

Student Expectations and Branding Strategies among Private Institutions of Higher Education in Malaysia

Vincent WEE Eng Kim* and THINAVAN Periyayya**

Abstract

Competition in private higher education in Malaysia is intense and many institutions realize the need to review their branding strategies to become more competitive. In order to conceive a new branding strategy it is crucial that these institutions understand the expectations particularly of Malaysian Chinese students who dominate enrolment in the private education sector.

This study examines the expectations of Malaysian Chinese students on selected factors, identified in past research, that influence the choice of institutions in their application for admission. Two hundred Chinese students were randomly selected from several private institutions to respond to a questionnaire which tested on such variables as academic programme and staff, facilities, pricing, and promotion. Data collected were analysed using Factor Analysis and Comparison of Means. Based on the mean score analysis, factors that significantly influenced the choice of an institution of higher education for admission are found to be academic integrity, quality of teaching, duration of course, future employability, educational fees, foreign and local degrees offered, institutional reputation and track record, student testimonies and opportunities of exposure to new social environment. A few factors found to be significant in an earlier study had lost their importance and these are entry requirements, facilities and extra-curricula activities. It is clear that for branding strategies to work, an institution of higher education has to take into account expectations that matter most to students.

Introduction

Malaysia had since the early 1980s witnessed a significant change in the roles and responsibilities of private institutions as providers of tertiary education. The growth of information and communication technology (ICT), the escalating costs of education abroad, and changes in government policies provided a strong impetus to the emergence of private institutions of higher education (PIHEs) in the country (StudyMalaysia, 2005). Until the

* Vincent WEE Eng Kim is Senior Lecturer, Business School, Sunway University. E-mail: weevincent@yahoo.com

** THINAVAN Periyayya is Associate Professor, Media Department, Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. E-mail: thinavan@utar.edu.my

1990s, tertiary education was available only in public universities (Shahabudin, 2005), and private institutions of higher education were prohibited to award their own degrees. During the global recession in the 1980s, a group of Malaysian academics from the University of Malaya and Institute Technology MARA took the lead to establish private institutions of higher learning to offer selected undergraduate programmes (Tan, 2002: 53). In the mid-1980s, the then Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad encouraged PIHEs to explore the possibility of offering twinning programmes with higher education institutions in Australia and other countries (Tan, 2002: 58).

This has led to the introduction of transnational education by PIHEs in the form of foreign degree programmes. These programmes offer an option for students to spend part of their studies overseas (Anantha Raj, 2011: 74). The growth of the PIHEs in the 1990s was also due to the official move to meet the rising demand for tertiary education through the privatization of the education sector (Lee, 2003). The rapid growth of private education has witnessed a surge in the number of PIHEs in the Malaysian educational landscape. According to the Ministry of Higher Education, as of 2012, there are currently 500 PIHEs out of a total of 616 higher education institutions in the country. Most of these institutions are clustered in the major towns where the biggest market is found.

According to Chieh (2011), there is an estimated enrolment of 541,629 students in PIHEs out of whom 87,000 are foreign students. In comparison, public institutions of higher learning such as universities, polytechnics and community colleges have a combined enrolment of 503,535 students. In 2008, 84.8 per cent of the students in public institutions of higher learning were Bumiputras (Malays and other indigenous groups), followed by 9.7 per cent Malaysian Chinese, 2.8 per cent Malaysian Indians and 2.7 per cent “Others”. The PIHEs, established by Malaysians and a few by foreigners, cater to those who have been kept out or opt out of public universities and colleges but who are prepared to pay high tuition fees charged by these institutions. Understanding the expectations of students to fulfil their needs for higher education is vital for the continued growth and viability of PIHEs.

