CIM and employee brand support as well as its relevant causal mechanisms in the higher education sector in Malaysia. The study employed a survey (472) with Malaysian university staff as respondents to test the research hypotheses and the proposed conceptual model. Findings of the study indicated that the Malaysian university staff has some external validity in exploring CIM and employee brand support. The results also demonstrated that the CIM in universities should be merged with strategic communication. Finally, this study provides a better corporate identity management to policy makers, regulators, managers and government in the higher education sector. For example, institutions can inculcate employee brand support in their academic staff to ensure corporate identity management moves in the right direction.

Keywords: *Corporate identity management, employee brand support, image, visual identity, higher education*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, both academic and business interests in corporate identity have increased significantly. Higher education institutions in particular have realised that strong identity can help them compete in the world university rankings, attract potential students, motivate academic staff and also serve as means to differentiate their products (academic programme) and services. Identity is now widely recognised as an effective strategic instrument and means to achieve economic advantage (Schmidt, 1995). Moreover, many universities are striving to develop a distinct and recognisable identity as 'the ivory tower of academia'. As explained by Einwiller and Will (2002) the characteristics of an efficacious corporate identity include the reputation for high-quality goods and services, robust financial performance, harmonious workplace environment as well as the reputation for social and environmental responsibility.

Similarly, the globalization of business has also finally embraced by the higher-education sector in which education is seen as a service that could be marketed worldwide (Drori, Delmestri & Oberg, 2013; Melewar & Akel 2005). Even more, the increased rivalry in the higher education market has been seen as the key driver of higher-education marketisation across the world (Maringe, 2005, 2010; Maringe & Mourad, 2012). Universities and other institutions of higher education have to compete with each other to attract high-quality students and academic staff at international level. As a matter of fact, competition is no longer limited within national borders as both education and training have become a global business sector. For this reason, education marketing is developing standards more akin to consumer goods marketing. This presents challenge for universities such as the development of a more customer orientated service approach to education as well as an increased emphasis on their corporate identity has been understudied.

Furthermore, higher education institutions are enforced in some senses to turn into more independent, yet the most dominant market is state delimited (Adcroft, Teckman & Willis, 2010; Henkel, 1997). The influence of government is felt more strongly by colleges and universities than by businesses and industries (Adcroft et al., 2010; Karol & Ginsburg, 1980). For example, Gledhill (1996) have mentioned that governments take control of universities in a number of ways ranging from administrative regulations and legislation to the actions of the government executive. This development has encouraged universities to improve their internal communication efficiency (Judson et al., 2006), to support academics and at the same time to improve their performance (Tooley et al., 2003).

Moreover, the ranking systems such as QS Ranking and THE Ranking have arised in many countries (Salmi and Saroyan, 2007; Stensaker, 2005) in order to help potential students to make decisions about their choice of university. These ranking systems also provide important information for funding decisions (Stensaker, 2005) and are used as policy instruments for comparing and measuring university performances (Salmi & Saroyan, 2007). The ranking tables has a significant impact on higher education institutions decision making by assisting them to set goals for strategic planning and to measure their performance, as well as to support their representation (Hazelkorn, 2007).

Malaysia higher-education sector has witnessed a fast development for the last three decades. Currently, there are 20 public universities offering a variety of courses and hundreds of private universities. To be successful in the current global and regional market of higher education, universities need to develop a competitive advantage based on a set of unique characteristics. Therefore, the unique identity of universities should be communicated to the relevant stakeholders in an effective and consistent manner. Under these circumstances, universities can finally realise the role of corporate identity as a powerful tool of gain competitive advantage. Managing corporate identity strategically, will help universities to develop a competitive edge over competitors (Olins, 1995). Consequently, a growing number of universities have started integrating corporate identity management as part of their strategic development plan (Baker & Balmer, 1997). Anchored to these ideas, the current study attempts to address this knowledge gap by providing empirical evidence on the concept of corporate identity management and it consequences in the context of higher education sector.

The purpose of this paper is divided into two main objectives. Firstly, it purposes to help the researcher to empirically examine the model within an organizational setting and investigate the dimensions. This contains the re-examination of construct operationalisation,

dimensionality and the evaluation of certain expectations connected to the results in the existing literature. Secondly, the objective of this study is to advance a model to enlighten the consequences of CIM. The research assumes to add in the evolvement of recent knowledge of CIM and offer new practical understandings to policy makers and top managements of higher education institutions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Corporate Identity Management
Based on the premise of the theory of social identity, individuals seek to achieve or maintain positive self-esteem by differentiating their in-group from a comparison out-group on some valued dimensions. This is achieved after being categorized in terms of group membership, and having to define themselves in terms of that social categorization (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The discussion of identity within the organizational literature has developed around the concept of organizational identity, while the marketing literature focuses on corporate identity. Organizational identity refers broadly to what members perceive, feel and think about their organization. It is assumed to be a collective, commonly-shared understandings of the organization's distinctive values and characteristics. Albert and Whetten (1985) have offered an influential definition of organizational identity to which is central, enduring and distinctive about an organization's character.

