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## Brand Name and Customers' Intention

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**Abstract:**

*The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of the brand dimension of perception of quality, brand image, and integrated marketing communications towards attitude and subsequent influence on consumer interest in university scope.*

*The study aims to analyze the role of college brand from the perspective of high school students in Indonesia as a developing country. The survey was conducted on 397 students. Data analysis and testing of the integrated model proposed the use of Structural Equation Modeling.*

*The results of the analysis show that there is a brand influence for the dimension of quality perception, brand image, integrated marketing communications towards the interest of the college. The three dimensions of the brand have a positive effect on interest to college.*

*There is an insignificant influence from the perception dimension of quality to interest, while other dimensions have a significant effect on student interest to college. These results provide an overview for the college management to develop the institutional brand strategy because this study uses a sample of high school students as a true college consumer.*

*Empirically, the results of this study indicate that consumers of higher education in Indonesia, i.e. high school students, assess the brand of college, that leads to a positive attitude based on the significance of the brand. Furthermore, there is a positive and significant influence on attitudes toward student interest for college election.*

**Keywords:** Colleges, interests, attitudes, quality perceptions, brand image, integrated marketing communications.

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## 1. Introduction

A person's income is influenced by skills that are mostly created through education and being a graduate, having a Masters or a doctoral degree tends to attract the best job offers (McMahon, 2013). The hope of getting a good job and income makes people desire and have an interest to continue their education up to a college degree level. Therefore, universities are required to provide the necessary education for the wider community. The continuity of college life depends on the number of students who can be recruited - hence the desire and interest of the community to go to higher education - becomes a profitable thing if it can be catered for appropriately. Interest significantly affects actual purchasing behavior (Barber and Taylor, 2013). Thus, the formation of interest in prospective students can be used to predict actual purchases of college services.

In Indonesia, the success of universities can be seen among others from the high number of enthusiasts and the number of students according to the capacity they have. Competition among universities is increasingly competitive, seen from the development of the number of public colleges in 2011 being 2.752 and in the year 2017 they went up to 3,252 (or an increase of 18.17%). State universities amount to 122 or 3.75% (<https://forlap.ristekdikti.go.id> 2018). In 2016, the number of students in state universities amounted to 4,637,846 or 26.78%. An increasingly competitive environment demands changes in the management of higher education. To that end, universities need to make efforts to influence the interest of prospective students in order to obtain a number of targeted students. One effort that can be done by universities to survive in this competitive environment is by doing branding. University branding activities can provide both success and be positive for institutions (Chapleo, 2010).

Sciple (2010) states that brands can be very effective in shaping a positive perception of a college or university and a comprehensive brand marketing strategy will be an instrument for shaping a positive perception. Positive perceptions of the quality of college services will affect the interest of prospective students. In Indonesia, the quality of college services can be reflected by the accreditation rank of the National Accreditation Board of Higher Education (BAN-PT). The college's reputation is also evident from the results of various international rankings that have unequal quality assessment parameters, such as ARWU, THE, QS, Webometrics. Rasli *et al.* (2011) state that the quality of college services related to facilities and supporting infrastructure, image and marketing, academic and administrative problems, location, and access are factors influencing student decisions to register. Meanwhile, Karyati and Sukirno (2016) argue about the brand image that has relatively positive and significant effect on the interest to continue studies to college. Thus, the interest of prospective college students may be influenced by the perception of the quality of services offered and the brand image. Branding efforts also require marketing communications for the purpose of influencing target consumers. Consumers, as external audiences, are recipients of messages from

integrated marketing communications activities (Oladele, 2011). University branding efforts that use campaigns with integrated marketing communications result in the success that supports improved student quality and brand equity (Horriagan, 2007). For that, college marketing communications activities need to be done in a way to provide some information to prospective students.