The prospects of any PIHE will rest with its brand image. One with an established brand will have a definite advantage over its competitors. Branding refers to a name, term, sign or symbol that identifies and differentiates an institution. The differentiation can either be tangible or intangible or a combination of both (Kotler and Keller, 2009: 28). But it takes more than a catchy slogan or symbol to stand out from the crowd. Tertiary education is arguably a high involvement product (Kotler, 1976: 46). High involvement products are those that consumers need to take time to think over their purchases. This is because the products are expensive and consumers are inclined to evaluate the benefits to justify their decision. In this context proper branding of an institution to communicate the benefits it

offers is important in a highly competitive private education sector. PIHEs offer a range of educational services rather than physical products. Service branding has to focus on three areas, namely, external branding, internal branding, and customers' perceptions of brands. External branding explains how organizations create brands (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001: 456; McDonald *et al.*, 2001: 163); internal branding focuses on employees (Aurand *et al.*, 2005: 32; Hankinson, 2004: 103; Vallaster, 2004: 106); and customers' perceptions of brands refer to the value that customers place on the brands (Jones *et al.*, 2002: 451; O'Cass and Grace, 2003: 466; O'Loughlin and Szmigin, 2005: 18).

Pursuing studies in PIHEs is a costly commitment and as such students and their families will make sure that they obtain good value for their investments in higher education. With hundreds of institutions competing for students, the stakes for PIHEs are high. An institution that does not fulfil the expectations of students will be quickly rejected, and this is a key reason for student withdrawals after enrolling (Alridge and Rowley, 2001, 61). This study therefore explores factors considered by Malaysian Chinese students in their PIHE selection or decision-making process as well as the media most dominant in providing relevant information on higher education opportunities.

Literature Review

Education is closely associated with economic growth. Historically none of the rich industrialized countries were able to achieve significant economic growth before attaining universal primary education. In less developed agricultural societies, the value of labour is determined by manpower that relies on physical strength and long working hours. Human capital theory, as developed by Schultz (1963), argues that education increases human productivity. Human resource theory (including intellectual capital, psychological capital, cultural capital, and social capital) further expands this framework into a broader and more complicated system. In Malaysia, education reforms have been implemented from time to time to cope with the developmental needs of the nation and the rapidly increasing number of tertiary students (Ahmad, 1998: 471).

Failure of public institutions to cope with the rising demand for higher education has been a strong stimulus to the growth of PIHEs in Malaysia (Wong and Hamali, 2006: 113). Intense competition for students in the private education sector has turned branding and brand development into management priorities (Kapferer, 2008: 365; Keller, 2008: 106; Post, 2008: 140). The branding of PIHEs is moving towards student-oriented expectations. In response to the growth of student enrolment in degree courses, almost all private colleges aspire to be upgraded to university-college status by the Ministry of Higher Education. As competition

among universities intensifies, a need for thorough understanding of student expectations is crucial for all PIHEs. Thus, attention to institutional branding is gaining greater prominence among university administrators. In order to survive and to succeed, it is mandatory that administrators understand how various student segments differ in their decision-making behaviour (Coccari and Javalgi, 1995: 78).

In the area of marketing, Berry (2000) produced a service-branding model in an attempt to cultivate service brand equity at the customer level. Service brand equity refers to customers' recognition that a particular brand is different and offers higher value than alternative brands in the market. In a business that offers services as intangible products, awareness of the name of the company, knowledge of its unique products, and direct personal experience will contribute to brand equity. Berry (2000) suggested nurturing a service brand by launching managerial efforts to enhance brand awareness and create brand meanings for customers. A company's presentation of a service brand is assumed to be the primary source of brand name awareness, whereas brand meanings are derived from a customer's direct contact with the services associated with the brand. For service providers, it is critical to understand which cues or attributes of the service offering are most valued in the decision-making process of current and potential customers.

Student decision-making process is a fundamental and integral part of theory and research on higher education. A student faces the hard choice on which particular discipline of study and institution of higher learning to enrol after completing secondary education. It is therefore critical for PIHEs to influence the student decision-making process. To do this effectively relevant key attributes of the service offerings that are highly valued by the students must be identified (Samsinar *et al.*, 2003: 262). Students have been found to opt for PIHEs that match their selection criteria academically, socially, and financially (Brown, 1991: 32). Plank and Chiagouris (1998: 23) reported that the choice of college for admission depends on five factors, namely, academic programmes offered, leadership opportunities in the college, perceived job prospects after graduation, financial aid, and value for money. From the service marketing point of view, consumers through an interactive process will experience or receive a bundle of benefits that are different from those of purchasing a physical product (Hoffman and Bateson, 2002: 324). In a study by Brown (1991:32-33), 17 college image components were identified as predictors of students' selection of college or university and four out of the 17 components, namely, quality of education, recreational activities, educational facilities and faculty members, were found to be statistically significant.