Therefore, it is essential to view CIM dimensions more widely by encompassing the higher education institutions visible and invisible identity. In this context, the corporate identity theoretically underpinning cuts across disciplines; drawing on sociology, psychology, anthropology, language and linguistics; and implementing of management and marketing strategies. Even more, the process of CIM in organisations can be defined as a 'mixture of disciplines between management and communication' (Elving, 2012). However, there are a number of CCM dimensions from different angles. As has been explained by Simones et al., (2005) there are 3 key dimensions of CIM. Firstly, mission and values dissemination (MVD) which represents the organization's internal sense of purpose and how it can be communicated within the organizational context. MVD is a strategic tool in corporate identity management, which is constant with the literature that emphasizes the significance of strategy in the development of corporate identity (Balmer, 1994; Gray & Balmer 1997; Olins, 1991).

The justification is that corporate identity is strategically compelled by each organization's unique corporate philosophy, which is reflected in its values, mission and goals. This dimension, which is a key element of corporate identity, internally diffuses the sense of purpose and singularity of the company motivating commitment to organizational goals. This aspect is deemed to retain the initially suggested features. Hence, it is identified as the most robust dimension.

For instance, Simones et al (2005) have suggested a few items of MVD in organisation as follows; "There is total agreement on our mission across all levels and organisation areas", "All employees are committed to achieving the organisation's goals", "Organisation's values and mission are regularly communicated to employees", "Senior management shares the corporate mission with employees". These items will create a basis for emerging consistent behaviours among academic staff highlighting their role in taking the right universities' messages in the context of higher education institution. Therefore, universities should invest time and effort in this field. The MVD factor also shows that the top managements of

universities are involved in identity management and expansion by spreading information throughout the departments or units in universities. Furthermore, this factor also captures employee personification in organizations (Simones et al., 2005).

Secondly, Consistent Image Implementation (CII) holds numerous elements that establish the CIM, consists of specific marketing image development, corporate symbols, staff understanding of the symbols and visible aspects of identity (e.g., buildings). Research by Simones et al., (2005) has included the items from both the initial visual identity and communications dimensions. For instance, CII captures brand and communication dimensions through numerous degrees of tangibility. Items such as "Our facilities are designed to portray a specific image" and " Employees are dressed in a manner to project the university image" tangibly affect the image portrayed. In contrast, other items are relatively intangible, such as "Much of our marketing is geared toward projecting a specific image" and "Our employees and staff understand symbols (or visual branding) of our organisation image." It is in these more invisible items that the role of employees in the process is emphasized.

Thirdly, visual identity implementation (VII) consists of the activities that are commenced to improve visual identity. This factor adopted the items suggested by Simones et al., (2005) which derived from the original visual identity dimension. The factor reflects visual identity as the corporate identity foundation element. This can be observed as the action-oriented or most practical CIM dimension. As for example, specific activities linked to the application of corporate identity includes "A visual audit of our organisation is undertaken periodically" and "Our organisation has formal guidelines for the brand/visual elements". As suggested by Bharadwaj et al., (1993), the consequence of VII is that visibility and consistency should support the physical dimensions of service delivery and it reflects the corporate identity. This factor was emphasized in the qualitative interviews, particularly in relation to brand maintenance. Visual identity is a part of the deeper identity of the group, the outward sign of the inward commitment, serving to remind it of its real purpose (Abratt, 1989).

The Consequences of CIM: Employee Brand Support
Recent evidence has suggested that, the members of an organization should have parallel values to those of their institution (Trim, 2003). As suggested by Sujchaphong (2015), institutions need to base their activities on the organisation's brand values in order to encourage employees to support the brand in their behavior. The link between employees' performance, commitment and customers' perceptions of service brand is also related to branding and service marketing (Karmark, 2005). As argued in the previous study, the relationship between brand and employees is conceptualized as they are living the brand (e.g., Karmark, 2005; Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). Several scholars have applied it in different context including the employees plays the role of a brand ambassador (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001; delivering the brand (Kunde, 2000); brand citizenship (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005); living brand role (Karmark, 2005); co-creator of the brand (Schultz, 2005), and being brand champion (Ind, 2007). The term 'part-time marketers' used by Burmann and Zeplin, (2005) is conceptualized as "those employees outside of marketing or sales [who] emphasize that they have a major indirect influence on the customer brand experience through their responsibility for the quality of the company's products and services and through their roles as internal supplier/service provider for those employees with customer contact."

Additionally, employees exhibit behaviours that support the brand which comprises delivering the brand, understanding the brand, being the brand and/or demonstrating the brand (Karmark, 2005). As Karmarks (2005) has suggested, the employee's brand support behaviour can be seen from the standpoints of the value and norm based perspective as well as the communication and marketing based perspective. Concerning the value and norm based perspective through culture control, employees are anticipated to signify the brand passionately, that is, to be the brand and/or to represent the brand. Besides that, the communication and marketing based perspective which is an output of communication activities, employees are probable only to recognize the brand and be able to convey it (Karmark, 2005).

Subsequently, from the communication and marketing based perspective, the corporate identity management in universities and its influence on employees' behaviour define the employee brand support. This is observed when the academic staffs of universities are able to understand and integrate brand values into work activities as an academician. In a university context for instance, employee who reveals behaviour which supports the university's brand is an employee who has a clear understanding of her/his university's brand values and uses these brand values in her/his everyday work (Judson et al., 2006, 2009). It is renowned that if an academic staff does not clearly understand the university's brand, his or her acts may reflect more of his or her own values than the university's brand values (Jevons, 2006; Baker & Balmer, 1997; Whisman, 2009).

