Addis Ababa University School of Commerce

Department Of Marketing Management



Determinants of Brand Equity in Higher Education: the case of private Universities in Addis Ababa

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Determinants of Brand Equity in Higher Education: the case of private Universities in Addis Ababa

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Marketing Management Graduate Program Unit

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This is to certify that the thesis is prepared by Mahlet Mandefro, entitled; Determinants of Brand Equity in Higher Education; the case of private Universities in Addis Ababa: In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Marketing Management with the regulation of the University and the accepted standards with respect to originality.

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_____

Tewodros Mesfin (PhD)

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List of Acronyms

A.A Addis Ababa

CBBE Consumer Based Brand Equity

EBBE Employee Based Brand Equity

FBBE Financial Based Brand Equity

HE Higher Education

HEIs Higher Education Institutions

HERQA Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

SPSS Statistical Packages for Social Science

VIF Variance Inflator Factor

Abstract

The primary objective of this study was to investigate determinants of CBBE in Higher Education, particularly in private Universities in Addis Ababa. The research adopted an exploratory research approach and questionnaires were administered to gather research data. Samples of 385 students from the four private universities in Addis Ababa were contacted. Out of the 385 questionnaires distributed, 360 were deemed valid. The scale constructed to measure consumer-based brand equity included brand awareness and brand image captured through Product Attributes, Service Attributes and Symbolic Attributes. The findings established that image related attributes particularly, Service Attributes and Symbolic Attributes proved to be very essential and are predictors of brand equity of Higher Education Institutions' (HEI) particularly in the case of private Universities in Addis Ababa. On the contrary, Brand awareness attributes had no significant impact on ratings of brand equity. This study contributes to the scant literature testing the applicability of customer-based brand equity in the educational sector specifically in Ethiopia. Since private university education is of significant importance as it accounts for approximately over 25 percent of the country's undergraduate enrollments, the study provides an insight into the Ethiopian university students' perceptions of the different attributes of overall brand equity. The study was limited to only private universities, thus, future research should attempt to examine brand equity across many different areas of the Higher education sector in Ethiopia. Also, instead of overreliance of developed scales, there would be the need to create industry-specific scales in accordance with the specific research setting as scales developed for one empirical setting may not apply to another. Studies like this can help practitioners analyze the value of their brands as well as their competitors', develop their marketing strategies and marketing communications plans, and in building and managing their brands more effectively. Similar studies can also be used for longitudinal brand health checks and to evaluate the effectiveness of advertising and branding campaigns and events.

Key Words: Brand Equity, Higher Education, Services Marketing, Private Universities

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study and finally the organization of the research report.

1.1 Background of the Study

Branding plays many roles for companies. According to Kotler (2009), Brands are important valuable intangible assets for companies, a distinctive tool that builds a long-term relationship with the consumers, and protects its‟ rights. For consumers, brands reflect their experience and knowledge; simplifying the processing of information accumulated over time about the company and its products or brands.

The role branding plays in the service sector is even more critical to the success of a service firm due to the unique characteristics of services and the fact that perceived risk is generally higher in the purchase of services. With services, consumers find it more difficult to evaluate the quality of the offering in advance of purchase (Parasuraman, 1985). In this situation, the brand can play an important role as it reduces the perceived risk associated with the purchasing of products hence giving consumers greater confidence in their decision making. In essence, the brand provides a signal or a promise to consumers about the service that will be delivered, thus mitigating some of the problems associated with experience and credence qualities (De Chernatony and McDonald, 1998). In addition, strong brands can serve as a tool for differentiation and ease the consumer choice process by creating distinctiveness (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998).

An attempt to define the relationship between customers and brands produced the term “brand equity” in the marketing literature (Wood, 2000). Since then, brand equity has grown to become one of the major areas of attention to managers and marketing researchers owing to its major role as a quite significant intangible firm asset. Aaker (1991) conceptualized brand equity as a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm‟s customers. Brand equity generates a type of added value for products which help with companies' long term interests and capabilities (Chen, 2008).

Both goods and services are branded. Hence, brand equity applies to both categories. Some researchers argued that branding is more critical for services than for goods. For instance, Onkvisit and Shaw (1989) argue that the intangible nature of services makes it difficult for consumers to evaluate their quality hence, branding is critical. Branding a service can help consumers by helping to assure them of a uniform level of service quality (Berry, 2000). Branding also aids the service provider by elevating the service above the commodity level to differentiate the service relative to competing brands. Bharadwaj (1993) also argued that branding may be more important for services than goods due to the complexity faced by consumers in the purchase of services. Due to the unique characteristics of services, consumers have a difficult time evaluating the content and quality of a service prior to, during, and after the consumption of the service. As a result, brand names can help to reduce the risks associated with the purchase and consumption of many services.

Higher education provides an interesting and important context for research, since higher education institutions across the world have become increasingly "marketing oriented" and students increasingly become "consumers" (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2008).

The Ethiopian Government gives higher education a central position in its strategy for social and economic development. Ethiopia has radically expanded the numbers of its higher education institutions. The total number of privately owned HEIs, universities, university colleges and institutes, has now approximately reached 98, out of which only 4 of them have the statuses of university level (Kassahun, 2015).According the HE proclamation of FDRE (2009), an institution is granted the status of a "University" if it has a minimum enrollment capacity of 2,000 students in regular undergraduate and graduate programs in at least three academic units larger than departments, or it has a minimum enrollment capacity of 2,000 students in regular undergraduate programs in at least four academic units larger than departments.

The Ethiopian private HE sector accounts for approximately 25 percent of the country‟s undergraduate enrollments (Kassahun, 2015). The rapid expansion of HEIs may be partially explained by the need for a larger trained work force the Government recognizes that it needs the private sector if it is to meet its targets for the expansion of higher education.

According to Kassahun (2015), private universities are popular because they allow students to choose both their subject and their location, in contrast to courses and places at public universities

that are allocated centrally by the Ministry of Education. Private universities are also popular with female students as they can live at home and do not have to live communally on campus.

The value a brand adds to a product or service arises from the brand‟s role as an indicator of desirable attributes and as the basis for building an emotional bond (Teas and Grapentine, 1996). Although brand equity has been relatively extensively researched in the context of industries producing physical products, rather less attention has been given to understanding the concept in relation to the context of a service sector; particularly in the education sector. This study aims to work with existing models of brand equity previously employed in a similar case study and adopts them for use in the service sector in the specific context of private higher education (HE) particularly in selected Universities in Addis Ababa.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since the concept „brand equity‟ was introduced to marketing, its importance and potential contributions to the success of organizations has been observed, literature further indicates that firms need to measure brand equity in order to improve their marketing credibility and productivity for stakeholders, and to justify their marketing expenditures. In order to do this, it is important to understand the causal interrelationships among brand equity dimensions and their impacts on customers‟ behavior in order to make sensible and effective suggestions on marketing and branding strategies. Thus, brands only have equity if they influence, or change the behavior of buyers or consumers.

Scholars and researchers have suggested various brand equity measures to help understand and measure consumer-based brand equity. Several measures of brand equity have been proposed, but there is still no consensus on how it should be measured; nor a single comprehensive measure of brand equity. Indeed, many scholars suggest that no single measure can adequately account for the multidimensional nature of brand equity (Keller 1993). Furthermore, the causal interrelationships among the dimensions of brand equity and their impacts on customers‟ behavioral intentions remain unclear and few empirical studies have examined this subject (Buil, 2013). Understanding the relationships between brand equity and its impact on customers‟ behavioral intentions will ultimately contribute to improved market share and profitability of HE institutions.

It is further argued that the concept of brand equity can be equally applied in both goods and services contexts, however, there is a relative lack of published empirical research in the services

sector, and this is even more limited in the higher education sub-sector. With the rapid pace of technological and social changes in recent decades, HE institutions today are facing more severe competition. Private Universities offer a comparatively homogeneous, consumer-oriented programs and services with little meaningful differentiation. As a result, severe competition is visible in the industry and thus there is an urgent search for effective branding management strategies which might increase differentiation and consequent competitive advantages (Lee, 2015).

In the Ethiopian context, many studies related to brand equity have been conducted mainly in the goods market. Hotels and Financial Institutions have also been of interest to researchers in the service Industry but it is apparent that there is relatively little research that focuses on the service sector from the perspective of brand equity.

One key challenge that faces the higher education sector is the lack of applied research on marketing and more specifically, branding and brand equity. There has been an absence of education as a specific marketing area from services research (Mazzarol & Soutar, 1999). According to Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka (2006), the literature on HE (higher education) marketing is incoherent, even inchoate, and lacks theoretical models that reflect upon the particular context of HE and the nature of their services. This indicates that there is a clear need for further research in this field.

Another challenge for higher education institutions is the growing competition surrounding recruitment of students. In the context of increasing competition, HEIs have recognized the need to market themselves to attract students (Hemsley-Brown &Oplatka, 2006). However, it is important to note that higher education institutions operate in a climate of limited resources and do not always afford the luxury of large marketing budgets. Therefore, by recognizing the need to market their service does not imply that the institutions will be resourced accordingly.

The motivation behind this research is to enhance academic understanding of brand equity in the HE sector, identify the determinants of brand equity and explore the implications for management practice in privately owned HEIs particularly in the case of selected private Universities in Addis Ababa.

1.3 Research Questions

This study tries to answer the following research questions based on the adopted model to fit the study:

- **RQ1:** Which of the attributes of brand equity are key determinants of CBBE in the private Higher Education Institutions (Universities) in Addis Ababa?

- **RQ2:** To what extent do the attributes of brand equity influence CBBE in private Higher Education Institutions (Universities) in Addis Ababa?

- **RQ3:** What are the relationships between the attributes of CBBE and overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions (Universities) in Addis Ababa?

1.4 Objective of the study

General Objective

The general objective of conducting this study is to identify the major determinants of brand equity and examine to what extent these determinants influence overall brand equity in higher education institutes in Addis Ababa, particularly in private Universities.

Specific Objectives

Based on the adopted model to fit the study, the study will try to address the following specific objectives:

- To examine the most influential determinants of Customer-Based Brand Equity in private HEIs in Addis Ababa, particularly in private Universities,
- To assess to what extent the attributes of Customer-Based Brand Equity influence brand equity and the competitive performance of private HEIs in Addis Ababa, particularly in private Universities and ;
- To investigate the relationships among the attributes of Customer-Based Brand Equity and overall brand equity of private HEIs in Addis Ababa, particularly in private Universities.

1.5 Scope of the study

Among the different perspectives of viewing brand equity, this study focuses only on brand equity from the customer‟s perspective in private higher education institutions particularly in private Universities located in Addis Ababa. The research is conducted on regular and extension prospective graduate students of the private Universities pursuing an undergraduate degree in Business related field of studies.

According to Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency, currently there are four privately owned Universities namely: Admas University, St. Mary University, Rift Valley University and Unity University. Admas University has 3 campuses in Addis Ababa while Rift Valley University has six campuses. St. Mary University and Unity University each have only one campus for undergraduate studies in Addis Ababa (HERQA).

1.6 Significance of the study

The Education sector is considered as one of the major sectors that guarantee sustainable economic and social development at the national and regional levels of a given economy. Keeping how important this sector is in mind, this study is conducted in hope that it will contribute to the limited literature available testing the applicability of customer-based brand equity in the higher education sector and specifically in the developing world context particularly in Ethiopia.

Since private university education is of significant importance as it constitutes a significant portion of admissions of students in the country every year, this study is hoped to provide an insight into privately owned University students‟ perceptions of overall brand equity in the capital Addis Ababa.