In another study carried out at the University of North Alabama, 29 college image components were identified and those that were found to be significant included location, type of academic programmes, community in which college is located and overall quality of

education (Absher *et al.*, 1993: 426-427). In a Malaysian study, out of the 20 characteristics of PIHEs which influenced the decisions of students, four items were found to be significant, namely, facilities, procedures and policies, entry requirements and extra curricula activities (Samsinar *et al.*, 2003: 275-276). Packaging this bundle of characteristics or benefits into the brand that represents a particular service is vital in order to make the service provider competitive. What goes into the bundle will depend on the expectations of the consumers.

Wen *et al.* (2004) found that Mainland Chinese have traditionally relied on word of mouth communication from group and family members for product information. Their study accords with the Malaysian Chinese belief that verbal information is considered more credible than printed sources and also minimizes the risk of losing face. Many young Malaysian Chinese are exposed to advertising including the Internet which is a new source for product information. Although thriftiness is valued in Confucianism consumption culture as a sign of modesty and humility, brand and status consciousness have gradually emerged as pre-purchase evaluative criteria among the young. Their independence and confidence, coupled with the rise of individuality, has fuelled their desire for things that express their tastes, and this also applies to higher education aspirations.

Methodology

A quantitative study was conducted on Malaysian Chinese students from ten randomly selected PIHEs located in the Klang Valley area.¹ The sample comprises 20 respondents from each institution. A questionnaire containing three sections was used. The first section pertains to the respondent's demographic profile. The next section that contains questions adapted from three sources namely Absher *et al.* (1993), Brown (1991) and Samsinar *et al.* (2003), focuses on tertiary education selection criteria based on a five-point Likert scale with 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 5 as "strongly agree". The final section focuses on media and other sources of information. Questions in this section are based on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". A pilot study was conducted to measure the reliability of questions in the second and third sections. The respective Cronbach's Alpha scores were 0.70 and 0.80. A score of 0.70 and above implies that the questions are reliable in measuring the factors under study.

Data from the survey were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 software. Descriptive statistics used in the analysis included frequency, mean score and percentage. A confirmatory factor analysis and comparison of means and Chi-square analysis was carried out to examine the goodness-of-fit of the measurement model and to establish the factors that influenced the decisions of students on the institution of their choice.

Results

Demographic Analysis

The respondents were Malaysian Chinese students of whom 50.5 per cent were 18 to 19 years old and 35 per cent were 20 to 21 years old. Two-thirds of the students were from the higher income group with family monthly income averaging RM6,000 and above. The majority of the respondents were enrolled in Foundation courses while the rest were pursuing qualifications in the A-Level, diplomas and bachelor degree courses (Table 1).

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Age	Frequency (N=200)	Percentage
18 and 19	101	50.5
20 and 21	70	35.0
22 and 23	18	9.0
24 and above	11	5.5
Monthly Family Income (RM)		
1001-2500	11	5.5
2501-4000	20	10.0
4001-6000	38	19.0
6001 or More	131	65.5
Enrolment by Academic Programme		
Foundation	118	59.0
A-Level	12	6.0
Diploma	40	20.0
Bachelors degree	28	14.0
Others	2	1.0

PIHE Selection Criteria

A comparison of means was performed to statistically analyse the responses from students to evaluate the order of importance of the criteria in their decision to enrol in a PIHE. The factors are arranged on the Likert scale of 1 to 5. A high mean score (> 4) indicates that the factor has a strong influence on student choice (Table 2). Generally, factors such as academic integrity, length of existence and future employability, with mean values of 4.55, 4.51 and 4.30, respectively, exert the strongest influence on the choice of institution. With a mean value of 3.9, location is seen as the least important factor by students. This seems to indicate that students are prepared to pursue courses of their choice regardless of the location of the PIHE.