A number of studies have reported that, universities should move towards the alignment of employee behaviour with brand values. Then, without the support from employee behaviour, the brand message loses its integrity (Judson et al., 2006). Additionally, the messages sent to employees about the brand are relatively as important as the one sent to customers (Boone, 2000). It is very important to ensure that employees are involved in such activities in order to make the brand lively (Boone, 2000, p.36). Besides, Stensaker (2005, p.16) has also supported the view that universities need to align employee behaviour with brand values, for if the academic staff and students of the university do not feel that they are part of the branding process, "even the most creative branding will not be trustworthy".

Generally, research on the relationship between CIM and Employee Brand Support focuses on a wide range of corporate communication research. Overall, CIM should be perceived more as an asset to be continued. As a matter of fact, every higher education institution is interested to know their performance. In spite of the extensive review, previous study has not measured the relationship between CIM and employee brand support. Anchored to this idea, Simones et al., (2005) have noted that the CIM scale can be used in several ways including firms' for conveying values to employees and to assess the impact of CIM-related activities. Therefore, the CIM is believed to have an impact on employee brand support in the context of higher education sector.

In the higher education context, when CIM has been applied, academic staff tend to have a clearer understanding of their universities' brand values and are able to reflect the brand values in their daily operation (Judson et al., 2006; Whisman, 2009). Nevertheless, empirical study has not explored the relationships between CIM in higher education and the academic staff's brand support behaviour. In the latest study, CIM activities in universities are measured as possible variable factors of the academic staff's employee brand support. Taken together with the reasons above, it is suggested that the relationship between

Corporate Identity Management (CIM) will have a positive effect on Employee Brand Support (EBS)*.*

METHODOLOGY

Based on the research questions, the unit of analysis of this study were for both qualitative and quantitative stages is the organization. The focus of this study is universities with an emphasis on organisational (higher education sector) constructs and their hypothesised relationship in the conceptual model. In consistent with Forman and Argenti (2005), data were collected at the individual level (academician). The questionnaires were distributed to the academic staff of universities nationwide in order to measure the universities' CIM and its relationship with employee brand support.

Development of the instrument was carried out in four stages as suggested by Churchill (1979). The first stage was item creation, the purpose of which is to create a pool of items by identifying the item from existing scales. The second stage involved interviews with universities' corporate communication practitioners to ensure the items gathered from the literature were in line with the context of study. At this stage, additional items appeared, and needed to be added to the existing scale. The third stage involved the process of scale of content and face validity. As it will be described more fully in subsequent sections, the basic procedure is to have panels of judges to confirm the validity of items based on the representativeness and clarity of the items. Based on their placements, items with a low score could be eliminated. Finally, the combination of various scales after the content and face validity processes were ready for the instrument testing stage. The instruments (questionnaire) were distributed to a small sample of respondents to gain an initial indication of the scales' reliability. From the results, each item which does not contribute to the reliability of scales was culled and then field test of the instrument was carried out.

Measurements

The measurement of the CIM in this study relied primarily on scales from Simones et al., (2005) instrument that consist of 16 attributes and 10 attributes were added from the qualitative interview. In a review of CIM research, Simones et al., (2005) have identified CIM as mission and values dissemination (MVD), consistent image implementation (CII) and visual identity implementation (VII) to measure the CIM. Each question was measured on a five-point Likert scale. Subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each item on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

While employee brand support measured via the self-report method with items examining academic staff's perception of Aurand et al. (2005), 7-item scale (2 was newly added from the qualitative study) was used to measure group perceived employee brand support. All of these items were measured and operationalized using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agrees.

Table 1: The Domains and Items of Constructs in Extent Literature

Construct	Items	Major references
Corporate Identity Management (Focal Construct)		
Mission and Value Dissemination (MVD)	• There is total agreement on our mission across all levels and higher education areas • All employees are committed to achieving the university's goals	Simoes, Dibb and Fisk, (2005).

	• University's values and missions are regularly communicated to employees • Senior management shares the corporate mission with employees. • Employees view themselves as partners in charting the direction of the university • We do have a well-defined mission	
	• In my university, senior management and all staffs are strived in achieving teaching and learning quality • My university organized specific training to understand university's mission with all staffs • My university organized specific events to communicate university's vision with all staffs • My university's missions are consistent with the national education aspiration	Item generated from qualitative interview
Consistent Image Implementation (CII)	• Our university's name is part of our image • Our corporate symbols (logo, slogan, colors/visual style, signage) are constituents of our image • Our facilities are designed to portray a specific image. • Much of our marketing is geared to projecting a specific image • Our employees and staff understand symbols (or visual branding) of our university • Employees are dressed in a manner to project the university's image	Simoes, Dibb and Fisk, (2005).
	• My university emphasizes academic staff's achievement through media to project the university's image • My university emphasizes international recognition to project the university's image • In my university, academic staff are encouraged to publish high quality research publication to project a specific university's image • My university share the information about the university through social media to portray a good university image	Item generated from qualitative interview
Visual Identity Implementation (VII)	• A visual audit of our facilities is undertaken periodically. • Our university has formal guidelines for brand/visual elements • Our university transmits a consistent visual presentation through facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication material. • Our consumables (e.g., books) and stationeries are designed to match the overall visual elements/image of our university.	Simoes, Dibb and Fisk, (2005).
	• My university ensure the design of my university's logo are vibrant • My university highlight specific facilities images as financial performance presentation	Item generated from qualitative interview