Given that there is relatively little research that focuses on the service sector; particularly in the education sector, this research is expected to pave the way for further researches and also help guide HEIs as to which attributes strongly help in building a positive brand equity in the eyes of consumers; which in this case are students.

1.7 Organization of the Research Report

This thesis consists of five chapters. The chapters are comprised of: Introduction, Review of Related Literature, Research Design and Methodology, Data Analysis, and Summary of findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.

This chapter has presented the background of the research topic, outlined the research problem, research questions and objectives, scope and limitation of the study, and discussed the study‟s contributions.

Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on brand equity, including definitions of brand and brand equity, the different perspectives of brand equity, the different brand equity models, the branding and brand equity of HE and finally presents hypothesis of the study and the conceptual framework adopted to suit the study.

Chapter 3 discusses research reasoning approach, design and methodology: the type and design of the study. It also includes sampling technique, data collection methods and method of data analysis that has been used in the study. Finally, this part presents the results of reliability and validity tests based on the pre-test performed and Ethical considerations has been included.

Chapter 4 presents the summarized findings of the study and discusses them in detail.

Chapter 5 discusses the results and contributions of the study, implications for practitioners, together with the limitations of the study, directions for future research, and conclusions from this research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides an insight to the readers about the theoretical and empirical review, hypotheses and conceptual framework of the topic under the study. In line with the objectives of the study, this chapter covers topics related to brand, branding, brand equity, customer based brand equity, and the branding of HE.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Concept of Branding

In the last decade branding has emerged as a top management priority due to the growing realization that brands are one of the most valuable intangible assets that firms possess (Keller & Lehmann, 2003). The concept of a brand however is not a new phenomenon. Historically, the concept of brand was first used by the ancient Egyptian brick-makers who drew symbols on bricks for identification (Farquhar, 1990). Other examples of the use of brands were found in Greek and Roman times; at this time, due to illiteracy shopkeepers identified their shops using symbols. Moreover, in the Middle-Ages, craftsmen marked their goods with stamps as a trademark by which to differentiate their skills. The next milestone of brand evolved in North America with the growth of cattle farming as a kind of legal protection, proof of ownership and quality signals (De Chernatony and McDonald, 2003). Today, a brand can be a name, symbol, design, or mark that enhances the value of a product beyond its functional purpose.

A brand can be defined as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Kotler,1995). However, a brand is much more than a source of identity or differentiation. According to DeChernatony and Dall‟Olmo Riley (1999), a brand is the link between firms‟ marketing activities and consumers‟ perceptions of functional and emotional elements in their experience with the product and the way it is presented. This link can be viewed in terms of a relationship between consumers and brands and that understanding consumer-brand bonds in terms of relationship marketing principles will assist marketers in enhancing brand value.

2.1.2 Brand Equity

Generally, understanding the concept of brand is the first step in order to understand the concept of brand equity. Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm‟s customers. Brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other proprietary assets were the five assets of brand equity he proposed. Keller (1993) on the other hand referred to brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on the consumer response to the marketing of the brand. He also defined brand knowledge in terms of two core components: brand awareness and brand image. Although Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) conceptualized brand equity differently, both defined brand equity from a customer perspective and emphasize that customer based brand equity provides value to the firm and to the customer.

Brand equity is regarded as a very important concept in business practice because marketers can gain competitive advantage through successful brands (Walfried, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995).

Since the term "brand equity" emerged in the, 1980s, there has been a growing interest in the subject among marketing academicians and practitioners (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995).

The concept of brand equity is of particular relevance to consumer choice. In essence, brand equity measures the value of the brand, both to the organization and to the consumer. A thorough understanding of brand equity from the customer‟s point of view is essential for successful brand management. As Keller (1993) explained, positive customer-based brand equity "can lead to greater revenue, lower cost, and higher profit; it has direct implications for the firm‟s ability to command higher prices, a customer‟s willingness to seek out new distribution channels, the effectiveness of marketing communications, and the success of brand extensions and licensing opportunities." Trying to define brand equity, Keller (1993) focused on marketing and he described brand equity as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand".

Brand equity can be viewed from different perspectives, as Baalbaki (2012) mentioned brand equity can be seen from three different perspectives,



Figure 2.1: Brand Equity Perspectives

i) Financial perspective (Financial- based brand equity)

As seen from the financial perspective, brand equity was viewed as a method that gave managers guidance in understanding brand enhancement. In this perspective, the measures focused on stock prices or brand replacement (Myers, 2003). Supporters of the financial perspective (FBBE) define brand equity as the total value of a brand which is a separable asset - when it is sold or included in a balance sheet (Atilgan, 2005). Wood (2000), discussed that from a financial perspective it is possible to give a monetary value to the brand that can be useful for managers in case of merger, acquisition or divestiture. Estimating a financial value for the brand is certainly useful but it does not help marketers to understand the process of building brand equity.

ii) **Customer perspective (Customer-based brand equity)**

The approach used in conducting this particular study; that is the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) approach is the dominant perspective and the one preferred by a majority of academics and practitioners in marketing research. According to Cobb-Walgren (1995), if a brand has no meaning or value to the consumer, it is ultimately meaningless to investors, manufacturers, or retailers. Motameni (1998) also mentioned this perspective as a marketing perspective. He used the concept of brand equity in the context of marketing decision-making. Keller (1993) used the term consumer-based brand equity to refer to brand equity and noted that customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favorable, strong and unique brand associations in their memory. Positive customer-based brand equity has many advantages like long term revenues, customers‟ willingness to seek out for themselves new channels of distribution, the ability of firms to command higher prices and the effectiveness of marketing communications (Keller, 2003).

iii) **Employee perspective (Employee-based brand equity)**

As discussed by Youngbum Kwon (2013), the definitions of Employee-based brand equity (EBBE) and Customer-based brand equity (CBBE) are similar in respect that they are both values that come from the innate nature of the brand. Employee-based brand equity is defined from the employee perspective and is based on the differential effect that brand knowledge has on an employee‟s response to his or her work environments and cultures (King and Grace, 2009).

2.1.3 Measuring Consumer Based Brand Equity

The importance of understanding brand equity from the customer‟s point of view is explained by Keller (1993) as positive customer based brand equity can lead to a greater revenue, lower costs, and higher profit. It has direct implications for the firm‟s ability to command higher prices, customer‟s willingness to seek out new distribution channels, the effectiveness of marketing communications, and the success of brand extensions and licensing opportunities.

Compared to the measurement of brand equity from a financial perspective as the total value of the brand that is a separable asset when it is sold or included in a balance sheet (Feldwick, 1996), customer-based brand equity is measured from the perspective of the customer and is based on consumer knowledge, familiarity, and associations with respect to the brand (Washburn and Plank, 2002). Proponents contend that for a brand to have value, it must be valued by the customer. If the brand has no meaning to the customer, none of the other definitions is meaningful (Keller, 1993). Keller (1993) coined the CBBE definition as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand."

A thorough understanding of brand equity from the customer‟s point of view is essential for successful brand management. How to measure brand equity is very important in assessing the value of brands. There are a variety of conceptualizations of brand equity, though relatively few empirical evaluations in a service context.

2.1.4 Brand Equity Models

Two of the most influential scholars in the study of the brand equity concept are David Aaker and Kevin Lane Keller (Campbell, 2002). Their oft-quoted models have their foundations in cognitive psychology and focus on consumers‟ cognitive processes (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993), and provide conceptual frameworks for defining and understanding the concept of brand equity from a consumer perspective. Their models and perspectives of brand equity continue to exert a very strong influence

on current research and publications. This section discusses the components of these two models and their suggested brand equity measures. These models are focused primarily on consumerbased brand equity.

2.1.4.1 Aaker's Brand Equity Model

Aaker‟s (1991) conceptualized brand equity model consists of four major consumer-related constructs of brand equity: namely, brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty, together with other proprietary brand assets, such as patents and trademarks, as the fifth dimension of his brand equity model.

Aaker (1991) argues that brand equity can provide value to the consumers by enhancing their interpretation and processing of information about a brand, and confidence in their purchase decision. Positive brand equity also provides value for the company by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing programs and brand extensions, and enhancing premium price and profit, trade leverage, competitive advantages and loyalty (Aaker 1991).

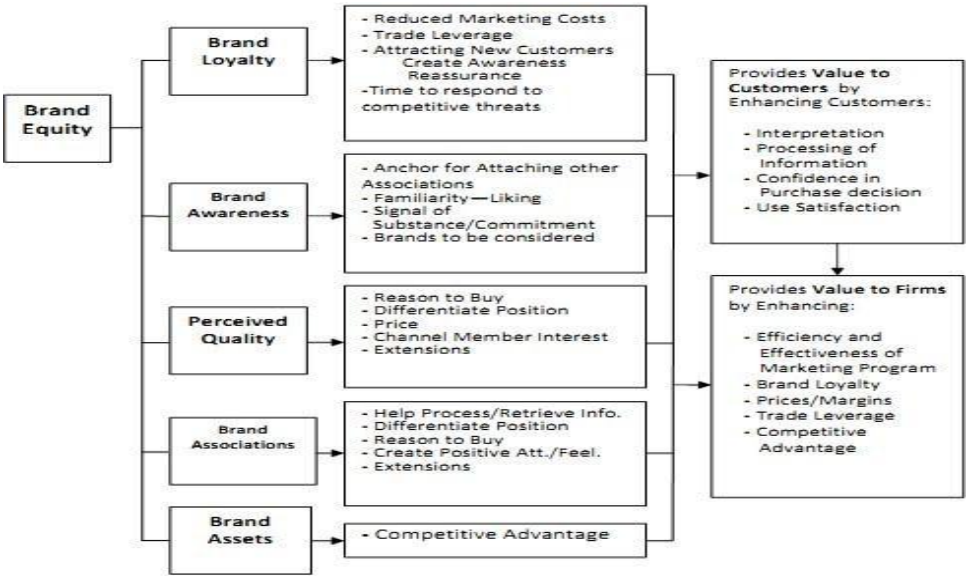


Figure 2.2 Aaker‟s (1991) consumer-based brand equity model

1. <u>Brand Awareness</u>

Brand awareness is a key determinant of brand equity (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003; Mackay, 2001; Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Washburn and Plank, 2002). It is defined as an individual's ability to recall and recognize a brand (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003). Top-of-mind and brand dominance is other levels of awareness included by Aaker (1996) in measuring awareness. Awareness can

affect customers‟ perceptions, which lead to different brand choice and even loyalty (Aaker, 1996). A brand with strong brand recall (unaided awareness) and top of mind can affect customers‟ perceptions, which lead to different customer choice inside a product category (Aaker, 1996).

2. Brand Associations

Aaker (1996) conceptualizes brand awareness that must precede brand associations. That is where a consumer must first be aware of the brand in order to develop a set of associations (Washburn and Plank, 2002). Brand association contains the meaning of the brand for consumers (Keller, 1993). It is anything linked in memory to a brand (Aaker, 1991). Brand associations are mostly grouped into a product-related attribute like brand performance and non-product related attributes like brand personality and organizational associations (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003). Customers evaluate a product not merely by whether the product can perform the functions for which it is designed for but the reasons to buy this brand over the competitors (Aaker, 1996) such as brand‟s fault-free and long-lasting physical operation and flawlessness in the product‟s physical construction.

3. Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is defined as the customer‟s judgment about a product‟s overall excellence or superiority in comparison to alternative's brand (Zeithaml, 1988; Aaker, 1996) and overall superiority that ultimately motivates the customer to purchase the product (Aaker, 1994). It is difficult for customers to make a rational judgment of the quality. They are likely using quality attributes like color, flavor, form, appearance of the product and the availability of production information to „infer‟ quality (Zeithaml, 1988)

4. Brand Loyalty

Aaker (1991) defines brand loyalty as „the attachment that a customer has to a brand‟. Two different levels of loyalty are classified: behavioral and cognitive loyalty (Keller, 1998). Behavioral loyalty can be indicated by a number of repeated purchases or commitment to rebuy the brand as a primary choice (Keller, 1998). Cognitive loyalty refers to the consumers‟ intention to buy the brand as the first choice (Keller, 1998; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). Another indicator of

loyalty is the customer‟s willingness to pay higher price for a brand in comparison with another brand offering similar benefits (Aaker, 1996).

5. <u>Other Proprietary Brand Assets</u>

The fifth category of Aaker‟s brand equity model represents other proprietary brand assets such as patents, trademarks and channel relationships. Brand assets will be most valuable if they inhibit or prevent competitors from eroding a customer base and loyalty. These assets can take several forms. For example, a trademark will protect brand equity from competitors who might want to confuse customers by using a similar name, symbol, or package. A patent, if strong and relevant to customer choice, can prevent direct competition. A distribution channel can be controlled by a brand because of a history of brand performance (Aaker, 1991).

2.1.4.2 Keller's Brand Equity Model

In Keller‟s (1993) brand equity model, the consumer‟s brand knowledge is seen as the key outcome of the marketing program and the key measure of brand equity. Brand knowledge, in turn, can be partitioned into two components: brand awareness and brand image.

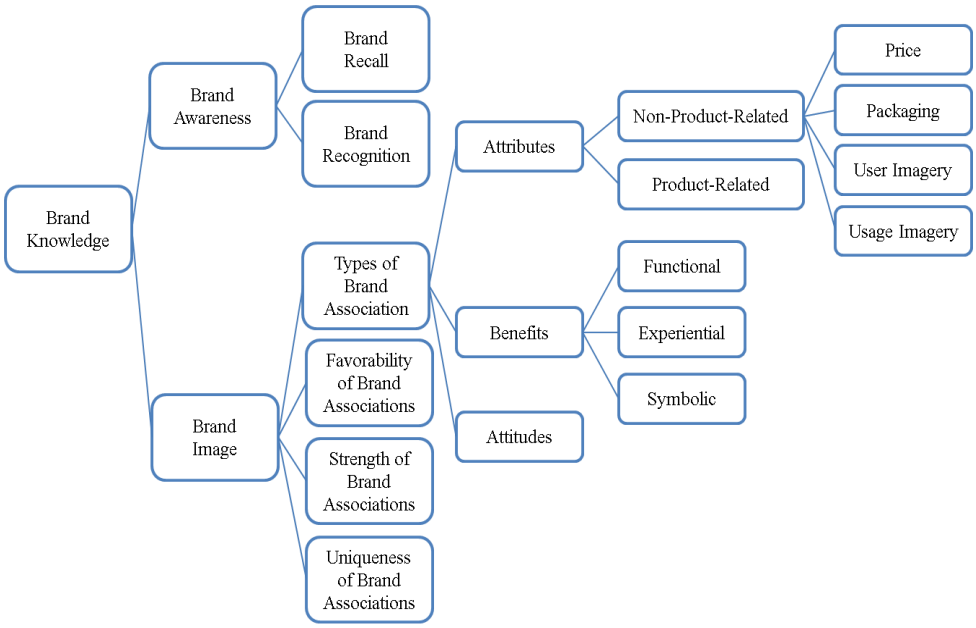


Figure 2.1.4.2 Keller‟s consumer-based brand equity model

Source: Keller (1993)

1. Brand awareness

Brand awareness includes aided or unaided brand recall and recognition. It is a very important component of brand equity as it is a key driver in enhancing the likelihood of a consumer‟s purchase decision, especially in low-involvement categories (Keller 1993).

2. Brand image

Keller (1993) defined brand image as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. "Brand associations" are seen, in turn, as "the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers". Brand attributes, benefits and attitudes are the three major types of brand associations. Positive brand equity means that the consumer‟s response to the marketing program must be strong, unique and in favor of the brand.

Brand attributes can be either product related or non-product related. Product-related attributes are the ingredients necessary for performing the product or service function sought by consumers, while non-product-related attributes are external aspects of the product of service that relate to its purchase or consumption (Keller 1993). Price, packaging, user imagery and usage imagery are the four main types of non-product-related attributes.

Benefits fall into three major categories: functional, experiential and symbolic. Functional benefits are the intrinsic advantages of product or service consumption, and are often associated with product-related attributes. Experiential benefits refer to how the consumer feels about using the product or service, and they are also often linked with product-related attributes. Symbolic benefits refer to the extrinsic advantages when buying a product or service, and they are more frequently associated with non-product-related attributes (Keller 1993).

The third type of brand association, brand attitude, refers to the overall consumer satisfaction with the brand, which, in turn, can be derived from beliefs about product related attributes, as well as the functional and experiential benefits and non-product related attributes and symbolic benefits. Brand attitude often has a strong impact on consumer behavior (Keller 1993).

Customer-based brand equity is said to have been achieved when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and holds some strong, favorable, and unique brand associations in memory (Keller, 2008). According to Keller, this is an important factor when

applying the concept of CBBE to higher education as it could take a number of years for a student to achieve these feelings. For example, a prospective student may be aware of a University as a brand but may not be familiar with the product having never used it. Furthermore, the student may not achieve strong, favorable and unique associations with the brand until they have completed a degree, or even longer, possibly years after graduation. The key focus of Keller‟s previous statement should be in achieving a high level of awareness, as students‟ decisions on which university to attend are quite often made on recommendations from family, friends and current teacher. This is the reason why the researcher took prospective graduates of the private Universities as its target population for this particular study.

Both Aaker (1991) and Keller (2003) view brand equity as the value that can be added to or subtracted from the brand by consumers and/ or a firm. Whereas Aaker refers to a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, Keller describes it as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumers‟ responses to the same marketing mix element compared with the response to a fictitious product or service. Both Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) view brand equity from a cognitive psychology perspective and they focus on consumers‟ cognitive processes.

In reference to Aaker (1991) and Keller‟s (1993) CBBE frameworks, and Mourad et al., (2011) brand valuation model, the brand equity model used in this study is proved to be applicable in measuring brand equity in the service sector particularly in HE Institutions. The model utilizes a consumer-based perspective to identify the major determinants of total brand equity and fulfills the need for this particular study but disregards the financial and institutional perspectives of brand equity. This can be seen as the weakness of the model.

2.1.5 The Branding of HE

According to Vukasovič (2014), the role of the brand in HE has been considered as very important. The brand is possibly the most important connection a student has with an institution. The brand of a University carries with it a promise of a particular level of service and student outcomes. In the case of education, the service is more than a simple set of tangible features but is a complex bundle of benefits that satisfy customer‟s needs (Ivy 2008). The level of satisfaction in a customer will influence the level of brand equity. Further, brand image and reputation help to conjure up a level of brand equity in a prospective student. Image and reputation are critical in developing customer loyalty among University students. In the context of HE, loyalty can include

a student‟s decision to stay on for advanced (postgraduate) studies following the completion of a bachelor (undergraduate) degree (Nguyen and LeBlanc 2001).

The concept of branding, as applied to HE, is somewhat different from branding in the commercial sector. Most notably, branding in HE is about who we are, and is not limited to what a particular product offers the marketplace. An educational brand is often equated to an institution‟s academic reputation. It serves as a lens to strategically focus the institution in the midst of fluid internal and external pressures as well as opportunities.

HE represents a context in which brand image potentially plays a major role in reducing the risk associated with such service largely because the assessment of quality takes place after consumption (Chen 2008). Hence, having a strong brand is important as a risk reliever that simplifies the decision-making process (Erdem and Swait 1998). That is to say, the brand represents a differentiation tool that gives cues to the consumers during the decision-making process. In addition, there are a number of other factors that directly influence the evaluation of the educational quality and hence the perception of the university brand (Kurz, Scannell, and Veeder 2008). These factors include the quality of the staff, location, size, history and international agreements (Mourad, 2011). It was noted that many universities adopt a brand management strategy in order to improve their ranking in the HE market (Brunzel 2007). Finally, the social image of the educational institution as well as its overall position in the market are important in influencing the he brand and thus impact on the selection process (Paden and Stell 2006).

2.1.6 Overview of HE and Brand Equity

Higher Education is a unique industry with respect to it being a marketable service. Historically, it has not been seen as commercial in nature and has been somewhat sheltered from market forces. However, education policy reform in many countries during the last fifty years has seen a shift from away from centralized control to a more decentralized and deregulated model (Clarke, 2009). As such, in the past few decades higher education has been subject to more institutional reform than any other part of the educational establishment in advanced industrial states (Ansell, 2008). The education community however did not necessarily welcome this reform. Barrett (1996), states that it is both regrettable and ominous that the marketing focus, explicitly borrowed from business, should be accepted and even welcomed to the higher education industry. In most

countries, however, this paradigm shift, or marketization of HE has been viewed as a compromise between privatization, academic autonomy and state control, (Young, 2002).

The existing research in brand equity demonstrates a degree of commonality in terms of the drivers of brand equity although there are some inconsistencies and overlap in terms of the relationships between key variables and some inconsistencies in terms of structuring models.

For many, a university degree is a one-time purchase. Therefore, when looking at brand loyalty and brand equity and the application of existing theoretical models to HE marketing, one must consider these differences. For instance in the HE context there could be less emphasis on developing brand loyalty in terms of repeat purchase, and more emphasis on building customerbased brand equity to promote positive word of mouth marketing. This is not to say that brand loyalty is not pertinent to HE marketing as it is. But rather brand loyalty may look somewhat different in HE. In Keller‟s (2001) pyramid, brand loyalty assumes top priority and alludes to the importance of this in generating repeat purchases. It is described as the "ultimate relationship" between brand and consumer and should be the underlying goal in marketing decision-making (Keller, 2001). However, repeat purchase in HE may not be the key driver, but rather it could be student satisfaction, i.e. the experience involving the use of the product, as the key measure in developing customer based brand equity. Keller's (2001) model for establishing brand equity is possibly the most comprehensive and will serve as the foundation for the discussion on establishing customer-based brand equity in the he sector.

2.2 Empirical Review

Research is limited in the area of University branding, and is virtually non-existent in the area of customer based brand equity in a higher education international student context. It is also apparent that there is relatively little research that focuses on the service sector. The following section synthesizes existing research around brand equity in HE.

Vukasovič (2014) conducted a study on measuring CBBE in HE aiming to establish the key elements of brand equity for international students by exploring existing brand equity theory in its applicability to international higher education (HE). The empirical setting of the study was Slovenia, a country in Europe. The main objective of the research was to enhance academic understanding of brand equity in the he sector and explore the implications for management practice. The findings of the research provided evidence that the customer-based brand equity model can be applied to the he context as an element of competitive advantage and used to guide

marketing activities for Universities internationally. Results showed that brand image related attributes significantly influence overall brand equity particularly, service related attributes and symbolic attribute respectively.

A research was conducted by Mourad, Ennew and Kortam in 2011 on Brand Equity in HE taking Egypt as its empirical setting. The researchers tried to identify the determinants of service brand equity in the context of a relatively high-credence service – HE. A modified brand equity model was proposed by the researchers, based on Keller‟s (1993) and Aaker‟s (1991) brand equity models.