Table 2. Factors that Influence the Choice of PIHEs among Malaysian Chinese Students

Number	Variables	Mean Value
1	Academic integrity	4.55
2	Length of existence	4.51
3	Future employability	4.30
4	Quality of teaching	4.28
5	Education fees	4.25
6	Duration of course	4.16
7	Facilities	4.12
8	Availability of preferred courses of study	4.10
9	Entry requirement	4.00
10	Location	3.90

Students made informed decisions on the choice of institutions according to a set of factors listed in Table 3. Based on Chi-square results, nine factors were found to be significant at 0.1 confidence levels. These items are academic integrity (trust in the institution to deliver what it promises), foreign and local degrees offered, institution's reputation and proven track record, future employability, quality education, tuition fees, duration of the course of study, opportunities of exposure to new social environments, and concrete student testimony which refers to recommendations made by existing or senior students.

Table 3. Chi-square Results by Factors Favoured by Respondents

Characteristics of PIHEs	Chi-square	Significance
Academic integrity/trust	1.968	0.045*
Foreign degree/qualification offered	1.833	0.043*
Local degree/ qualification offered	1.813	0.041*
Institution's reputation and track record	1.802	0.040*
Concrete student testimony	1.801	0.039*
Future employability	1.765	0.038*
Quality education	1.743	0.036*
Education fees	1.728	0.033*
Duration of course	1.721	0.032*
Facilities	9.032	0.212
Availability of preferred course	9.136	0.223
Entry requirement	9.256	0.236
Location of institution	9.345	0.252
Library resources	9.498	0.263
Scholarship/financial aid	9.642	0.283
Institution's size and layout	12.339	0.321
Popularity of institution	12.347	0.337
Student population	12.452	0.348
Extra-curricular activities	12.463	0.356
Opportunities of exposure to new social environments	12.588	0.035*

* Statistically significant factors

Media Effectiveness and Brand Message

Based on the mean score, the Internet (5.01) and newspapers (4.91) are the two most effective sources of information for the students, followed by magazines, brochures, open days and education fair (Table 4). The traditional electronic media (TV and Radio) and word of mouth communication lag behind the print media. Promotional materials such as posters and photographs have the lowest mean scores (3.81 and 3.61).

Table 4. Media Effectiveness to Convey Brand Message

Sources of Information	N = 200	
	Mean	SD
Internet	5.01	0.96
Print Media		
Newspapers	4.91	0.93
Magazines	4.62	0.81
Brochures	4.62	1.03
Open day	4.51	1.06
Education fair	4.31	1.03
Electronic media		
TV	4.28	1.22
Radio	4.21	1.21
Word of mouth	4.11	1.22
Promotional materials		
Posters	3.81	1.12
Photographs	3.61	1.01

N is the total number of respondents

SD is the standard deviation from the mean score

Discussion and Conclusion

This study found that Malaysian Chinese respondents were more attracted to local institutions that confer foreign university rather than local university qualifications. This is in line with the findings of Batra *et al.* (2000) which suggest that consumers in developing countries showed positive attitudes and preference for non-local brands. The majority of the students in PIHEs are those with SPM (O-level) qualifications while 78 per cent of those in public universities have passed the STPM (A-level) examination (Samsinar *et al.*, 2003). The present study shows that 65 per cent of the students in PIHEs come from higher income families compared with 46 per cent in the 2003 study.