	Employees brand support (consequence)	
Employees brand support	• I am confident in my ability to clearly explain the brand values • I use my knowledge of my institution's brand values to better organise my time • The brand values influence my decisions on customer (student) requests • I know what skills are necessary to deliver on the brand value • I include information on brand values in my day-to-day operation	Adapted from original items from the study by Aurand et al. (2005)
	• I use my knowledge of my university's brand values beyond my daily work • I include information on my university's brand values in maintaining relationship with my co-workers	Item generated from qualitative interview

The test was conducted to ensure adequate mechanics of compiling questionnaires and a satisfactory reliable scales. Cronbach's alpha is used as the tool to test the reliability of a multi-scale measurement to assess whether all items are measuring the same thing (DeVellis, 1991). It is also used to remove items with low total correlations (<0.3) (Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach 1970), is highlighted in the analysis as fairly standard in most discussions of reliability. The level of acceptance for the reliability depends on the purpose of the research project. Thus, for this study, the target level of minimum reliability was set in the 0.934 to 0.960 range.

Table 2: The results of the reliability test

Constructs	Items	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if the item deleted	Cronbach's alpha	Sample size (N)*
Corporate Identity Management	MVD1_CIM	0.753	0.958	0.960	472
	MVD2_CIM	0.694	0.958		
	MVD3_CIM	0.705	0.958		
	MVD4_CIM	0.751	0.958		
	MVD5_CIM	0.789	0.958		
	MVD6_CIM	0.689	0.957		
	MVD7_CIM	0.764	0.958		
	MVD8_CIM	0.700	0.958		
	MVD9_CIM	0.745	0.958		
	MVD10_CIM	0.534	0.959		
	CII1_CIM	0.605	0.959	0.962	472
	CII2_CIM	0.633	0.959		
	CII3_CIM	0.651	0.959		
	CII4_CIM	0.758	0.958		
	CII5_CIM	0.674	0.958		
	CII6_CIM	0.550	0.960		
	CII7_CIM	0.598	0.959		
	CII8_CIM	0.712	0.958		
	CII9_CIM	0.427	0.960		
	CII10_CIM	0.702	0.958		
	VII1_CIM	0.717	0.958	0.961	472
	VII2_CIM	0.716	0.958		
	VII3_CIM	0.763	0.957		

	VII4_CIM	0.589	0.959		
	VII5_CIM	0.715	0.958		
	VII6_CIM	0.716	0.958		
Employee brand support	BS1	0.785	0.924	0.934	472
	BS2	0.847	0.918		
	BS3	0.750	0.927		
	BS4	0.702	0.931		
	BS5	0.818	0.921		
	BS6	0.778	0.924		
	BS7	0.832	0.920		

The result is 33 items of instruments, comprising two scales, all with an acceptable level of reliability (Field, 2009). This instrument can now be used to investigate the consequences of CIM.

Primary data were gathered through the survey of the target population's academic staff of the Malaysian universities academic staff. Survey packets were sent directly to 472 academic staff. Subjects of this research were primarily academic staff which is relatively convenient. All academic staff of Malaysian public university was included in this research for two reasons. First, the collection of data for all populations is practical and financially feasible. Therefore, they were not subjected to any sampling. Second, the requirement about the sample size by chosen analysis techniques (multivariate analysis) required a considerable sample size in order to obtain reliable estimates (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996). Approximately 53.0% (n = 263) were female and 47.0% (n = 233) were male. This sample distribution reflects the norm of academic staff in Malaysia. The majority of the respondents 56.9% (n = 282) were Ph.D holders, 38.5% (n = 191) with Master Degree, 4.2% (n=21) Bachelor Degree and 0.4 (n=2) were others.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Before conducting the major part of the analysis, descriptive statistics took place by using SPSS 22.0 software. In this stage, the means and the standard deviation were calculated in order to disclose the central tendency and dispersions. Tests for normality included kurtosis measures, skewness measures, and visual inspection of histograms. The majority of items appeared to be within normality. Kurtosis measures were below one. Skewness measures were around zero and analysis indicated normal-shaped histograms. To finalise the scales validation and refinement of the measurement scales via exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were conducted (Marsh et al., 1988).

The analysis of data for this study consisted of two major parts: (1) assessment of the measurement model by using exploratory factor analysis (EFA); and (2) assessment of a relationship using multiple regression. The first part was developing an acceptable measurement model. Once the measurement model was validated, the second part was conducted to examine the model for all constructs by using SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The process started with data examination and screening to prepare for subsequent quantitative analyses and then the descriptive statistics were presented. Prior to achieve acceptable level of reliability for further analysis, a reliability test was performed on measurement scales. In the following step, each multi-item measurement scale was subjected to an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to discover its underlying dimensions.