The model developed by (Mourad et al., 2011) emphasized two main dimensions of brand equity: brand awareness and brand image. The awareness dimension is created by word of mouth and promotion while the image dimension is created by symbolic attributes (brand personality, social image of the brand and positioning in the market), service attributes (price, perceived quality, after sales service, benefits from consuming the service) and provider attributes (relationship between the provider and the staff, location of the service organization, internationalization of the service, staff, historical image, size). In addition, the model highlighted the role of consumer attributes in terms of experience and socio-economic factors affecting the consumers‟ perceptions of brand equity. The findings of this empirical research suggested that the brand is a significant influence on the selection of a university and implied that creating and managing strong universities‟ brands can have an important role to play in the HE market.

The final results of the research revealed that brand image-related dimensions were far more important as drivers of brand equity than awareness-related ones, and consumer-specific attributes had no significant impact on ratings of brand equity. Among the brand image related attributes, service attributes were found to be significant; price (measured in term of value offered), high quality and benefits (enhancing employment opportunities) all had a significant and positive impact on brand equity.

Another similar study was conducted by Dankwa and Yeboah in 2016, aiming to measure CBBE in Ghanaian tertiary education particularly in the private universities with the help of Aaker‟s brand equity model. The scale constructed to measure consumer-based brand equity included brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand image. The findings established that all variables under brand equity proved to be very essential and are predictors of Higher

Education Institutions‟ (HEI) performance in Ghana. Perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand image respectively predicted significant effects on overall brand equity and the performance of HEIs in Ghana.

2.3 Research Hypothesis and Conceptual Framework

2.3.1 Research Hypothesis

Based on the above related empirical and theoretical literatures, various studies show that different CBBE models have been tested in different empirical settings aiming to identify the determinants of CBBE in HE. This study adopts a model proposed by (Mourad et al., 2011); which builds on Aaker‟s and Keller‟s renowned models of brand equity in trying to identify significant determinants of brand equity in private Universities in Addis Ababa. The following hypotheses were proposed to be tested in this regard.

- **Brand Awareness attributes:** This covers all the promotion related activities conducted by the HE institutions (Chen, 2008). It is argued that awareness is largely driven by marketing activities conducted by the HE Institutions, publicity as well as word of mouth communication and these attributes serve as an important potential influence on overall brand equity (Mourad et al., 2011).Based on this theoretical background, the researcher has proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: Brand Awareness attributes have a positive and significant influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.

- **Provider attributes:** Provider attributes are one of the three components of brand image attribute in the model adopted for this research. The other two are Service attributes and Symbolic attributes. All three are to be treated separately.

  Provider attributes relate to the attributes of the organization itself, the staff providing the service and other attributes such as location, size and history (Mourad et al., 2011). In the model adopted for this study, these attributes also include the relationship between students the faculty/staff.

  Based on this theoretical background, the researcher has proposed the following hypothesis:

H2: Provider attributes have a positive and significant influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.

- **Service attributes:** Again, in the model adopted for this research, these attributes lay under brand image related attributes. These relate to attributes such as the perceived quality of the education service, range of courses, study method and quality management, guarantees and after sales service, and also included are university-related factors in terms of the availability of the courses, tuition fees and graduate employment rate (Mourad et al., 2011). Based on this theoretical background, the researcher has proposed the following hypothesis:

H3: Service attributes have a positive and significant influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.

- **Symbolic attributes:** This includes associations relating to brand personality and identity and in the model adopted for this research, this attribute represents the overall image, social responsibility and innovation of the faculty (Mourad et al., 2011). Based on this theoretical background, the researcher has proposed the following hypothesis:

H4: Symbolic attributes have a positive and significant influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.

2.3.2 Conceptual Framework of the study

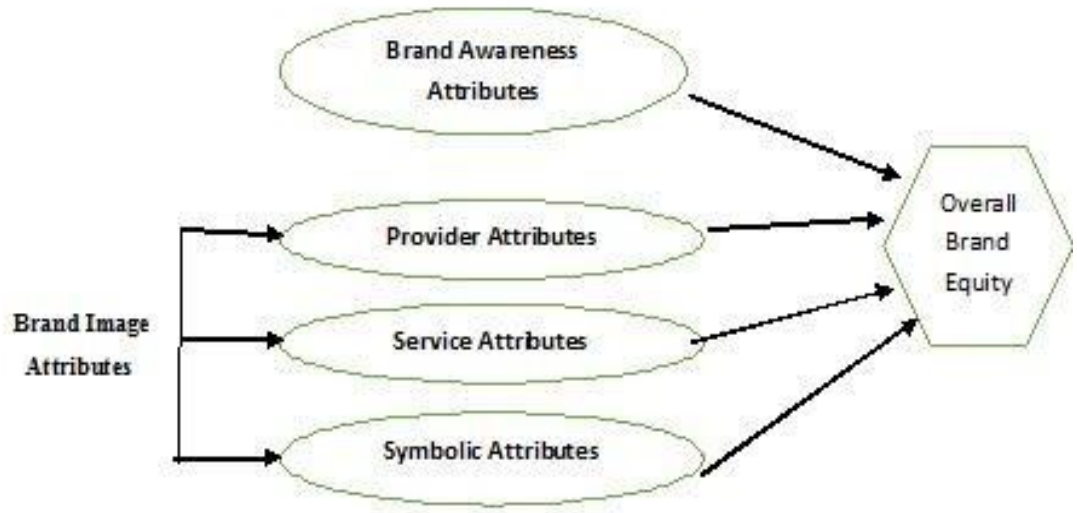
The model adopted for this study was developed by Mourad, Ennew and Kortam in 2011. The model was built on the work of Keller (1993) and to a less extent of Aaker (1991).

Brand equity is presented as a two-dimensional construct-based around brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). According to Aaker (1991), brand awareness is the ability of a potential consumer to recognize the brand as a member of a specific product category and it should be emphasized that awareness and recognition are essential before attaching attributes to the brand. Aaker further noted that brand awareness is about the ability to link the brand to a product category, brand image is concerned with the associations that an individual makes with the brand and collectively, these brand associations define a brand image. Brand associations may include a variety of attributes such as perceived quality, brand name and product attributes. Attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a product or service-what a consumer

thinks the product or service is or has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption (Keller 1993).

The model adopted for this study on service brand equity focuses directly on the determinants of brand equity and is shown in figure 2.3. The model illustrates brand awareness attributes, provider attributes, service attributes and symbolic attributes collectively known as brand image attributes have important potential influence on overall brand equity. Keeping this in mind and aiming to enhance academic understanding of brand equity in the HE sector and explore the implications for management practice, this particular research has adopted the model taking Addis Ababa as the empirical setting and prospective graduate students of privately owned HEIs particularly private universities as subjects of study and sets out to identify which major attributes drive CBBE and create superior value, to what extent these attributes influence overall brand equity and try to observe the relationship among these attributes.

Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework of the study



Source: Adopted from (Mourad et al., 2011) with slight modification

2.4 Chapter Summary

Creating and managing brand equity is one of the main strategic issues in today's competitive environment as Brand equity provides marketers with a strategic bridge from their past to their future" (Keller, 2003) .In order to create strong brand equity, managers should check that their brand has the following characteristics:

- Meets the customer expectations,
- Is reliable and consistent over time,
- Its price reflects its added value,
- It is properly positioned in the market,
- All the marketing activities help in building and maintaining it and brand managers understand consumer perceptions (Keller, 2003).

The review of the extant literature revealed a relative paucity of published empirical research, particularly in the education services sector. This is also observed in the context of Ethiopia. Higher education is a high credence service (Mourad et al. 2011) and this finding led to the observation that brand equity is more important for services if those services are predominated by experience or credence attributes (Bharadwaj,1993). Related empirical and theoretical literatures relevant to this particular study were discussed and it can be observed that various studies different CBBE models have been tested in different empirical settings aiming to identify the determinants of CBBE in HE. The model for service brand equity adopted for this current study focuses directly on the determinants of brand equity and applied it to the context of private Universities in Addis Ababa.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher made discussions about the research approach, research design, data type and sources, population and sampling technique, procedure of data collection and method of data analysis used for the study. In addition survey related reliability, validity and ethical considerations have been presented.

3.1 Research Reasoning Approach

The goal of deductive research reasoning is to test concepts and patterns known from theory using new empirical data. Hence deductive research reasoning is theory-testing research which is the objective of this research. The goal of theory-testing is not just to test a theory, but also to refine, improve, and possibly extend it (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

The customer based brand equity model has had a recent phenomenon in the marketing literature (Tilde Heding, 2009). The most renowned theories are that of the (Aaker, 1991) model and (Keller, 1993). This study has adopted a model developed from both these models to assess determinants of CBBE in the Higher Education sector particularly in private universities in Addis Ababa. Hence this study has followed a deductive form of scientific research reasoning approach because at this level, building a theory is very difficult and beyond the capacity of the researcher.

3.2 Research Approach

A research approach helps to decide upon issues like what, where, how much, by what means, etc., with regard to an enquiry or a research study (Kohtari, 2004). A research approach is the arrangement of conditions for collections and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. Thus, research approach provides an outline of what the research is going to do in terms of framing the hypothesis its operational implications and the final data analysis.

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thorn hill (2000) as cited by Farhadi (2009) broadly classified the research approach as exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. The authors further defined exploratory research as a research approach which has a primary objective to insights into and understanding of the problem situation tackling the research and descriptive research as a type of a research approach that has a purpose to describe something. Moreover, if the research is concerned with learning of {why (i.e. how one variable produces changes in another)} the research is said to be explanatory.

And hence, to address the three research questions, to identify and examine the impact of the determinants of CBBE on the overall brand equity of private HE in Addis Ababa, this study has used both descriptive and explanatory research approach.

3.3 Research Design

There are different ways followed in approaching a research problem. According to Creswell (2009), there are three research designs namely; quantitative, qualitative and combination of the two. According to Cooper et al., (2003) as cited by Farhadi (2009) quantitative research helps to determine the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable in a population. It also used to explain causal relationships to facilitate generalization and to predict the future whereas qualitative research methods provide a complete picture of the situation by increasing the understanding of social process and interrelations.

Based on the objectives of the study and the availability of relevant information, quantitative research design has been used in the belief that it will allow the research reach its goal efficiently. The quantitative approach was applied to examine the relationship between the dependent variable (i.e. Overall brand equity) and the independent variables (i.e. Brand Awareness, Provider Attributes, Service Attributes and Symbolic Attributes).

3.4 Data Type and Data Sources

The researcher has used primary sources of data in this study. The primary data was generated through a structured questionnaire prepared based on the works and scales developed and accustomed to Consumer Based Brand Equity.

3.5 Population and Sampling Procedure

3.5.1 Population of the study

Population is defined as "the complete set of units of analysis that are under investigation, while element is the unit from which the necessary data is collected" (Davis 2000). As stated in the scope of the study, the research has tried to identify determinants of CBBE in Higher Education particularly in private Universities in Addis Ababa. The population of this study is all regular and extension prospective graduates enrolled in the Universities expected to graduate with a BA

Degree in Business and related fields of study by the end of the academic year (2017). According to reports from the registrar units of each University, the population of the study is depicted in the table below:

Table 3.1 Population of the study

Department	Number of students from each department				
	Admas University (Main Campus)	RiftValley University (Main Campus)	St.Mary University	Unity University	Total
Marketing Management	88	70	216	157	531
Accounting& Finance	454	484	1258	316	2512
Management	178	200	161	57	596
Economics	-	-	-	27	27
Total number of prospective graduates	720	754	1635	557	3666

Source: Admas, Rift Valley, St. Mary and Unity Universities Registrar Office (2017)

As shown in the table above, the total population of the study sums up to 3666 students.