Based on the findings, the bundle of factors that should be considered in the branding strategy of PIHEs include academic integrity, degree offered (local/foreign), institutional reputation and track record, employability, quality of education, fees and duration of study. In

comparison with the 2003 study by Samsinar *et al.*, based on a sample size of 210 students, the significant factors of a higher institution were facilities, procedures and policies, entry requirement and extra curricula activities and none of these factors were found to be significant in the current study. The 2003 student sample comprised various ethnic groups whereas the current study is concerned with Chinese students and separated by a time-lag of ten years. This implies that, as far as Malaysian Chinese are concerned, in planning branding strategies it is crucial to consider changes in consumer expectations in order to ensure that these strategies are relevant and effective in the highly competitive private education sector. It is pertinent to take note that some of the factors which were not statistically significant in the 2003 study were found to be significant in the current study. These factors are academic integrity, quality of teaching, duration of course, future employability, educational fees, and opportunities for exposure to new social environments. Conversely a few factors that were significant in the 2003 study were found to be insignificant in the current study and they are entry requirements, facilities and extra-curriculum activities. These changes in student decisions are primarily due to fresh perceptions of employment opportunities. For instance, priority is given to future employability as the media has drawn attention to the high percentage of unemployed graduates. According to Md Izwan and Zuraini of Malaysian Insider (Feb 2013) quoting from the Ministry of Higher Education website, among 184,581 graduates from the PIHE sector in 2012, 44,931 or 24 per cent were unemployed. News of this nature tends to have an important impact on current and future students in the PIHE sector. Employability also depends on the quality of education received and academic integrity of the PIHEs. Entry requirements are no longer important simply because the minimum requirements to enrol in a degree programme are easily attainable (minimum five credits in SPM; two principal passes in STPM or an accredited diploma qualification) by most aspiring students. This implies that the selection criteria that go into the branding strategies need to be reviewed from time to time.

According to Guo *et al.* (2011), the impact of brands has been examined from various theoretical perspectives. Evidence suggests that a brand serves as an indicator of quality and is more potent in this respect than other external variables such as price, physical appearance and reputation. Brand helps reduce “purchase complexity” and enables consumers to understand product or service attributes and evaluate products or services effectively. It additionally provides sellers with an economical method of helping prospective customers to infer quality when it is not discernible. Studies also show that branding is a mechanism to help consumers identify and differentiate products within the same category and can signify the uniqueness of a particular offer. Through branding strategies and advertising messages, an organization can convey a certain image for its brand (Gordon, 2002: 288). Consumers may, however, evaluate the organization’s message through the prism of their own subjectivity. People will use their

own interpretations and will respond differently to brands. This subjective evaluation results in the formation of brand image of PIHEs among Malaysian students. It is important that the brand message be conveyed to potential consumers clearly and effectively.

Research on brand communication clearly indicates that the Internet and print media must be fully utilized to convey branding messages. Since the Internet and print media are singled out as the most popular sources of information, they may be integrated to ensure that the website links of an institution appear in all the print advertisements and in printed materials such as brochures and leaflets. This will motivate students to visit the websites for further information and branding messages. According to Gatfield *et al.* (1999) brochures are superior compared to other printed literature in internal branding because a good blend of promotional elements such as visuals, typeface, pictures and texts are used to communicate persuasively the benefits of a product or service. The communicative functions of university brochures are viewed to be more promotional than informative (Hajibah, 2008). In order to develop an effective media strategy and consistent brand image, Malaysian PIHEs should evaluate and select the most effective communication channels to serve the inquiring students.

The present study also demonstrates that TV and radio are less popular amongst students, and face to face communication such as open days and participation in education fair and word of mouth are more promising. Genuine testimonies or recommendations by senior students at open days, recruitment fairs and awards ceremonies play a role in branding a PIHE and sway the decisions of parents and students. This is supported by Duke's study (2002) that confirms that marketing education services tends to rely on promotion by word of mouth to influence the perception of potential students on the institution of higher learning.

In the desire to be associated with a well-established institution, Malaysian Chinese students tend to enrol in well-known institutions of higher learning with strong brand identities. The price premium charged by institutions of higher education for their brands is taken to reflect the quality of the education that is offered. The quality issue should therefore be given priority. The overall perceived quality of higher education has a considerable impact on the selection of a higher education institution (Plank and Chiagouris, 1998). It is also found that a student's socio-economic background such as family income; parental education and occupation, and high school achievements are directly related to his college aspirations.