After obtaining information, the prospective students will perform an evaluation activity. The results of the evaluation will form a positive or negative attitude that will affect his interest. Bittner and Schipper (2014) suggest that buying interest can be predicted from attitudes and perceptions of the benefits of a product. Therefore, attitudes can encourage interest in individual behavior. This research is conducted by building an integrated research framework for the purpose of understanding how the college brand, with the dimensions of quality perception, brand image, and integrated marketing communications will shape the attitude that further affects the interest of prospective students. This research is done from the point of view of prospective college students. This study closes the mediation role gap from brand attitudes toward consumer interest in the context of universities in developing countries.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 The role of brands to interests in higher education**

Individual interests depend on the relationship of attitudes and norms (Ramayah and Suki, 2006). Buying interest is a fundamental determinant or predictor of actual purchasing decisions (Ahmed and Zahid, 2014). Therefore, buying interest can be identified through a tendency to take a buying action or recommend its products and brands to others. Creating and maintaining a strong university brand has an important role in the competition that exists in the college market (Chen, 2008). Some studies suggest that brand equity is positively related to buying interest (Jalilvand *et al.*, 2011; Irshad, 2012; Buil *et al.*, 2013; Gorina 2016). The dimensions of brand equity are related to buying interest (Jung and Sung, 2008; Hung *et al.*, 2015; Guskova *et al.*, 2016) and interprets purchasing interest (Wang and Li, 2012).

### **2.2 The role of quality perception, brand image, and integrated marketing communications**

Brand equity is measured by brand awareness and quality perceptions (Aaker, 1996; Yoo *et al.*, 2000; Buil *et al.*, 2008). The findings of Singh and Kumar (2016), show that demographic factors affect perceptions of the quality of services offered and reinforce the fact that higher education institutions need to emphasize and take into account the dimensions of service quality in their marketing strategies. While for Alhelalat (2015), the main selection criteria of prospective students is the name and reputation of the university, career prospects, and educational environment. Daily *et al.* (2010), argue that accreditation is the most important factor in the selection of

higher education institutions even though students do not fully understand the meaning.

The brand image contains the importance of a brand for a consumer (Keller, 2008). In the college brand equity, the determinants of image dimensions are much more significant than the determinants of consciousness dimensions (Mourad *et al.*, 2011). The brand image gives some impression to the consumer. Impressions that affect the interest of prospective students can be raised from the aspects of universities, courses, tuition fees commensurate with existing facilities, and ease of access because of the strategic location (Abdullah, 2016). Impressions arise from offered programs, tuition fees, facilities, and academic staff excellence (Dahari and Abduh, 2011). The impression can also be built through the ease with which graduates get a job. Employment opportunities, availability of financial assistance, institutional reputation, information accessibility to institutions and accreditation are the most important factors in choosing educational institutions (Daily *et al.*, 2010). Findings of Iskandar and Setiawan (2015), demonstrate that college graduates with competency certificates, gain recognition of their competence as workers, and improve their quality and competitiveness in the world of work both at home and abroad.

Quality and brand image require marketing communication, for the purpose of encouraging buying interest (Rossiter and Percy, 1998). Integrated marketing communications that combine multiple communication disciplines can provide maximum clarity, consistency, and impact through seamless message integration (Low, 2000). Findings of Nagra *et al.* (2012) reinforces the crucial role of using integrated marketing communications for marketing success, which cannot rely solely on one medium as a strategy in an effort to attract customers. The findings of Saeed *et al.* (2013) show that integrated marketing communication is a better consumer-oriented approach than orientation that focuses on the needs of the organization and performs better with synergy procedures than isolation. Competitive college competition is a solid basis for using this concept to make information more complete and clearer to consumers.

### **2.3 Attitudes and interests**

A positive attitude will affect buying interest (Goh, 2010). Attitudes are formed on the basis of a combination of beliefs toward the emergence and evaluation of outcomes (Ajzen, 1991) and the beliefs arising from a number of values perceived by consumers will shape interest (Kwok *et al.*, 2015). Perceived value is a strong predictor of attitudes, whereas normative attitudes and influences positively affect purchasing interests (Cheah *et al.*, 2015). Attitude is the consumer's evaluation of the brand which is formed by paying attention to the perceived ability to find relevant motivations (Rossiter and Percy, 1998). Thus, attitudes formed from a combination of trust and evaluation results, will affect consumer buying interest.

### 3. Conceptual model development and hypothesis

This research proposes and hypothesizes the role of brands (with the dimensions of quality perception, brand image, integrated marketing communications) in shaping attitudes and influencing college consumer interest. The findings of Paliulis and Labanauskis (2015), indicate that the quality dimension is the most important element of an efficient and effective higher education both with regard to academic and administrative matters. The quality of services for higher education consists of seven criteria: quality of input, curriculum, academic facilities, industry interaction, interaction quality, support facilities, and non-academic processes (Jain *et al.*, 2013).