3.5.2 Sample Size

According to Israel (2013), there are different strategies to calculate sample size. These include using census for small population, using a sample size of a similar study, using a formula to calculate sample size and using published tables that help determine sample size based on the number of the population without doing any calculation.

The sample size for this particular study was computed based on a formula suggested by (Kothari, 2004). The sample size from the grand total of 3,666 prospective graduates in Business related fields of study from the 4 registered private Universities in Addis Ababa using the formula;

$$n = \frac{Z^2pqN}{e^2(N-1) + Z^2pq}$$

n = sample size required

N = grand total of population = 3666

Where, p=sample proportion, q=1-p,

e= acceptable sample error = 5% =0.05

Z=the value of standard deviation at a given confidence level and to be worked out from the z table which shows area under the normal curve= confidence level = 1.96 for 95% confidence; $n=1.96^2(0.5^2)3666/ (0.05^2(3666-1) + (1.96)^2(0.5)^2 =347.80\approx348$

This produced a sample size of 348.However, to make room for inappropriate completion and non-return of the questionnaires, 35 (about 10%) participants were added to round the figure up to 385.

In order to calculate the number of sample students to take from each of the four Universities, the proportion formula was used:

Sample from "X" university = (no of students from "X" university /total population)*sample size

The total population is the sum of all prospective graduate students in the four institutions in business and related fields of study, that is 3666.The institutions with their respective number of students and the sample taken from each of them is shown below:

Admas University (Main Campus): Number of students 720 (720/3666)*385 = 76

Rift Valley University (Main Campus): Number of students 754 (754/3666)*385 = 79

St. Mary University: Number of students 1635 (1635/3666)*385 = 172

Unity University: Number of students 557 (557/3666)*385 = 58

After calculating the number of questionnaires to distribute to each University, the total number of questionnaires were equally distributed among each academic department in the particular University keeping that the respondents have a homogenous characteristics.

All the 385 questionnaires were distributed to prospective graduate students enrolled in the four private Universities in Addis Ababa pursuing a BA Degree in business and related fields of study, but only 360 questionnaires were deemed useable. The twenty-five (25) questionnaires could not be used because of the inability or failure of some respondents to answer most of the questions and the remaining questionnaires were unreturned by respondents.

3.5.3 Sampling Technique

Sampling technique is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. It refers to the technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample. As a priori the researcher must decide the number of sample or sample size that he or she is going to use for the study. The sampling process is to choose the sampling frame, which is the list of elements from which a sample may be drawn: also called the working population (Zikmund 2000). The sampling frame for this study is all prospective graduate students enrolled in the four private Universities in Addis Ababa pursuing a Bachelor‟s Degree in Business and related fields.

The next step was to identify the sampling method used to select the sample for the study from the population. According to the methodology literatures, there are two main sampling methods, probability and non-probability sampling (Zikmund, 2000). Probability or Random sampling is based on the concept of random selection, whereas non-probability sampling is non – random sampling (Kothari, 2004). The probability method was chosen due to the universal acceptance of results because of the availability of sampling frame. Multi-stage sampling was used for this particular study. From the list of probability sampling methods, cluster sampling method was first used in this study. If the total area of interest happens to be a big one, a convenient way in which a sample can be taken is to divide the area into a number of smaller non-overlapping areas and then to randomly select a number of these smaller areas (usually called clusters), with the ultimate sample consisting of all (or samples of) units in these small areas or clusters (Kohtari, 2004). In this case, the clusters are academic departments (fields of studies) under each University. Among the list of academic programs in the Universities, Business and related field of studies were selected. After the identification of these clusters, students were selected in a random manner and every student of the universe under the cluster of field of study was given an equal chance of inclusion in the sample.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Since the questionnaire is one of the most important research instruments for collecting primary data, a structured close ended questionnaire was used as a primary source of data in this study.

The choice of using pre-coded close ended questionnaire was based on Fisher‟s view on structured questionnaire. According to Fisher (2007), if a researcher wants to quantify the research material, then it is best to use a structured approach. He further noted that in order to compare the views and experiences of a great many people it is easier if pre-coded approach is used.

The researcher designed the questionnaire used for this study in a way that was clear, brief and understandable to the respondents and made sure it covered the relevant aspects of the model used. According to Fisher (2007), it is recommended to keep the questionnaire as brief as possible and give it a logical and sequential structure so that the respondent can easily see what the questionnaire is about and can follow its themes as they go through them.

A pilot survey was conducted on 30 respondents prior to administrating the questionnaire to the selected sample size. The pilot survey was conducted to check if the questionnaire was clear, easy to understand and straightforward to ensure that the respondents could answer the questions with no difficulty. Based on the feedback from the pilot survey, necessary changes were made on the questionnaire before administering to the selected sample size.

The questionnaire employed for this study was arranged into a five point Likert scale anchored from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” on the scale. The questionnaire is made up of two sections. The first section is made up of general information questions aimed to capture information related to students. The second section is comprised of questions aiming to address the basic research questions and has 28 indicator questions headed by four constructs, Brand awareness and Brand image captured through Provider Attributes, Service Attributes and Symbolic Attributes as independent variables and Overall Brand Equity as the dependent variable.

3.7 Reliability and Validity Test

3.7.1 Reliability Test

Before going any further, a pre-test was made for reliability and validity. Reliability is the degree to which the measure of a construct is consistent or dependable (Bhattacherjeend, 2012).

Out of the 30 copies of questionnaires distributed for the pilot survey, 26 questionnaires were completed and returned. The Cronbach Alpha was used to test reliability of the scales used from the pre-test sample. For this study Cronbach‟s alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of variables in the research instrument.

Cronbach‟s alpha is a coefficient of reliability used to measure the internal consistency of the scale; it represented as a number between 0 and 1 (Zikmund, 2010). Scales with coefficient alpha between 0.6 and 0.7 indicate fair reliability, a Cronbach‟s alpha score of .70 or higher are considered as adequate to determine reliability. An alpha coefficient of 0.850 was obtained. Thus, the data generation was reliable and free of random errors. The table below shows the value of alpha for each dimension as a whole.

Table 3.2 Reliability Analysis of the Variables

Measurement	**Number of items**	**Cronbach's alpha**
Brand Awareness Attributes	5	.859
Provider Attributes	6	.814
Service Attributes	5	.796
Symbolic Attributes	7	.831
Overall brand equity	5	.795
Reliability of all items	28	.850

Source: Researcher's survey, (2017)

3.7.2 Validity Test

Validity is the extent to which differences found with a measuring instrument reflect true differences among those being tested, (Kothari, 2004). In other words, Validity is the most critical criterion and indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. In order to ensure the quality of the research design content and construct validity of the research were checked (Kothari, 2004).

If the instrument used for a study contains a representative sample of the universe, the content validity is good. Its determination is primarily judgmental and intuitive. It can also be determined by using a panel of persons who shall judge how well the measuring instrument meets the standards, but there is no numerical way to express it. Based on this definition the content validity was verified by the advisor of this research, who looked into the appropriateness of the questions and the scales of measurement. In addition, discussions with fellow researchers as well as the feedback from the pilot survey were another way of checking the appropriateness of the questions. The pre-testing indicated whether the questionnaire provided the relevant information (in terms of format, content, understandability, and terminology) and if respondents were able to complete it accurately. Some adjustments were made to the questionnaire based on the feedback received from the pre-test.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

In different research designs, data analysis methods should be suitable with the type of research method chosen for a study. The primary information for this research was collected with the help of questionnaire and to make a thorough analysis of the responses from the sample population, the data was analyzed with the combination of both descriptive statistics like mean, frequency, cross tabulation and standard deviation of the variables and inferential statics like correlation analysis to examine direction and significant of the correlation of the variables considered under this study and regression analysis to examine the relationship between the dependent variable (i.e. Overall brand equity) and the four independent variables (i.e. brand awareness, provider attributes, service attributes and symbolic attributes) with Pearson correlation and liner multiple regression techniques.

Simple mean and tabulation was applied to get clear picture about the demographic makeup of the respondents. Then, in order to get an implication about the model and its applicability, inferential statics was used. With the help of bivariate correlation analysis, the researcher tried to observe the influence of brand awareness, provider attributes, service attributes, and finally symbolic attributes on the overall brand equity. This was done in order to pinpoint the causal relationship of the independent variables in relation to the dependent variable. All the above were performed with SPSS version 20 software.

The regression equation or model specification for assessing the determinants of CBBE in HE, particularly in private universities in Addis Ababa:

$Yi = \alpha + \beta1X1 + \beta2X2 + \beta3X3 + \beta4X4 + \Sigma$

Where, Y=Overall brand equity α= Y intercept/constant

β1= The beta weight or regression coefficient of brand awareness β2= The beta weight or regression coefficient of provider attributes β3= The beta weight or regression coefficient of service attributes β4= The beta weight or regression coefficient of symbolic attributes

X1= Brand Awareness

X2= Provider Attributes

X3 =Service Attributes

X4 =Symbolic Attributes

Σ = sum of residuals or error terms

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The participants in this study were selected with their full consent and were well informed about the purpose of the thesis. The researcher assured all respondents that all the information they provided is to be kept confidential and the data will be used only for intended purpose.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter the data collected from respondents were analyzed and interpreted using quantitative analysis which involves analysis of the demographical information of respondents and the descriptive and inferential statistics employed to test the hypothesis and to investigate the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. To analyze the collected data in line with the overall objective of the research undertaking, statistical procedures were carried out using SPSS version 20.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

After distributing 385 questionnaires for customers, a total of 360 answered questionnaires were retrieved, which is 93.5% of the total distributed questionnaires. The remaining 10 (2.7%) questionnaires were not retrieved, and the rest 15 (4.1%) were found to be incomplete.

The questionnaire used for this study was made up of two sections. The first section is made up of general information questions aimed to capture information related to demographic characteristics of students. The second section is comprised of questions aiming to address the basic research questions and has 28 indicator questions headed by five constructs, Brand awareness and Brand image captured through Provider Attributes, Service Attributes and Symbolic Attributes as independent variables and Overall Brand Equity as the dependent variable.

4.1.1 Demographic Analysis of Respondents

Before going forward to the analysis of data, discussion on background information of respondents such as demographic data is useful in order to make the analysis more meaningful and interesting for the readers.

As indicated in Table 4.1below the female respondents constituted the largest share of the gender composition representing 61.9% of the total respondents while 38.1% were male. The age groups were distributed as shown in Table 4.1. As it shown in the table, 87.8% were from 21-30 age group, 11.7 % were from 31-40 and the remaining 0.5 % were from 41-50 age group. Regarding the employment status of respondents, 46.4% were employed in a private company, 27.7% of

them are not in the work force, 21.7% are employed in a government office and the remaining 4.2 % are self-employed.

50.3% of the total respondents have never attended either a public or private HEI previously and have no experience of tertiary education except for the University they are attending at the moment while the remaining 49.7% have attended a HEI previously. Majority of the respondents that is, 69.7% of the total are working towards a first bachelor degree while the remaining 30.3% of them are working towards a second bachelor degree. Among the total number of respondents, 66.9 % of them are enrolled in the extension (evening program) while the remaining 33.1 % of them are regular students.