A good institutional brand needs to stand out, convey the brand message effectively, and to build consumer trust. These are critical because a brand is equivalent to a promise that an institution must deliver (Nandan, 2005). Brand and consumer trust will also serve to reduce the risk of making wrong decisions in the selection of a particular PIHE. It is through the creation of a brand that an educational institution, through promotion, seeks to convey certain identity and image of itself to potential students. Educational institutions must therefore be

able to meet these fundamental branding requirements in their marketing attempts to target the Malaysian Chinese students. Findings from this study may help policy makers and administrators of private institutions to review their educational, administrative policies and branding strategy in the context of student expectations to convince the Malaysian Chinese students to enrol in their institutions.

No research is without limitations and it is admitted that the sample size of this study is relatively small in comparison with the total student population in the private higher education sector. A small sample size may lead to bias and findings cannot be confidently generalized. Besides this, the choice of PIHEs in the study was restricted to the Klang Valley while there are many more outside this region. They may not be representative of all the PIHEs in the country.

More research is recommended to explore the relationship between service quality and student satisfaction among Malaysian Chinese students in PIHEs to determine the effectiveness of branding strategies in the actual delivery of education in terms of quality, integrity, employability and other key factors identified in this research.

Notes

- 1 The PIHEs are Inti College, KBU International College, New Era College, Olympia College, KDU University College, Limkokwing University, Segi University, Sunway University, Taylor's University, and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

References

- ABISHER, K. G., G. CRAWFORD and K. P. GATLIN 1993. Identifying college selection factors among students of a regional university, *Southwest Business Symposium Proceedings*: 419-430.
- AHMAD, R. 1998. Educational development reformation in Malaysia: past, present and future, *Journal of Educational Administration*, 36(5): 462-475.
- ALRIDGE, S. and ROWLEY, J. 2001. Conducting a withdrawal survey, *Quality in Higher Education*, 7(1): 55-63.
- ANANTHA RAJ Ariokasamy 2011. An analysis of globalization and higher education in Malaysia, *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 1(9): 73-81.
- AURAND, T. W., GORCHELS, L. and BISHOP, T. R. 2005. Human resource management's role in internal branding: an opportunity for cross-functional brand message synergy, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 14(3): 163-169.
- BATRA, R., RAMASWAMY, V., ALDEN, D.L., STEENKAMP, J.E.M. and RAMACHANDER, S. 2000. Effects of brand local and non-local origin on consumer attitudes in developing countries, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 9 (2): 83-95.
- BERRY, L.L. 2000. Cultivating service brand equity, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28 (1): 128-37.
- BROWN, J.D. 1991. Identifying benefit segments among college students, *The Journal of College Admission*, (Spring) 30-33.