Pinar *et al.* (2014) state that a strong university brand is based on the brand equity dimension for students and faculty quality. University reputation and emotional environment, brand awareness (core dimension), as well as library services, living facilities, career development, physical facilities (support dimensions) are also important elements for a strong university brand. Service quality improvements have a positive influence on students' attitudes and interests to pursue the education at universities that assume students as customers (Watjatrakul, 2014). Singh and Kumar's findings (2016) reinforce the fact that universities need to emphasize and take into account service quality dimensions. The above findings indicate that attitudes are the most important determinants of interest, where the perception of quality is a factor that positively affects the attitudes and interests of students to study at universities. Therefore it can be hypothesized that:

*H<sub>1</sub> : Perceptions of quality have a positive effect on the attitude of prospective students to study at universities.*

*H<sub>2</sub> : Perceptions of quality have a positive effect on the interest of prospective students to study at universities.*

The results of Duarte *et al.* (2010) on university image shows that the most influencing predictors are the constructs of academic life and employment, while the constructs of communication and programs have the same effect on the image of the university. These findings illustrate that universities should work on all factors not just on one dimension. Tavares and Cardoso (2013) state that prospective students tend to act like rational consumers when deciding to pursue higher education and when choosing their institution, but not when deciding about the course of study. On the other hand Alves and Raposo (2010) state that it is very important to measure and understand the university's image because its influence exceeds student satisfaction and loyalty. Findings by Clemes *et al.* (2013) indicate that service quality has a significant effect on the university's image and the value felt by the students. Therefore, higher education institutions can face increasing competition through image formation. The proposed hypothesis is as follows:

*H<sub>3</sub> : The image of the college brand has a positive effect on the attitude of the prospective students.*

*H<sub>4</sub> : College brand image has a positive effect on the interest of prospective students.*

Students' interest in college depends on how much and how accurate the information is. Prospective students should be given consistent information and desired image. Marketing communication elements and higher education institution activities need to be integrated by using five interrelated marketing communication elements; advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct sales, personal promotion (David and Martina, 2011). Social media, with its unique characteristics such as interactivity and individualization, integration of communication and distribution channels, and proximity and information gathering need to be integrated into marketing communications in the service industry (Valos *et al.*, 2016). The development of communication technology that changes consumer behavior in various sectors including higher education requires the application of integrated marketing communications so that it can be hypothesized as follows:

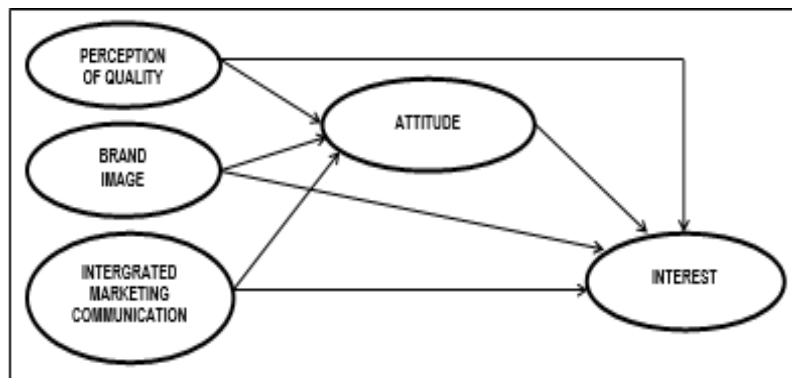
*H<sub>5</sub> : Integrated marketing communications held by universities have a positive effect on the attitude of prospective students.*

*H<sub>6</sub> : Integrated marketing communications held by universities positively influence the interest of prospective students.*

Attitudes are the most important determinants of interest supported by the importance of motivational influences which are positive predictors that significantly contribute to the interest to perform the actual behavior (Weng and Tsai, 2014). Meanwhile, Smith *et al.* (2003) prove that brands significantly influence consumer confidence and interest in buying back. High confidence in the brand and the high value that consumers perceive of the brand leads to a good attitude toward the brand, therefore the consumer's attitude toward a positive brand leads to a much higher interest in buying the brand (Punyatoya, 2015). Consumers tend to have an attitude after an evaluation of the various information that can be obtained. Therefore, consumer attitudes formed from trust and evaluation actions contribute to the interest to make purchases, so it can be hypothesized by:

*H<sub>7</sub> : The attitude of the prospective student positively influences the interest to study at the college.*

**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model of Research



#### 4. Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, construct measurements were based on previous relevant studies. Because previous construct measurements were developed for different purposes, the modified items were adjusted for the purposes of this study. The construct value of quality perception is measured using 5 indicators with 27 statement items developed and adopted from Rasli *et al.* (2011) and Pinar *et al.* (2014); construct brand image is measured with 5 indicators and 18 items statement (Rasli *et al.*, 2011; Setyowati, 2015; Dahari and Abduh, 2011; Iskandar and Setiawan, 2015); integrated marketing communications construct is measured with 6 indicators and 19 statement items (David and Martina, 2011). Furthermore, attitude constructs are measured with 2 indicators and 19 item statements (Sharifi, 2014) while construct interest is measured with 2 indicators and 13 items statement (Sharifi, 2014; Setyowati, 2015).

The five-point Likert scale is used to get responses to the overall statement items in the questionnaire instrument, with point 1 stating strongly disagree or very unimportant and point 5 to answer strongly agree or very important. Each construct is measured from several indicators where each indicator is reflected and measured from a number of questionnaire item statements. Furthermore, a pilot test to complete the questionnaire items to clarify the meaning of the statements was conducted. The survey also includes demographic questions about gender, high school attendance, residence, education and parent employment, family income, and who finances college prospective students.

The population of this study is high school students. Thus, high school students represent the research sampling frame. Data were collected from several high schools in Jakarta, North Jakarta, South Jakarta, East Jakarta, and West Jakarta. High school quality is stratified or categorized based on the assessment of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia by looking at the results of the national examinations of its students. From the results obtained, high schools can be classified as seeded, medium, or ordinary. Sampling using convenience sampling technique is done randomly at each different high school classification. Questionnaires were given to respondents who are in 15 high schools located in all areas of DKI Jakarta, which include 7 public high schools and 8 private schools. The distribution and collection of questionnaires was carried out by a survey team who had been trained first. Questionnaires were filled out by respondents after first receiving an explanation from the survey team regarding the purpose of the study in order to avoid misunderstandings over the meaning of the statements contained in the questionnaire. The survey team collected as many as 432 questionnaires of which 397 questionnaires (or 91.90 percent) could be used.

Out of all the respondents in this study, 78.34 percent wanted to continue studying instate universities and the rest choose to go to private higher education institutions.

This illustrates that there are still more prospective college consumers who prefer to go to state universities. Respondent profile survey results in Table 1.

*Table 1. Questionnaire Participant Profiles*

		<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>			<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	159	40.05	<b>Income</b>	< Rp 3 million	81	20.40
	Female	238	59.95		> Rp 3 – 7 million	182	45.84
<b>Major</b>	IPA (Natural Science)	223	56.17	> Rp 7 – 11 million	68	17.13	
	IPS (Social Science)	174	43.83	> Rp 11 million	55	13.85	
<b>Residence</b>	With parents	345	86.90	<b>School fees</b>	Parents	338	85.14
	With family	43	10.83		Own	2	0.50
	With others	5	1.26		Family	11	2.77
			Others		43	10.83	
<b>Educational</b>		<i>Father</i>		<b>Educational</b>		<i>Mother</i>	
	Senior High/below Diploma	206	51.89		Senior High/below Diploma	243	61.21
	Bachelor Degree	47	11.84		Bachelor Degree	50	12.59
	Postgraduate	124	31.23		Postgraduate	87	21.91
		14	3.53			8	2.02
<b>Occupational</b>	Government employees	31	7.81	<b>Occupational</b>	Government employees	20	5.04
	Private employees	174	43.83		Private employees	85	21.41
	Entrepreneurs	154	38.79		Entrepreneurs	71	17.88
	Others	27	6.80		Others	210	52.90

From the survey results, it was noted that there were more female respondents (59.95 percent) than men. This is consistent with the national statistics whereby female high school girls are more numerous than men. There was a larger amount of respondents who chose the science (Natural Science) major (56.17 percent) than those in the IPS (Social Sciences) department. Respondents mostly reside with their parents (86.90 percent). With reference to the parents' work, the father of 43.83 percent of the respondents was a private employees whilst 38.79 percent were entrepreneurs. Most of the mothers (52.90 percent) were housewives (not working). Parent income of most respondents was between 3 million to 7 million rupiahs monthly (45.84 percent).