Finally, multiple regressions were employed to test the hypothesised relationships between the research constructs as proposed in the theoretical model.

This study followed the procedure suggested by Hair et al., (2010) where the data are examined and descriptive statistics are reported. Several issues have an impact on the outcome of variables or relationships of variables such as missing data, outliers, linearity, normality, homoscedasticity and multicolinearity. To overcome with this issue, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) have outlined the procedure of data screening.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to investigate the factorial structure of the scales to identify groups of variables (Field, 2005, p.619). Therefore, the data analysis for exploratory factor analysis used orthogonal and oblique rotation (Field, 2009; Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Rotation is essential to enhance the interpretability and scientific utility of the solution which is to simplify and clarify the data structure. The purpose of this analysis is to maximise high correlations between factors and variables and minimise those which are low. Moreover, a rotation technique is very useful compared to others to develop factors from variables (Field, 2009).

Furthermore, Varimax orthogonal techniques were applied in this study, which is the most widely used rotation for maximising variance. The main objective of Varimax rotation is to maximise the variance of factor loading by making high loadings higher and low ones lower for each factor (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p.620).

The results for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value in this study was 0.949, higher than the recommended value of 0.6 and the Bartlett Test of Sphericity reached a statistical significance, which means the forcibility of the correlation matrix is supported. Principal Component Analysis indicated the presence of six components with eigenvalues greater than 1, as a scree plot, revealed a clear cut-off of these components.

After factors derived from the EFA, each loaded factor was assessed using Cronbach's alpha measure in order to test internally consistence (Carmines & Zeller, 1979; Parasuraman et al., 1988). This method is widely used in many social sciences research (Churchill et al., 1974; Churchill, 1979; De Vaus, 2002). According to De Vaus (1996) and Nunnally (1978) values of 0.70 or more are considered to be of an acceptable level of reliability. The next section demonstrated clusters of items which were specified relevant dimensions of the elements.

Table 3: Factor loading and Cronbach's Alpha for Corporate Identity Management

Variables	Factor and Related Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
MVD1_CIM	There is total agreement on the university's missions across all levels and university niche areas at my university	.697	0.950
MVD2_CIM	All staff are committed to achieving the university's goals at my university	.691	
MVD3_CIM	My university's values and missions are regularly communicated to the staff	.785	
MVD4_CIM	The senior management shares the university's missions with the staff at my university	.802	
MVD5_CIM	All staff view themselves as partners in charting the direction of the university at my university	.739	
MVD6_CIM	My university has a well-defined missions	.751	
MVD7_CIM	The senior management and staff at my university strive together in achieving quality in teaching and learning	.768	

MVD8_CIM	My university organized specific training to understand the university's missions with its staff	.677
MVD9_CIM	My university organized specific events to communicate the university's visions with its staff	.710
MVD10_CIM	My university's missions are consistent with the national education's aspiration	.729
CII1_CIM	My university's name is part of my university's image	.689
CII2_CIM	My university's corporate symbols (logo, slogan, colors/visual style, signage) are constituents of my university's image	.763
CII3_CIM	The facilities at my university are designed to portray a specific image	.718
CII4_CIM	Much of my university's marketing is geared towards projecting a specific image	.757
CII5_CIM	The employees and staff at my university understand symbols (or visual branding) of my university	.703
CII6_CIM	The staff at my university are dressed in a manner to project the university's image	.617
CII7_CIM	My university places emphasis on the achievements of the staff's academic achievement through the media in order to project the university's image	.719
CII8_CIM	My university emphasizes international recognition to project the university's image	.734
CII9_CIM	All academic staff at my university are encouraged to publish high quality research publications in order to project the university's image	.619
CII10_CIM	Information relating to my university are shared through social media in order to portray the university's image	.653
VII1_CIM	A visual audit of my university facilities is undertaken periodically	.805
VII2_CIM	My university has formal guidelines for brand/visual elements	.850
VII3_CIM	My university transmits a consistent visual presentation through facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication material	.878
VII4_CIM	My university's consumables (e.g., books) and stationeries are designed to match the overall visual elements/image of my university	.791
VII5_CIM	My university ensures the design of its logo are vibrant	.770
VII6_CIM	My university highlights images of specific facilities as a form of a financial performance presentation	.781

Corporate Identity Management (CIM): This factor encompasses staffs' perceptions on organisational corporate identity. A 26 items scale applied by Simoes et al., (2005), was applied and provided information about organisations identity. Applying factor loading at 0.5, no item was excluded and the factor was loaded with one factor (Field, 2009).

Table 4: Factor loading and Cronbach's Alpha for Employee Brand Support

Variables	Factor and Related Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
BS1	I am confident with my ability to clearly explain my university's brand values	.843	0.943
BS2	I use my knowledge of my university's brand values to better organize my time	.869	
BS3	My university's brand values influence my decisions on customer (student) requests	.840	

BS4	I know what skills are necessary to deliver my university's brand value	.815
BS5	I include information on my university's brand values in my day-to-day operation	.883
BS6	I use my knowledge of my university's brand values beyond my daily work	.848
BS7	I include information on my university's brand values in maintaining relationship with my co-workers	.866

Employee Brand Support (EBS): This factor encompasses staff' perceptions on brand supports. A 7 items scale, developed Aurand et al. (2005), was applied measuring the brand support. All items were included applying factor loading at 0.5. (Field, 2009).