Table 4.1: Demographic characteristic of respondents

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender of Respondents	Male	137	38.1
	Female	223	61.9
	Total	**360**	**100**
Age of Respondents	21-30	316	87.8
	31-40	42	11.7
	41-50	2	0.6
	Total	**360**	**100**
Occupation of Respondents	Gov"t Employee	78	21.7
	Private Employee	167	46.4
	Self Employed	15	4.2
	Student	100	27.7
	Total	**360**	**100**
Education Level of Respondents	Working towards a 1st Degree	251	69.7
	Working towards a 2nd Degree (Not Masters Degree)	109	30.3
Previous Education of Respondents	Previously attended a HEI	179	49.7
	Never attended a HEI	181	50.3
	Total	**360**	**100**
University	Admas	70	19.4
	Rift Valley	73	20.2
	St. Mary	165	46
	Unity	52	14.4
	Total	**360**	**100**
Enrollment Type	Regular	119	33.1
	Extension	241	66.9
	Total	**360**	**100**
Field of Study	Marketing Management	115	31.94
	Accounting & Finance	115	31.94
	Economics	15	4.18%
	Management	115	31.94
	Total	**360**	**100**

Source: Survey Result, (2017)

Regarding the question asking why the respondents joined a private University, 30.27% of them responded by saying they are working towards a second degree, 24.4 % of them failed 12^{th} grade matriculation exam and hence could not join a public university, 15.6% of them did not choose to attend a public university because the field of study they were assigned to was not of their interest.

Regarding how each respondent first learned about the private University he/she is now attending, 36.7% of them responded by saying it was through word of mouth and recommendation of close friends/family while 35.8 % of them came to learn of the University they are currently attending because a family member/a close friend is attending in the same University/attended at some point in time and 21.4 % of them first learned about the private University they are now attending through the media (TV/Radio and written media).

4.1.2 Test of Reliability and Validity

The reliability test is an important instrument to measure the degree of consistency of an attribute which it is supposed to measure. As stated by Mahon and Yarcheski (2002), the less variation of the instrument produces in repeated measurements of an attribute, the higher its reliability. Reliability can be equated with the stability, consistency, or dependability of a measuring tool. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most commonly accepted measures of reliability. It measures the internal consistency of the items in a scale. It indicates that the extent to which the items in a questionnaire are related to each other. It also indicates that whether a scale is one-dimensional or multidimensional. The normal range of Cronbach‟s coefficient alpha value ranges between 0-1 and the higher values reflects a higher degree of internal consistency. Different authors accept different values of this test in order to achieve internal reliability, but the most commonly accepted value is 0.70 as it should be equal to or higher than to reach internal reliability (Hair., 2003).

The variables were tested for reliability by using Cronbach‟s Coefficient Alpha and the overall reliability of the measurement constructs is found to be 0.869 which shows the measure has internal consistency.

Table 4.2 Reliability Analysis of Variables

Measurement	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Brand Awareness Attributes	5	.686
Provider Attributes	6	.744
Service Attributes	5	.744
Symbolic Attributes	7	.804
Overall brand equity	5	.861
Reliability of all items	28	.869

Source: Survey Results, SPSS (2017)

4.1.3 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

In this part descriptive statistics in the form of mean and standard deviation were presented to illustrate the level of agreement of the respondents. The main objective of the study is to identify determinants of CBBE in higher education, particularly in private Universities in Addis Ababa. To do so, students of those private Universities were asked to rate the level of agreement to each question under the four attributes namely: Brand Awareness, Provider Attribute, Service Attribute and Symbolic Attribute on a five point Likert scale with: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3 = neutral, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of CBBE Dimensions

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Brand Awareness	360	3.8656	.52559
Provider Attributes	360	3.6005	.65402
Service Attributes	360	3.4011	.69073
Symbolic Attributes	360	3.5659	.56821
Overall Brand Equity	360	3.4294	.78971
Valid N (listwise)	360		

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

As it can be seen from table 4.3 above, the mean score values of overall brand equity dimensions ranges between 3.40 (mean score value of Service Attributes) with standard deviation of 0.69 and 3.87 (mean score value of Brand Awareness) with standard deviation of 0.52.

In order to identify the determinants of overall brand equity in higher education, particularly in private Universities in Addis Ababa, a total of 28 questions were grouped into five dimensions, which were: brand awareness attributes, provider attributes, service attributes, symbolic attributes and Overall brand equity which is the dependent variable.

In order to compare the respondents‟ overall equity, descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used. The mean indicates to what extent the sample group averagely agrees or disagrees with the different statements. The higher the mean the more the respondents agree with the statement while the lower the mean the more the respondents disagree with the statement. In addition, standard deviation shows the variability of an observed response. Descriptive statistics of each dimension of overall brand equity has been discussed one by one in the following section.

4.1.3.1 Descriptive Statistics of Brand Awareness

The mean scores have been computed for all the five sub constructs of Brand Awareness dimensions that are , I know the symbol/logo of this University, the University brand comes to mind first when thinking about private HEIs, Positive brand awareness through Advertisements and other Marketing activities, positive word of mouth and successful promotion campaign. The result is presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Brand Awareness Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I know the symbol/logo of this University	360	4.25	.644
Comes to mind first when thinking about private HEIs	360	3.95	.809
Positive brand awareness through Ads and other Marketing activities	360	3.75	.831
Positive WOM	360	3.77	.778
Successful promotion campaign	360	3.61	.873
Valid N (listwise)	360		

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

As indicated in the above table the mean scores of brand awareness attributes for all the five items ranges from 3.61 to 4.25 which indicates that students are well familiar with the symbol/logo of this University has got the highest mean score 4.25, whereas the University runs a successful promotion campaign has got the least mean score value of 3.61. The overall mean score of brand awareness attributes was calculated to be 3.87.

4.1.3.2 Descriptive Statistics of Provider Attributes

The mean scores have been computed for all the six sub constructs of provider attributes dimensions that are, good student-faculty relations, convenient location , adequate size of campus, class rooms and other facilities, staff has sufficient knowledge, expertise and competence, history of good standing, future existence guaranteed. The result is presented in Table 4.5 below:

Table 4.5 Provider Attributes Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Good Student-faculty relations	360	3.38	1.016
Convenient Location	360	3.91	1.103
Adequate Size of campus, class rooms and other facilities	360	3.23	1.174
Staff has sufficient knowledge, expertise and competence	360	3.44	1.011
History of good standing	360	3.94	.768
Future existence guaranteed	360	3.70	.922
Valid N (listwise)	360		

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

As indicated in the above table, the mean scores of provider attributes for all the six items ranges from 3.23 to 3.94 which indicates that history of good standing of the University has got the highest mean score 3.94; whereas adequate Size of campus, class rooms and other facilities of the

University has got the least mean score value of 3.23. The overall mean score of provider attributes was calculated to be 3.60.

4.1.3.3 Descriptive Statistics of Service Attributes

The mean scores have been computed for the entire five sub constructs of service attributes dimensions that are: trust quality of education of this University, Provide range of programs and complete coverage of courses, has industry link, excellent after sales service, fair tuition fees as compared to the service given. The result is presented in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6 Service Attributes Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Trust quality of education of this University	360	3.59	1.049
Provide range of programs and complete coverage of courses	360	3.43	.808
Has Industry Link	360	3.49	.864
Excellent after sales service	360	3.19	1.021
Fair tuition fees as compared to the service given	360	3.31	1.163
Valid N (listwise)	360		

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

As indicated in the above table, the mean scores of service attributes for all the five items ranges from 3.19 to 3.59 which indicates that trustworthy quality of education provided by the University has got the highest mean score 3.59, whereas adequate Size of campus, class rooms and other facilities of the University has got the least mean score value of 3.23. The overall mean score of service attributes was calculated to be 3.40.

4.1.3.4 Descriptive Statistics of Symbolic Attributes

The mean scores have been computed for the entire seven sub constructs of service attributes dimensions that are: University has good reputation, positive social image and publicity, has a unique brand image and good position in the HE market, is involved in research and innovation and gives students a chance to be part of them, actively fulfills its social responsibilities, associate with and admire people who attend this University , trust and like brand image of this University , feel proud to be a student of this University. The result is presented in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Symbolic Attributes Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Has good reputation, positive social image and publicity	360	3.67	.880
Has unique brand image and good position in the HE market	360	3.69	.875
Is involved in research and innovation and gives students a chance	360	3.41	.773
		3.34	
Actively fulfills its social responsibilities	360		.740
		3.52	
Associate with and admire people who attend this University	360		.854
Trust and like brand image of this University	360	3.69	.842
Feel proud to be a student of this University	360		.883
		3.65	
Valid N (listwise)	360		

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

As indicated in the above table, the mean scores of symbolic attributes for all the seven items ranges from 3.34 to 3.69 which indicates that the university has a unique brand image among competitors and students like and trust the brand image of the University both got the highest mean score 3.69, whereas the University actively fulfills social responsibilities has got the least mean score value of 3.34. The overall mean score of symbolic attributes was calculated to be 3.56.

4.1.3.5 Descriptive Statistics of Overall Brand Equity

The mean scores have been computed for all five sub constructs of overall brand equity that are: satisfied with the service I am getting from this University, the University is more than a school to me, this University is a leading private University, likely to recommend to someone else, willing to attend if I decide to pursue my education further. The result is presented in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8 Overall Brand Equity Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	360	3.31	1.056
Satisfied with the service I am getting from this University	360	3.33	1.020
More than a school to me	360	3.53	.929
Is a leading Private University			
Likely to Recommend to someone else	360	3.58	.904
Willing to attend if I decide to pursue my education further	360	3.41	1.011
Valid N (listwise)	360		

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

As indicated in the above table the mean scores of symbolic attributes for all the five items ranges from 3.31 to 3.58 which indicates that the students are likely to recommend the University to someone else got the highest mean score 3.58, satisfied with the service I am getting from the University has got the least mean score value of 3.31.The overall mean score of overall brand equity was calculated to be 3.42.

4.2 Inferential Statistics

4.2.1 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.9 Correlation Matrix

Correlations

		Brand Awareness	Provider Attributes	Service Attributes	Symbolic Attributes	Overall Brand Equity
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Provider Attributes	Pearson Correlation	.443**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.		
Service Attributes	Pearson Correlation	.496**		1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.640** .000			
Symbolic Attributes	Pearson Correlation	.557**		.643**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.621** .000	.000		
Overall Brand Equity	Pearson Correlation	.499**	.609**	.760**	.713**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: Survey Result, 2017

To determine the existence and level of association, the researcher used bivariate correlation. Pearson correlation coefficient with falls between -1.0 and +1.0 and indicates the strength and

direction of association between the two variables (Field, 2005). The Pearson´s correlation coefficient (r) was used to conduct the correlation analysis to find the level and direction of the relationships between the dimensions of CBBE and overall brand equity. The classification of the correlation efficient (r) is as follows: 0.1 – 0.29 is weak; 0.3 – 0.49 is moderate; and > 0.5 is strong. The bivariate correlation of a two-tailed test confirm the presence of statistically significant difference at probability level $p<0.01$ i.e. assuming 99% confidence interval on statistical analysis.

The results of correlation analysis in the table 4.8 shows that three of the four independent variables were positively and significantly correlated with the dependent variable i.e. overall brand equity at 99 percent confidence level ($P<0.01$). The highest correlation is signified by Service Attributes ($r=0.760$), followed by Symbolic Attribute ($r= 0.713$), and Provider Attribute ($r=0.609$) while Brand Awareness attributes ($r= 0.499$) is positively but moderately correlated with overall brand equity.

4.2.2 Test for Linear Regression Model Assumptions

4.2.2.1 Normality Assumption

Normality of a data should be tested before running the regression analysis because multiple regressions require that the independent variables in the analysis be normally distributed.