The proposed research model was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with LISREL 8.54 software which included analysis such as: (1) measurement model, the significance of latent variables, Confirmatory Factor Analysis - CFA testing, and (2) structural modeling for the purpose of determining the feasibility of the model proposed.



## 5. Analysis and results

The measurement model uses CFA to indicate the contribution of each indicator in explaining its latent variables (Joreskog and Sorborn 1996). The maxima Likelihood (ML) rule is used in SEM to estimate the value of the measurement model coefficients. Table 2 shows the value of the coefficient of the measurement model. Hair et al., (1995) state that the Standart Loading Factor (SLF) or  $\lambda \geq 0.5$  which is very significant. Next, we used Construct Reliability (CR) and Variance Extracted (VE) values to ensure that the whole or a set of indicators can explain its latent variables. The reliability test for a latent variable to assess the consistency of the overall measurement of the indicator with CR value must be not less than 0.7 and the VE value not less than 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

**Table 2.** *Coefficient of Construct*

Constructs/Indicator		SLF	Error	Constructs/Indicator		SLF	Error
Perception of quality	Accreditation	0.64	0.59	Integrated Marketing Communication	Advertising	0.67	0.55
	Service	0.81	0.34		Publicity	0.78	0.39
	Amenities	0.75	0.44		Event	0.80	0.36
	Extra-curricular	0.73	0.47		Interactive marketing	0.74	0.45
	International program	0.71	0.50		Sales promotion	0.90	0.19
Brand image	Cost	0.57	0.68	Personal Sales	0.67	0.55	
	College	0.93	0.14	Attitude	Trust	0.97	0.06
	Study program	0.77	0.41		Evaluation results	0.67	0.55
	Certification of competence	0.77	0.41	Interest	Action	0.86	0.26
	Location	0.56	0.69		Recommendation	0.98	0.04

The result of the measurement model of quality perception construct analysis shows that the five indicators have a coefficient value of Standards Loading Factor (SLF) which is  $\geq 0.5$ , which means all the indicators have a positive effect on quality perception construct. Similarly, for the construction of the brand image, integrated marketing communications, attitudes, and interests, all indicators in each construct have a positive effect because it has a coefficient value of  $SLF \geq 0.5$ . The indicators that have the greatest contribution to construct for the perception of quality are: service with  $SLF = 0.81$ , construct of brand image on college indicator with  $SLF = 0.93$ , integrated marketing communication construct on sales promotion indicator with  $SLF = 0.90$ , attitude construct an indicator of trust with  $SLF = 0.97$ , and the interest construct on recommendation indicator with  $SLF = 0.98$ .

The results of the analysis show that the construct of perception of the quality of the five indicators is able to explain the construct because it has a reliability level (CR)

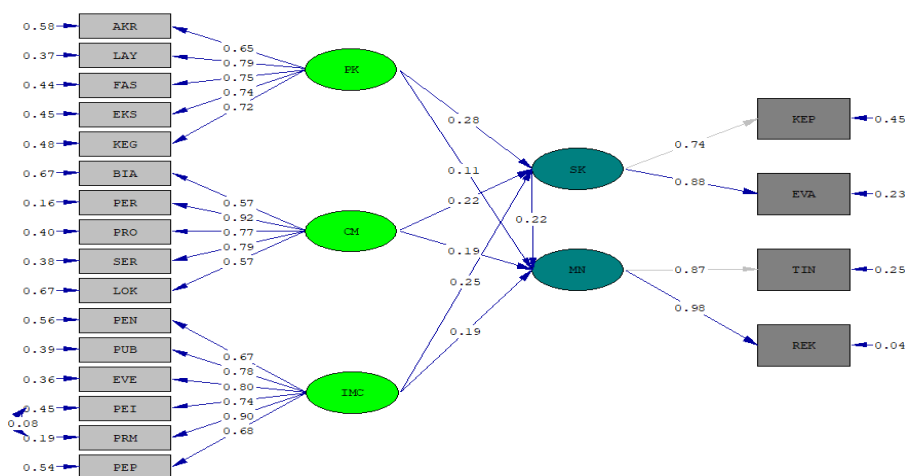
of 0.85 which is greater than the requirement of 0.7 and the validity level (VE) is of 0.53 which is not less than the requirement of 0.5. These requirements can also be met on the brand image constructs with CR = 0.85 and VE = 0.54; Construct marketing communications with CR = 0.89 and VE = 0.58; attitude constructs with CR = 0.82 and VE = 0.60; and interest constructs with CR = 0.92 and VE = 0.85. The structural model is used to test the hypothesis. The validity of Fit is done for the purpose of knowing whether the model used is feasible and appropriate for use in this research. Testing is done by looking at the conformity criteria model or cut-off value (Hooper *et al.*, 2008). Table 3 shows the value of Goodness of Fit Index (GOFI).