Multiple Regressions
Data was analyzed by using multiple regressions to test the relationship between CIM and employee brand support concerning respondents' score. Multiple regression techniques were chosen because they allow researchers in social science to deal with complexity in human behaviours. The central idea of the multiple regression method is that it is used to test the relationship between a dependent variable and two or more independent variables (Greene, 2003). Thus, using a multiple regression technique we can determine specific independent variables that have a major impact on a dependent variable, in this case the CIM and employee brand support. The hypotheses dealt with the relationship between CIM and employee brand support among university staff respondents. Positive relationship was predicted. Results of a simple regression analysis suggested that there is a significant positive relationship between CIM and employee brand support (R^2 = .428, p < .005). Table 6 displays the findings of the relationship between CIM and employee brand support for respondents. The results suggested that there is a direct relationship between CIM and employee brand support for respondents. Specifically, it indicated that CIM has high correlation with employee brand support.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics, Correlations and Reliabilities of Variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Reliability	1	2	3	4
MVD	3.8004	0.66292	0.912	1			
CII	3.9531	0.61075	0.890	0.763**	1		
VII	3.6273	0.73817	0.910	0.656**	0.740**	1	
EBS	3.7403	0.76305	0.944	0.615**	0.616**	0.637**	1

*p < .05; **p < .01
Note: MVD = Mission and value dissemination; CII = Consistent image implementation; VII = Visual identity implementation; EBS = Employee brand support

Table 6: Ordinary Least Square (OLS) between CIM and Employee Brand Support

	.
Corporate Identity Management (CIM)	.428*

Notes: N = 4472; p < .05

Since this first test found a significant positive relationship between CIM and Employee Brand Support, further tests were generated to test whether the specific CIM can influence Employee Brand Support among students. It is predicted that positive relationship has an impact on each Employee Brand Support dimensions of the university academic staff. In order to test these propositions, multiple regressions was used. In each regression model, Employee Brand Support was regressed against the three CIM dimensions, i.e. Mission and Value Dissemination, Consistent Image Implementation and Visual Identity Implementation. Regression weights and multiple correlations display in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for CIM and Employee Brand Support

Variable	β	Std. error	t-value	Sig.
MVD	0.252	0.006	4.734	.000**
CII	0.170	0.007	2.831	.005**
VII	0.318	0.009	6.246	.000**

$R^2 = 0.436$
Adjusted $R^2 = 0.433$
Overall Model F = 120.783*
Degree of freedom = 468
Predictors: (Constant), MVD, CII, VII
Dependent variable: EBS

Our main investigation aim was to determine the CIM that influence university's employee brand support. As mentioned earlier we predicted the dimension of CIM will be a significant predictor for relationship employee brand support of the university. The overall pattern of results in Table 6 indicates a significant relationship between CIM and the dimensions of employee brand support. Results showed that some CIM dimensions were significant predictors for employee brand support $F(3, 468) = 120.783$, $p < .05$ and $R^2 =.433$. These results partially supported past research as well as partially support the current hypothesis that CIM significantly positive with employee brand support. The test reveals that three CIM dimensions were significant predictors of employee brand support for university.

Table 3 also indicates that all the dimension, Mission and Value Dissemination $t(472) = 4.734$, $p < .05$, Consistent Image Implementation $t(472) = 2.831$, $p < .05$, and Visual Identity Implementation $t(472) = 6.246$, $p < .05$ have significant impact on corporate identity with almost 43.6% variance in employee brand support.

This study suggested that the CIM of universities staffs plays an important role in influencing employee brand support. As can be seen in Table 7, the finding shows three important dimensions of work values (Mission and value dissemination, Consistent image implementation, Visual identity implementation) influencing and perhaps in determining employee brand support. The findings also gave some indications of what should be included in the higher education sector planning strategy.

This finding has interesting implications. First, finding revealed that university staff look at only certain aspect of CIM that affects their employee brand support behavior. Basically, CIM is used by university's top management and public relations practitioners to measure how important CIM are to the individual. Similarly, in this study CIM was used to assess the importance of different attributes of corporate identity so that the university can understand their academic staff's perceptions, in order to develop an effective corporate identity strategies as well as effective employee development programs.

Our findings suggested that the CIM of universities are both instrumental and relationships communication has an influence on their employee brand support. One explanation for the CIM is now widely recognized as an effective strategic instrument.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The main limitation of this study is in the generalizability of the CIM structure. Therefore, it is suggested that more cross-cultural comparison studies are to be conducted to examine the possibility of generalizing the factor structure onto different subjects with different cultural backgrounds. In addition, these findings warrant further investigations on the impact of social/cultural variables on CIM.

Secondly, this study focused only on staffs from one university in Malaysia, it represents a limited test on the CIM and employee brand support. Even this limited test suggests that the CIM does affect employee brand support. The next step is to assess the external validity of the obtained results by replication of the study in other Malaysian university settings, and other tasks at hand. For example future research should test whether similar effect can be found in other public universities or private universities operating in Malaysia or foreign universities based in Malaysia, whether they are similar or differ than those in public or private Malaysian universities.