According to Brooks (2008), as cited by Abate (2012) if the residuals are normally distributed, the histogram should be bell- shaped and thus this study implemented graphical methods to test the normality of data. From the Histogram figure (see Appendix 3), it can be noted that the distribution is a normal curve, demonstrating that data witnesses to the normality assumption. Besides, the normal probability plots were also used to test the normality assumption as shown by the Normal P P-Plot Figure as can be seen from Appendix 4.

As shown in the Figures from the Appendixes 3 and 4 residuals were normally distributed around its mean of zero which indicates that the data were normally distributed and it was consistent with a normal distribution assumption. As the figures confirmed the normality assumption of the data, this implies that the inferences made about the population parameters from the sample statistics tend to be valid.

The value of Skewness and Kurtosis and their respective standard errors were computed as follows. The values of Skewness and Kurtosis demonstrate the normality assumption has been met.

Table 4.10 Skewness and Kurtosis measures

Descriptives

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Brand Awareness	360	.178	.129	.210	.256
Provider Attributes	360	-.378	.129	.792	.256
Service Attributes	360	-.409	.129	-.149	.256
Symbolic Attributes	360	-.788	.129	1.788	.256
Overall Brand Equity	360	-.369	.129	.403	.256
Valid N (listwise)	360				

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

4.2.2.2 Multicollinearity Test Assumption

One should check for the problem of multicollinearity which is present if there are high correlations between some of the independent variables. The study checks this with the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) which calculates the influence of correlations among independent variables on the precision of regression estimates. The VIF factor should not exceed 10, and should ideally be close to one. Tolerance is an indicator of how much of the variability of the specified independent variable is not explained by the other independent variables in the model and is calculated using the formula 1–R2 for each variable. If this value is very small (less than 0.10), it indicates that the multiple correlation with other variables is high, suggesting the possibility of multicollinearity.

Table 4.11 Multicollinearity Test

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Constant		
Brand Awareness	.654	1.529
Product Attributes	.513	1.949
Service Attributes	.477	2.096
Symbolic Attributes	.461	2.169

a Dependent Variable: Overall Brand Equity

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

As can be seen from table 4.9 above, the tolerance level of all independent variables are greater than 0.1 and the VIF value of all the independent variables are also less than 10. This confirms the absence of multicollinearity.

4.3 Regression Analysis

4.3.1 Multiple Regressions of CBBE Dimensions on Overall Brand Equity

The multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the influence of independent variable on the dependent variable and identify the relative significant influencer; i.e., independent variable (Brand Awareness, Provider Attributes, Service Attributes, Symbolic Attributes) to the dependent variable; i.e. overall brand equity. The proposed hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis. The result of regression analysis of the independent variables (Brand Awareness, Provider Attributes, Service Attributes, Symbolic Attributes) on the dependent variable overall brand equity indicates existence of positive and statistically significant effect on overall brand equity. The model summary table shows an Adjusted R-Square value is 0.664 which means that 66.4% of the customer-based brand equity was explained by the variation of the four CBBE dimensions. In other words, this means that 33.6% of the dependent variable i.e. overall brand equity cannot be explained by these four dimensions and that there must be other variables that have an influence on the outcome.

Table 4.12 Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.817[a]	.668	.664	.45766	2.108

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Awareness, Provider Attributes, Service Attributes, Symbolic Attributes

b. Dependent Variable: Overall Brand Equity

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

Table 4.13 Coefficient Matrix

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.662	.193		-3.424	.001
Brand Awareness	.063	.057	.042	1.104	.271
Provider Attributes	.094	.052	.078	1.830	.068
Service Attributes	.540	.051	.472	10.668	.000
Symbolic Attributes	.469	.063	.337	7.492	.000

Source: Survey Result, SPSS (2017)

Table 4.13 presents the result of regression analysis which is based on the four independent variables (Brand Awareness attributes, Provider Attributes, Service Attributes and Symbolic Attributes).The independent variables that contribute to variance of the dependent variable are explained by the standardized Beta coefficient. The beta value on the coefficient table indicates level of effect each dimension has on the dependent variable which is overall brand equity.

The strength of each predictor (independent variable) influencing the criterion (dependent variable) can be investigated via standardized Beta coefficient. The regression coefficient explains

the average amount of change in the dependent variable that is caused by a unit change in the independent variable. The larger value of Beta coefficient an independent variable has, brings the more support to the independent variable as the more important determinant in predicting the dependent variable.

The regression model of this study can now be properly written in an equation as follows:

Y (Overall Brand Equity) = a (y intercept) + (0.042) Brand Awareness+ (0.078) Provider Attributes + (0.472) Service Attributes + (0.337) Symbolic Attributes+ ε (Error Term)

The regression model from table 4.13 above result shows that keeping other variables constant, a one unit increase in Brand Awareness will bring a 0.042 unit increase in the overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions in A.A, a one unit increase in Provider Attributes will bring a 0.078 unit increase impact on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions in A.A, a unit increase of Service Attributes will bring a 0.472 unit increase impact on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions in A.A and a one unit increase of Symbolic Attributes will cause a 0.337 unit increase in overall brand equity of in private Higher Education Institutions in A.A.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing and Interpretation of Results

Table 4.14 Summary of findings

Hypotheses	Result	Reason
Ho: Brand Awareness attributes do not have a positive and significant influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.	Accepted	$\beta 1=0.042$, $p>0.05$
Ho: Provider attributes do not have a positive and significant influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.	Accepted	$\beta 2=0.078$, $p>0.05$
Ho: Service attributes do not have a positive and significant influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.	Rejected	$\beta 3=0.472$, $p<0.05$
Ho: Symbolic attributes do not have a positive and significant influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.	Rejected	$\beta 4=0.337$, $p<0.05$

Source: Researcher's survey, 2017

H1: Brand Awareness attributes have an important potential influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.

The result of multiple regression analysis of the table 4.13 indicates that in private Higher Education Institutions in Addis Ababa, Brand Awareness attributes do not have significant influence on overall brand equity with p value of > 0.05. Besides, the value of beta (β=0.042) shows a weak impact on overall brand equity caused by a unit increase in Brand Awareness.
Hence, the above proposed hypothesis is rejected.

This finding was somewhat surprising as it was contrary to the hypothetical relationships as postulated by Aaker (1991) and Keller (2003) and the findings of other studies which had concluded that brand awareness significantly impacts on other dimensions of brand equity. However, the findings of the current study were consistent with the study of Mourad et al. (2011). The model adopted for this study which was originally developed by Mourad et al in 2011 builds on brand equity models of Keller (1993) and Aaker (1991) to a lesser extent, in order to examine the brand equity in the service sector and, in particular, in the context of higher education in Egypt. Their findings provided empirical support for the proposition that brand equity is a significant factor of the choice of University. The first dimension in their model: "brand awareness", was not a statistically significant driver of brand equity in higher education, as was the case in the current study. Brand awareness is less important when competing institutions are already widely known. On the other hand, the second dimension, "brand image"-related determinants were found to be statistically significant drivers of brand equity in their research (Mourad et al. 2011).

H2: Provider attributes have an important potential influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.

The result of multiple regression analysis of the table 4.13 indicates that in private Higher Education Institutions in Addis Ababa, Provider attributes do not have significant influence on overall brand equity with p value of moderately > 0.05. Besides, the value of beta (β=0.078) shows a weak impact on overall brand equity. Hence, the above proposed hypothesis is rejected.

H3: Service attributes have an important potential influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.

The result of multiple regression analysis of the table 4.13 indicates that in private Higher Education Institutions in Addis Ababa, Service attributes have significant influence on overall

brand equity with p value of 0.000. And also, the value of beta (β=0.472) demonstrates that the positive influence of service related attributes on overall brand equity. This implies that a one percent increase in Service related attributes results in a 47.2 % increase in overall brand equity. Hence, the above proposed hypothesis is accepted.

Of the service attributes, trustworthy quality of education, excellent after sales service (alumni relations and student record) and availability of range of academic programs and complete coverage of courses have a more significant effect on overall brand equity respectively.

H4: Symbolic attributes have an important potential influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions.

The result of multiple regression analysis of the table 4.13 indicates that in private Higher Education Institutions in Addis Ababa, Symbolic attributes have significant influence on overall brand equity with p value of 0.000. And also, the value of beta (β=0.337) demonstrates that the positive influence of Symbolic Attributes on overall brand equity. This implies that a one percent increase in Service related attributes results in a 33.7 % increase in overall brand equity. This makes symbolic attributes second strongest predictors of overall brand equity. Hence, the above proposed hypothesis is accepted. It can be summarized that Image-related dimensions were far more important as drivers of brand equity than awareness-related ones.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter winds up the study undertaken so far by giving insights about summary, conclusions, recommendations and highlighting future research areas**.**

5.1 Summary of major findings and conclusions

This study presents the results of an analysis of the determinants of service brand equity in the context of a relatively high-credence service – HE. Although plenty of research which examines brand equity from the consumer's perspective in relation to physical goods exists, comparatively few studies have explored brand equity in a service context particularly in the education sector. This study tried to identify the key determinants of overall brand equity in higher education institutions, particularly of private Universities in Addis Ababa. In addition to this, the study also tries to identify which determinant has the highest influence on the overall brand equity.

All the respondents were regular and extension prospective graduate students working towards a bachelor‟s degree in business and related fields of study from the four renowned private Universities – Admas University, Rift Valley University, St. Mary University and Unity University.

This study was based on a framework adopted from Mourad et al., 2011 which is a modified brand equity model proposed based on Keller‟s (1993) and Aaker‟s (1991) models. This model emphasized two main dimensions of brand equity: brand awareness and brand image and applied it to the private higher education sector taking private universities in Addis Ababa into consideration. The awareness dimension is created by word of mouth and promotion while the image dimension is created by symbolic attributes, service attributes, and provider attributes.

Reviewed literature stresses the brand is a significant influence on the selection of a university.
By implication, creating and managing strong universities‟ brands can have an important role to play in the HE market (Chen, 2008).

In the inferential statistics part the following results were achieved.

Using the whole sample of 360 students, suggested that image-related determinants were the major drivers of brand equity particularly Service attributes and Symbolic attributes. Brand awareness attributes had no significant impact on ratings of brand equity.

The first hypothesis which states that Brand Awareness attributes have an important potential influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions was rejected.

The second hypothesis which states that Provider attributes have an important potential influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions was also rejected.

The third hypothesis which states that Service attributes have an important potential influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions was accepted.

The fourth hypothesis which states that Symbolic attributes have an important potential influence on overall brand equity in private Higher Education Institutions was accepted.

Finally overall brand equity found to be positively explained by the sum of the four independent variables by 66.8% in this study and the reaming 33.2% of the dependent variable (i.e. Overall brand equity) has explained by other exogenous variables.

5.2 Recommendations

For those involved in marketing service brands, the asymmetric impact of various determinants of brand equity provides guidance on how and where to focus marketing efforts. Hence, the following academic and practical implications could be derived to provide guidelines for the top managers to help them in improving the value of their brands.

The marketers in the area of HE service should realize that developing a positive brand image is more important than creating awareness. The insignificant relationship between brand awareness and overall brand equity as shown in this research is quite unexpected. Hence, marketers in the area of HE service should invest more on creating and maintaining the determinants of the brand image dimension of brand equity rather than in simply expanding their promotional campaigns. That is to say that creating good service quality in terms of service, provider and symbolic attributes, will result in the development of a strong brand image and hence brand equity.