**Table 3.** Goodness of Fit Index Match Test

Overall model match size	GOFI	Cut off	Measurement results	Information
Absolute fit measures	df	Positive	159	Good fit
	Chi/df	1 < Chi/df < 2	0.95	Good fit
	RMSEA	< 0.08	0.022	Good fit
	GFI	> 0.90	0.95	Good fit
Incremental fit measures	NFI	> 0.90	0.98	Good fit
	IFI	> 0.90	0.99	Perfect fit
	NNFI	> 0.90	1.00	Good fit
Parsimonious fit measures	AGFI	> 0.90	0.94	Good fit

Visible values of Goodness of Fit meet the requirements of the suitability of a good model so that it can be concluded that the overall model obtained a level of conformity or suitability. The resulting model is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2.** Model of the Coefficient Estimation Results



Furthermore, hypothesis testing is done by using Chi-square test statistic ( $\chi^2$ ) and RMSEA. The hypothesis is accepted if the p-value (test  $\chi^2$ ) is greater than 0.05 or the RMSEA value is less than 0.08. The value of p-value = 0.05656 which is greater than the requirement of 0.05 and RMSEA = 0.022 which means it is less than the required 0.08. This shows that the overall empirical model is acceptable because it meets the required criteria. The significance of the relationship between the latent variables is seen from the value of t in Figure 3.

**Figure 3.** *T - value Structural Model*

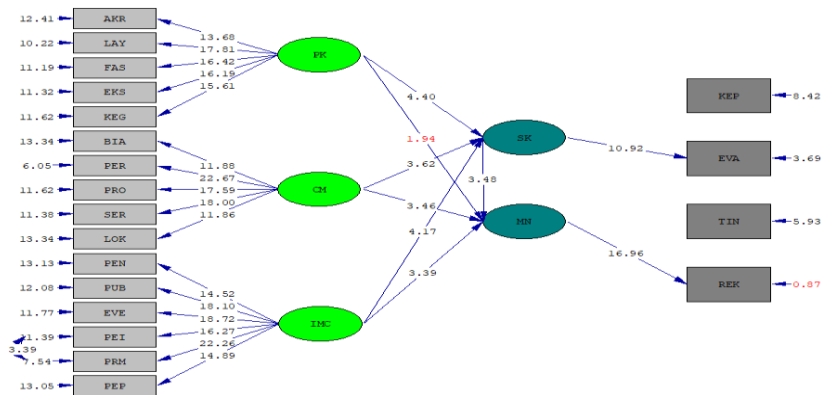


Table 4 shows the model coefficient and t values of each variable relationship in this study.

**Table 4.** *Results of Estimation Structural Model*

Hypotheses	Path from → to	Estimates	t-value	Conclusion
$H_1$	Perception of quality → Attitude	0.28	4.40	Significant
$H_2$	Perception of quality → Interest	0.11	1.94	Insignificant
$H_3$	Brand image → Attitude	0.22	3.62	Significant
$H_4$	Brand image → Interest	0.19	3.46	Significant
$H_5$	Integrated marketing communication → Attitude	0.25	4.17	Significant
$H_6$	Integrated marketing communication → Interest	0.19	3.39	Significant
$H_7$	Attitude → Interest	0.22	3.48	Significant