Third, this study duplicates items from CIM by Simones et al., (2005). Therefore, dimensions of the CIM suggested by other scholars also needed to be considered. Such additional dimensions can play a vital role in developing understandings about what and whether the CIM should deviate from 'best' corporate identity management'. Further research may identify CIM to enhance their employee brand support and lead to information which could provide helpful indications of the best CIM for university students. In summary, this study represents an initial research effort to identify CIM in which will influence the employee brand support of the university.

This paper predominantly offers better understandings towards the consequences of CIM. Specifically, this paper verifies theories in a different context (non-western) in order to examine their applicability in other settings than the west. To summarize, the CIM theoretical model has proven to be useful to the Malaysia higher learning institutions and the conceptual model presented has also proven its robustness. It is discovered that three dimensions of CIM are factors that affect Employee Brand Support directly.

The literature and the academic community need new settings to prove the applicability and validity of theories (Boyacigiller and Adler, 1991). For instance, the process of reexamination of constructs operationalization and dimensionality is adequate and the reliability of the scale was satisfactory and it connected to the results in existing literature. Hence assessing the CIM model in Malaysia adds additional perspectives to the existing literature, because Malaysian universities and their cultural backgrounds are significantly distinct from those of western cultures (Abdullah and Lim, 2001). The model clarifies the consequences of CIM in Malaysian higher-education sector and reveals broader applicability. This article contributes to the current knowledge on work values by pinpointing the importance of understanding potential universities' CIM in the Malaysian context.

BIODATA

Bahtiar Mohamad is a Senior Lecturer at Communication Department, School of Multimedia Technology and Communication, UUM. With a PhD from Brunel University London, United Kingdom, Bahtiar has been serving Universiti Utara Malaysia for approximately 14 years. He teaches Public Relations, Corporate Communication, Communication for Managers and Organizational Image Management, which all combine to support his hybrid profession linking communication with the management. His qualifications are in Business Administration and Corporate Communication. In recent years, his publication and research interests have focused on corporate communication and public relations. He is carrying out research in the area of corporate identity, corporate image, corporate branding and crisis communication. He is Member of Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (MIPR) and European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA). He is currently appointed as a Visiting Scholar at Marketing Department, Faculty of Business, Curtin University and Asian Institute of Cambodia.

Ahmed Rageh Ismail is a Senior Lecturer at School of Business - Curtin University. His main research and teaching interests fall into areas such as branding, marketing communications, cross-cultural marketing, consumer behavior, services marketing, internet marketing and retailing. He has published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, Qualitative Marketing Research: An International Journal, Journal of Promotion Management, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management amongst others.

Rosmiza Bidin is a lecturer in the Department of Communication, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her researches mainly focus on government-linked companies' corporate identity, corporate communication, image and reputation, public relations, marketing for animation production, web-portal communication, and media richness. She serves several journals such as Corporate Communication: An International Journal, and UPM Pertanika Journal; as well as several international conferences such as International Conference of Corporate Identity Group, and the International Conference on Communication and Media as presenters and reviewers. Currently she is involves in researches related to corporate identity in halal industry, marketing communication for animation production, and media communication. She is a member for Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM), Pacific & Asia Communication Association (PACA), and World Communication Association (WCA).

REFERENCES

Abratt, R. (1989). A new approach to the corporate image management process. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 5(1), 63-76.

Adcroft, A., Teckman, J., & Willis, R. (2010). Is higher education in the UK becoming more competitive?. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 23(6), 578-588.

Aurand, T. W., Gorchels, L., & Bishop, T. R. (2005). Human resource management's role in internal branding: An opportunity for cross-functional brand message synergy. *Journal of Product and Brand Management,* 14(3), 163-169.

Albert S., Whetten D. A. (1985). Organizatoinal identity. In L. L. Cummings & M. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 7, pp. 263-295). Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Baker, M. J., & Balmer, J. M. T. (1997). Visual identity: Trappings or substance?. *European Journal of Marketing,* 31(5/6), 366-382.

Balmer, J. M. (1994). The BBC's corporate identity: Myth, paradox and reality. *Journal of General Management*, 19(3), 33-49.

Bharadwaj, S. G., Varadarajan, P. R., & Fahy, J. (1993). Sustainable competitive advantage in service industries: A conceptual model and research propositions. *The Journal of Marketing*, 83-99.

Boone, M. (2000). The importance of internal branding. *Sales & Marketing Management*, 152(9), 36-38

Burmann, C., & Zeplin, S. (2005). Building brand commitment: A behavioural approach to internal brand building. *Journal of Brand Management*, 12(4), 279-300.

Carmines, E. G., & Zeller, R. A. (1979). *Reliability and validity assessment*. London: Sage.

Churchill, G. A. Jr. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16(1), 64-73.

Churchill, Jr., G. A., Ford, N. M., & Walker, Jr. O. C. (1974). Measuring the job satisfaction of industrial salesmen. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 11(3), 254-260.

Cronbach, L. J. (1970). *Essentials of Psychological Testing* (3rd ed.). New York: Harper and Row.

De Vaus, D. A. (1996). *Surveys in Social Research*. London: UCL Press.

De Vaus, D. A. (2002). *Surveys in Social Research* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.