- CHIEH, Y.H. 2011. 42 private varsities, colleges struck off in 2010, *Malaysian Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com> on 22 February 2013.
- COCCARI, R. L. and R. G. JAVALGI 1995. Analysis of student's needs in selecting a college or university in a changing environment, *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* 6(2): 69-90.
- DUKE, Charles R. 2002. *Learning outcomes: comparing student perceptions of skill level and importance*, *Journal of Marketing Education*, 24(3): 203-217.
- GATFIELD, T., BRAKER, B. and GRAHAM, P. 1999. Measuring communication impact of university advertising materials, *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 4(2): 73-79.
- GORDON, W. 2002. "The darkroom of the mind—what does neuropsychology now tell us about brands?." *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 1.3 280-292.
- GUO Xiaoling, Martine, HAO Wei, A. and SHANG Xiaoyan 2011. Consumer perceptions of brand functions: an empirical study in China, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 28(4): 269-279.
- HAJIBAH Osman 2008. Rebranding academic institutions with corporate advertising a genre perspective, *Discourse & Communication*, 2(1): 57-77.
- HANKINSON, P. 2004. The internal brand in leading UK charities, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 13(2): 4-93.
- HARRIS, F. and DE CHERNATONY, L. 2001. Corporate branding and corporate brand performance, *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(3/4): 441-456.
- HOFFMAN, KD and BATESON, JE. 2002. *Essentials of Services Marketing: Concepts, Strategies, and Cases*, 2nd ed. Harcourt College Publishers.
- HOFSTEDE, G. 1991. *Culture and Organization: Software of the Mind*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- JONES, P., SHEARS, P., HILLIER, D. and CLARKE-HILL, C. 2002. Customer perceptions of services brands: a case study of J.D. Wetherspoons, *British Food Journal*, 104(10): 845-854.
- KAPFERER, J.N. 2008. *The New Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long-term*, London: Kogan Page. 492
- KELLER, K.L. 2008. *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice-Hall, 13th edition (first published in 1998).
- KOTLER, P. 1976. Applying marketing theory to college admissions. In *A Role for Marketing in College Admissions*, edited by College Entrance Examination Board, New York: College Entrance Examination Board: 54-72.
- KOTLER, P. and KELLER K. L. 2009. *Marketing Management*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 13th edition (first published in 1998).
- LEE, M.N.N. 2003. International linkages in Malaysian private higher education. Retrieved from http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/News30/text009.htm on 10 May 2005.
- LIP, E. 1995. *The Design and Feng Shui of Logos, Trademarks, and Signboards*, Singapore: Prentice-Hall.
- MCDONALD, M. H.B., DE CHERNATONY, L. and HARRIS, F. (2001). Corporate marketing and service brands: moving beyond the fast-moving consumer goods model, *European Journal of Marketing*, 35(3/4): 335-352.
- MD IZWAN and ZURAINI, A.R. 2013. Malaysian graduates, a RM500 million strain on taxpayers. Retrieved from <http://www.malaysianinsider.com> on 22 February 2013.
- Ministry of Education 2012. *Malaysian Educational Statistics 2011*, Putrajaya.
- NANDAN, S. 2005. An exploration of the brand identity-brand-image linkage: a communications perspective, *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15(2): 157-179.
- O'CASS, A. and GRACE, D. 2003. An exploratory perspective of service brand associations, *Journal of Services Marketing*, 17(5): 452-475.
- O'LOUGHLIN, D. and SZMIGIN, I. 2005. Customer perspectives on the role and importance of branding in Irish retail financial services, *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 23(1): 8-27.
- POST, R.S. 2008. *Global Brand Integrity Management: How to Protect Your Product in Today's Competitive Environment*, New York: McGraw-Hill.

- PLANK, R. E. and CHIAGOURIS, L. 1998. Perceptions of quality of higher education: an exploratory study of high school guidance counsellors, *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* 8(10): 55-67.
- SCHULTZ T. W. 1963. *The Economic Value of Education*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- SAMSINAR Md. Sidin, SITI RAHAYU Hussin and TAN Ho Soon. 2003. An exploratory study of factors influencing the college decision making of undergraduate students in Malaysia, *Asia Pacific Review*, 8(3): 259-280.
- SHAHABUDIN, S. H. 2005. In the aftermath of liberalization: designing a common framework for public and private providers to serve national development goals: South Africa, *International Institute for Education Planning, UNESCO*. Retrieved from <http://unesco.org/iiep/eng/research/highered/polforum/.../SHapsah.pdf>. on 13 August 2012.
- ST. JOHN, E. P. 1990. Price response in enrollment decisions: an analysis of the high school and beyond sophomore cohort, *Research in Higher Education*, 31(2): 161-176.
- StudyMalaysia 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.StudyMalaysia.com> on 29 July. 2005.
- TAN, A.M. 2002. *Malaysian Private Higher Education: Globalisation, Privatisation, Transformation and Marketplaces*, Malaysia: ASEAN Academic Press.
- VALLASTER, C. 2004. Internal brand building in multicultural organisations: a roadmap towards action research, *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 7(2): 100-113.
- WONG, ANNIE MUK-NGIHK, AND JAMIL HAMALI. (2006) "Higher education and employment in Malaysia." *International Journal of Business and Society* 7.1, 102-120.