This research analyzes hypothesis about the influence of brand equity dimension that is the perception of quality, brand image, integrated marketing communication to consumer's attitude and buying interest in a college context. The results of hypothesis testing found a positive and significant influence on the perception of quality, brand image, as well as integrated marketing communications to the attitude of students. Similarly, the perception of quality, brand image, and integrated marketing communication affects the interest however the only significant factors

are the brand image and marketing communication. The relationship between the influence of perception of quality to interest was positive but not significant. There is a positive and significant influence of the attitude of the prospective student on his interest in the selection of universities.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

This research developed a model to explain the role of the brand dimension, that is the perception of quality, brand image and integrated marketing communication, to consumer's attitude and buying interest in the context of universities in Indonesia. The following discussion describes the results of hypothesis analysis that have been tested. The results of the study found that the perception of quality and brand image affect the attitude of high school students as prospective college consumers significantly. These results are in line with the findings of Mourad *et al.* (2011) about college brand equity for image dimensions, service attributes, provider attributes that are significantly more important than awareness dimensions. This supports the finding that brand equity affects consumer buying interest (Akhtar *et al.*, 2016). The accreditation indicator influences the selection of universities in Indonesia, supporting Manzoor Dar's (2015) findings of the college rankings that have more importance compared to other educational brand items. This supports the statement that reputation and facilities are factors that influence students in choosing courses (Mashithoh *et al.*, 2014). The result of this research shows that, quality perception has a positive but not significant influence or a small contribution to buying interest. Meanwhile, Wang and Li's (2012) discovery of different types of services expresses the significance of quality perception as a factor of brand equity in influencing consumer buying interest.

Meanwhile, the brand image influences the interest of prospective college students significantly. This is consistent with the findings of Lin *et al.*, (2007), where stronger brand image makes consumer buying interest stronger. For the dimension of integrated marketing communications, there is a partially significant effect on the attitude and interest of prospective students to universities. The findings of this study support Özsomer and Altaras (2008) in that brand associations supported by effective communication can help marketers to create favorable attitudes and influence buying interest. From the result of this research, one can see that attitude has a significant effect on interest of prospective students towards college, supporting the findings of Chung *et al.* (2012) and Khan *et al.* (2015), and are also in line with the statement of Ajzen (1991) that the interest to perform various types of behavior can be predicted with a high-attitude. Attitudes are formed from trust and evaluation and Delafrooz *et al.* (2011) argue that beliefs and attitudes are said to have a stronger direct influence on interest.

This paper presents the results of an analysis of the role of brands in influencing consumer interest for higher education contexts. The empirical findings of this study indicate that brand dimension which is the perception of quality, brand image, and

integrated marketing communications have the positive and significant influence on consumer attitude of the university. The result of the analysis also shows that brand image and integrated marketing communications have the positive and significant influence in the interest toward university while the dimension of perception of quality has a positive but not significant effect. The results of this study provide partial support for the proposed model. This is supported by Keller (2008) which states that the attributes and benefits of the brand will determine the consumer's positive attitude. It also supports the findings by Chung *et al.* (2012) in which attitudes are stated to have a significant influence on purchasing interest. The results of the analysis can illustrate that the college brand plays a role in consumer selection of the services it offers as proposed by Severt (2007) that a brand with its reputation is the most important thing in the selection of services.

## 7. Implications and future research

The results of this study provide important implications for increasing the literature on brand and consumer behavior and for the service industry, especially for higher education services. The brand dimension for universities developed in this study provides an overview and understanding of practitioners in identifying brand dimensions that affect attitudes and subsequently affect the interests of higher education consumers. Attempts to determine the right brand dimension will increase consumer interest in college. It is an opportunity for universities to remain attractive in these competitive conditions, especially in higher education markets that have become increasingly tight. As the findings of Bydanova *et al.* (2015) suggest, market changes create new challenges that make higher education institutions think of innovative marketing strategies and driven competition encouraging universities to focus on the introduction and development of clear brands (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). In the increasingly competitive services of higher education, strong brands will contribute to influence the interest of prospective students.

This study has limitations. The study sample did not represent the entire population, covering only senior high school students as college consumers in one province. Each province has a demographic profile with unequal conditions. Therefore, this research is conducted with focus and testing only in the context of brand dimension for quality perception, brand image, integrated marketing communication related to consumer attitudes and interest toward university degree program in Indonesia as one developing country. Despite these limitations, the results of this study provide an empirical framework as a reference for further research.

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