Drori, G. S., Delmestri, G., & Oberg, A. (2013). Branding the university: Relational strategy of identity construction in a competitive field. In P. Scott & L. Engwall (Eds.), *Trust in Universities* (137-151). London, England: Portland Press.

Einwiller, S., & Will, M., (2002). Towards an integrated approach to corporate branding: findings from an empirical study. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 7(2), 100-109.

Elving, W. J. L. (2012). Corporate communication positioned within communication studies – corporate communication, an international journal: The journal and its history, scope and future developments. *Corporate Communication: An International Journal*, 12(1), 66-77.

Field, A. P. (2009). *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Field, A. P. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS for Windows: and sex, drugs and rock'n' roll* (2nd ed.). London, England: Sage.

Forman, J., & Argenti, P. A. (2005). How corporate communication influences strategy implementation, reputation and the corporate brand: An exploratory qualitative study. *Corporate Reputation Review,* 8(3), 245-264.

Gledhill, J. (1996). Student management. In D. Warner & D. Palfreymen (Eds.), *Higher education management: the key elements* (pp. 103-116). Buckingham: Open University Press

Gotsi, M., & Wilson, A. (2001). Corporate reputation management: Living the brand. *Management Decision,* 39(2), 99-104.

Gray, E. R., & Balmer, J. M. (1997). *Corporate identity: A vital component of strategy*. University of Strathclyde: Department of Marketing.

Greene, W. H. (2003). *Econometric analysis*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education India.

Hair, J. F. Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis: A global perspective* (7th ed.). London, England: Prentice-Hall.

Hazelkorn, E. (2007). The impact of league tables and ranking systems on higher education decision making. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 19(2), 87-110.

Henkel, M. (1997). Academic values and the university as corporate enterprise. *Higher Education Quarterly,* 51(2), 134-143.

Ind, N. (2007). *Living the brand* (3rd ed.). London, England: Kogan Page

Jevons, C. (2006). Universities: A prime example of branding going wrong. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 15(7), 466-467.

Judson, K. M., Gorchels, L., & Aurand, T. W. (2006). Building a university brand from within: A comparison of coaches' perspectives of internal branding. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 16(1), 97-114.

Karmark, E. (2005). Living the brand. In M. Schultz, Y. M. Antorini, & F. F. Csaba (Eds.), *Corporate branding: Purpose/people/process* (pp. 103-124). Copenhagen: CBS press.

Karol, N. H., & Ginsburg, S.G. (1980). *Managing the higher education enterprise*. New York: John Wiley.

Kunde, J. (2000). *Corporate religion*. London, England: Prentice Hall.

Maringe, F., & Mourad, M. (2012). Marketing for higher education in developing countries: Emphases and omissions. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 22(1), 1–9.

Maringe, F. (2005b). University marketing: perceptions, practices and prospects in the less developed world. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 15(2), 129-15.

Maringe, F. (2010). Vice chancellors perceptions of university marketing: A view from universities in a developing country. *Higher Education Review*, 36(2), 53-68.

Marsh, H. W., Balla, J. R., & MacDonald, R. P. (1988). Goodness-of-fit indexes in confirmatory factor analysis. *Psychological Bulletin,* 103(3)*,* 391-410.

Melewar, T. C., & Akel, S. (2005). The role of corporate identity in the higher education sector: A case study. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 10(1), 41-57.

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory.* New York: McGraw Hill Publishing Company.

Olins, W. (1991). *Corporate identity*. London, England: Thames & Hudson

Olins, W., (1995). The new guide to identity: How to create and sustain change through managing identity. Brookfield, Vt.: Design Council/Gower.

Olins, W. (1989). *Corporate identity: Making business strategy visible through design*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: a multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12-40.

Salmi, J., & Saroyan, A. (2007). League tables as policy instruments: Uses and misuses. *Higher Education Management & Policy,* 19(2), 31-68.

Schmidt, K. (1995). *The quest for identity*. London: Cassell.

Schultz, M. (2005). A cross-disciplinary perspective on corporate branding. In M. Schultz, Y. M. Antorini, & F. F. Csaba (Eds.), *Corporate branding: Purpose/people/process* (pp.23-55). Copenhagen: CBS press.

Simões, C., Dibb, S., & Fisk, R. P. (2005). Managing corporate identity: An internal perspective. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* 33(2), 153-68.

Stensaker, B. (2005, 7 December). *Strategy, identity and branding − Re-inventing higher education institutions*. Paper presented to the city higher education seminar series (CHESS), London, City University.

Sujchaphong, N., Nguyen, B., & Melewar, T. C. (2015). Internal branding in universities and the lessons learnt from the past: the significance of employee brand support and transformational leadership. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 25(2), 204-237.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using Multivariate Statistics*. Needham Heights, Boston: Pearson.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. (1986). The social identity theory of inter-group behaviour. In S. Worchel, & L. W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Tooley, J., Dixon, P., & Stanfield, J. (2003), *Delivering better education: Market solutions for educational improvements.* London: Adam Smith Institute.

Trim, P. R. J. (2003). Strategic marketing of further and higher educational institutions: Partnership arrangements and centres of entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 17(2), 59-70.

Whisman, R. (2009). Internal branding: A university's most valuable intangible asset. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(5), 367-370.