Finally, managers should realize that brand equity plays a major role in influencing the consumers‟ selection process especially in the service industry as it acts as a risk reliever. As a

result, focusing on developing and maintaining the determinants of brand equity will help them in positioning their service in the market and hence influencing the consumer choice.

5.3 Limitations and Directions for Future studies

There are a number of limitations in this research.

First, the research sample includes only prospective graduate students of private Universities working towards a bachelor's degree in business and related field of studies and did not include students from public universities, postgraduate studies and other fields of study. Students considering to join the Universities and students who have already graduated from the Universities have not been selected to be part of the study as pre-purchase and post-purchase behaviors vary. Second, the study is geographically limited to Addis Ababa so caution must be exercised in generalizing from these findings to other cities in Ethiopia. Third, the researcher focused on only one type of brand equity which is customer-based brand equity and other studies could focus on brand equity from different perspectives, such as the financial or employee perspectives. Fourth, the research focuses on the students‟ perspective of the determinants of brand equity and ignored the university‟s point of view, which should be analyzed in future research.

In spite of limitations in the research, the researcher believes that this study will encourage future studies on brand equity of services particularly in the HE context as service marketing is a very interesting concept and it can also serve as a source of competitive advantage and be used to guide marketing activities for accredited Universities and those who will join the sector in the future.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT

Questionnaire to be filled by students of private Higher Education Institutions in Addis Ababa to identify the determinants of Consumer Based Brand Equity in private Higher Education.

Dear Respondent,

I really appreciate your genuine response for this questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed and given to you to collect data about your knowledge, feelings and attitudes about privately owned Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Addis Ababa.

My name is Mahlet Mandefro, MA candidate at Addis Ababa University School of Commerce conducting a research under the title of "Determinants of Consumer Based Brand Equity in private Higher Education: The case of private Universities in Addis Ababa" as a partial fulfillment of the requirement of masters of art in Marketing Management.

Your willingness and cooperation in giving genuine information is well appreciated and the information you provide will be used for academic purpose only and will be kept in strict confidentiality. If you would like further information about this study, or have problem in completing this questionnaire please contact me via +251912-627224.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Section 1: General Information of Respondents: please insert a check mark "□" in the box you select and no need of writing your name.

Age: Less than 20 □ 21-30 □ 31-40 □ 41-50 □ Above 50□
Gender: Male □ Female □

Occupation: Government Employee□ Private Employee □Self Employed□ Student□

Educational level:
Working towards a First Degree□ Working towards a second Degree□

Have you previously attended any other higher education institution? Yes□ No□

If yes, Mention where _____

Which privately owned Higher Education Institution are you attending?
St. Mary University □ Unity University □ Rift Valley University (Main Campus)□

Admas University (Main Campus) □

How long has it been since you joined this University?

< 1 Year□ 1-2 Years□ 3 -4 Years□ > 5 Years□

Enrollment Type

Regular □ Extension□

Program of Study

Marketing Management □ Accounting & Finance □ Management □

Economics □ Business Management □

Why are you attending a private University?

I failed to pass grade 12 Matriculation Exam □

I wasn"t able to attend the public university I was assigned to due to a personal reason □

The field of study I was assigned to in the public university wasn't my area of interest □

I was forced to withdraw from a public university due to a personal reason □

I was expelled/suspended from a public university □

I am learning towards a second degree □

How did you first learn about this University?

From the media (TV, Radio and/or written media) □From the internet □

Because a close friend or family is attending in the same University □

Word of mouth (recommended from a close family member/friend)

□ If other, please specify _____

Section 2: Please put a check mark " " among the five alternatives in the following table that best explain your attitude in the scale.

BA		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
BA1	I know the symbol or logo of this University					
BA2	When thinking about private higher education institutions, this University comes to my mind first					
BA3	This University is creating a positive brand awareness with its advertisements and Marketing activities					
BA4	Positive oral or written word of mouth runs about this University					
BA5	This university is running a successful promotion campaign showing its qualities and why it's better than its competitors					
PA		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
PA1	There are good student-faculty relations in this University					
PA2	The Location of this University's Campus is convenient					
PA3	The size of the campus, class rooms and other facilities of this University is adequate					
PA4	Staff of this University have sufficient knowledge, expertise and competency to fulfill their roles					
PA5	This University has a history of good standing					
PA6	The future operation and existence of this University is guaranteed					
SA		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
SA1	I trust the quality of education of this University					
SA2	This University provides a range of programs to meet the variety of interests of students and offers a complete coverage of courses relevant to the program of study					
SA3	This University is acknowledged by employers and Employment opportunity rate for graduates of this University is high (has an industry link)					
SA4	I think that this University gives excellent after sales services (alumni, record system)					

SA5	Tuition fees of this University are fair for the quality of service given					
SYA		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
SYA1	This University has good reputation, positive social image and publicity					
SYA2	This University has a unique brand image and good position in the private higher education market compared to competing brands					
SYA3	This University is involved in research and innovation projects and gives students a chance to be a part of these projects					
SYA4	This University actively plays a role in fulfilling its social responsibilities (in research and studies for political, economic, ecological, technical, cultural and other advancement of society)					
SYA5	I associate with and admire people who attend this University					
SYA6	I trust and like the brand image of this University					
SYA7	I feel proud to be a student of this University					
OBE		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
OBE1	I am satisfied with the service I am getting from this University					
OBE2	This University is more than a school to me					
OBE3	In my opinion, this University is a leading privately owned higher education institution in Addis Ababa					
OBE4	I am likely to recommend this University to someone else among other competing Universities					
OBE5	I am willing to attend this University if I decide to pursue my education further (other degree or Master's Program)					

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX 2: Reliability Statistics and Tests

Scale: Brand Awareness Attributes Reliability Statistics

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	360	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	360	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.684	.686	5

Scale: Provider Attributes Reliability Statistics

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	360	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	360	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.726	.744	6

Scale: Service Attributes Reliability Statistics

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	360	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	360	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.737	.744	5

Scale: Symbolic Attributes Reliability Statistics

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	360	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	360	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.805	.804	7

Scale: Overall Brand Equity Reliability Statistics

Case Processing Summary

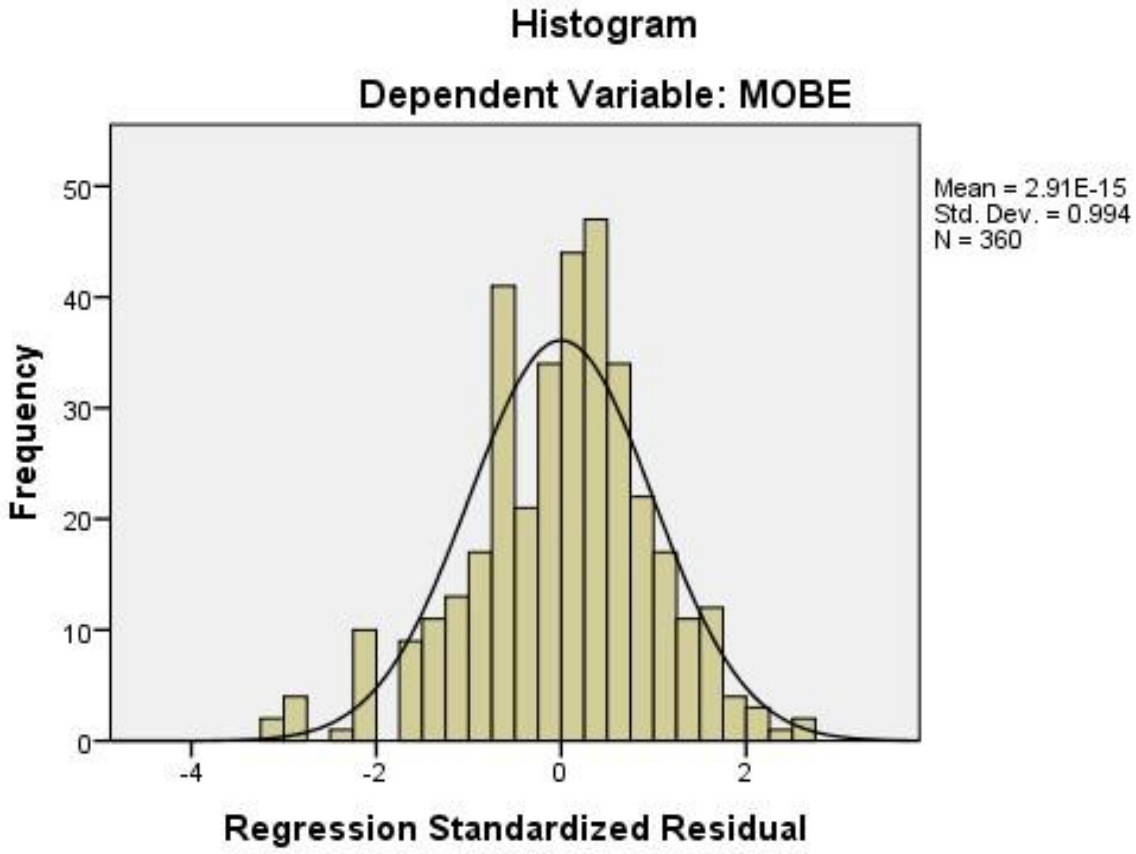
		N	%
Cases	Valid	360	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	360	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

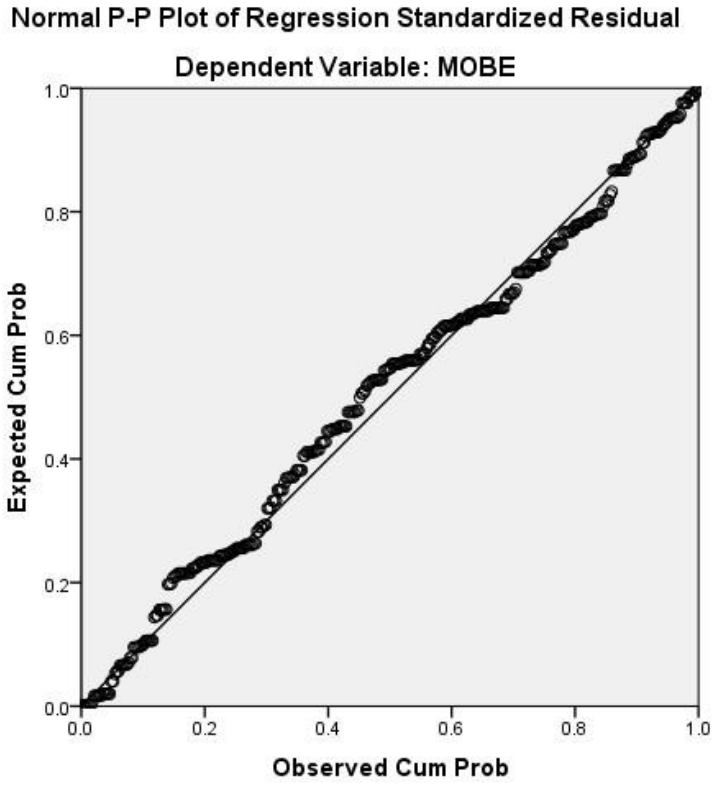
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.860	.861	5

APPENDIX 3: Histogram for Normality Test of the Data



APPENDIX 4: Normal P- P Plot to Test Normality of the Data



APPENDIX 5: ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	149.532	4	37.383	178.480	.000[b]
	Residual	74.356	355	.209		
	Total	223.888	359			

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Brand Equity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Symbolic Attribute, Brand Awareness, Product Attributes, Service Attributes