

# Brand Equity of a Private Catholic College in Negros Island, Philippines

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**Abstract:** - One of the best treasures a person can possess is education; it prepares him for his future workplace and the life he wants someday (Naparan & Balimbingan, 2020). This paper investigated the brand equity of a Private Catholic College in Negros Occidental, Philippines, focusing on brand equity in brand loyalty, brand association, brand awareness, and perceived quality. Aaker's brand equity model was utilized as the theoretical basis of this study. The researcher used the quantitative descriptive and comparative research design. The study's respondents are all college students enrolled in a Private Catholic College for the second semester of 2021-2022. Results found that older students, females, and students of Department C have higher perceptions of brand equity towards the private catholic college; that when brand equity dimensions are compared to age, there is evidence that shows a significant difference, especially in the dimensions of brand loyalty, brand association, and brand awareness. In the brand loyalty dimension, it was found that there are substantial differences in students' responses regarding their sex. When students are grouped and compared with the program, it was found that there are significant differences in brand equity. The researcher concluded that the brand equity of a Private Catholic College in Negros Island, Philippines is essential for students enrolled in 2021-2022, especially in brand loyalty, brand association, and brand awareness.

**Key Words—** *Private Catholic College, Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Brand Association, Brand Awareness, and Perceived Quality.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Brand equity refers to all properties and belongings connected to the name, symbol, or brand logo that either enhance or undermine the product or service (Aaker, 1991; El Nagggar & Bendary, 2019). Brand equity is one of the important concepts in brand management because substantial brand equity will make the brand chosen by its prospective customers (Prabowo & Farida, 2015). Understanding consumers' associations with brands is at brand management's core (Dzyabura & Peres, 2021). Measuring brand equity gives educational institutions the necessary strategic analysis before critical branding decisions (Vu et al., 2019).

With increased competition, schools have realized that having the strongest brands is critical to their marketability (Charles & Gherman, 2015).

According to Aaker (1991), brand loyalty, association, awareness, and perceived quality are essential in creating brand equity. Literature has shown that brand loyalty is a vital measurement aspect of brand equity (Lu et al., 2020). Brand loyalty is an important asset, as it contributes to the continuity of the customer lifecycle and leads to positive business advocacy (Erdoğmuş & Ergun, 2016; Ledikwe, 2020). Brand associations are criteria used by customers to assess a product or service (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010; Lee et al., 2021). It is cardinal to customers' willingness to pay (Phong et al., 2020). Brand awareness is an essential dimension of brand equity and is usually defined as the capability of individuals to recognize and recall a brand given a product category (Gong et al., 2020; Keller, 1993). It can help consumers identify the brand in the different types of products and affect their intent or decision (Hoang et al., 2020; Percy & Rossiter, 1992). Customers usually judge quality by comparing the expected and perceived quality (Chen, 2008; Suttikun & Meeprom, 2021). The study of perceived quality is essential for effective management and

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## II. FRAMEWORK

decision-making within higher education institutions (Istijanto, 2021).

One of the best treasures a person can possess is education; it prepares him for his future workplace and the life he wants someday (Naparar & Balimbingan, 2020). In the Philippines, Catholic schools represent a significant Philippine Roman Catholic Church ministry, consisting of more than 1525 member schools in 2017 (Vicente & Cordero, 2021). Education forms a very considerable activity within the Roman Catholic Church (Makosa, 2020). However, catholic institutions nowadays are confronted with issues on the deterioration of values, migration of qualified teachers to public schools, and decline in enrolment, posing threats to the Catholic identity and mission, operational sustainability, and quality of teaching and learning (Banusing & Bual, 2020; Bual & Madrigal, 2018).

Despite the wealth of research in marketing, such as brand equity, the researcher found it necessary to conduct this study since the Private Catholic College is at a crossroads due to tight competition among private and government academic institutions. This study may help the Private Catholic College, the management, and administrators improve their marketing strategies related to variables indicated in this study.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the brand equity of a Private Catholic College in Negros Island, Philippines.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

- What is the extent of brand equity of a Private Catholic College in terms of brand loyalty, brand association, brand awareness, and perceived quality when grouped and compared according to sex and department?
- Is there a significant difference in the extent of brand equity of a Private Catholic College in terms of brand loyalty, brand association, brand awareness, and perceived quality when compared according to sex and department?

### 1.2 Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the extent of brand equity of a Private Catholic College in terms of brand loyalty, brand association, brand awareness, and perceived quality when grouped and compared according to sex and department.

This study embraces the theory of the Brand Equity Model of Aaker. The Aaker Model (1991) is one of the generally accepted theories in this regard which has been widely used in many articles (Shamami & Kheiry, 2019). In his Brand Equity model, David A. Aaker (1991) identifies brand equity components such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations.

Brand loyalty for a century has been the core of marketing, yet this research topic is still modern and up-to-date (Gajanova et al., 2019). Brand loyalty is a MUST ingredient for businesses to ensure sustainability (Pribadi et al., 2019). It includes behavioral and attitudinal loyalty that pertains to the intention of purchasing and repurchasing, willingness to pay at any given price, refusal to change to other brands, and recommendation of the brand to others (Le, 2020; Oliver, 1999).

Brand associations are the informational nodes in consumers' memory that contain the brand's meaning (Erjansola et al., 2021). The benefits, attitudes, and attributes comprise a brand association (Dada, 2021; Severi et al., 2014). Associations help in decision-making and can represent the reason for buying or selecting a specific brand (Aaker, 1991; Kapferer, 2008; Kovács, 2019). Associations are regarded as one of the essential assets of brands (Kapferer, 2008; Keller & Swaminathan, 2020).

Brand awareness indicates clients' recognition, acceptance, and recall of a brand (Bilgin, 2018; Percy & Rossiter, 1992; Perreault Jr. & McCarthy, 2002). Brand awareness plays an essential role in most aspects of marketing (Zhang, 2020) but is often a neglected aspect of brand equity (Romaniuk et al., 2017). One main factor is brand awareness in creating brand-added value, a critical factor affecting consumers' knowledge level about the brand (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2017; Ekhveh & Darvishi, 2015).

Perceived quality is the customer's perception of a product or service's overall quality or superiority concerning its intended purpose relative to alternatives (Aaker, 1991; Stylidis et al., 2020). It is conceptualized as the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority (Calvo-Porrá & Lévy-Mangin, 2017; Zeithaml, 1988). Stylidis et al. (2020) stated in their study that the perceived quality domain is where the product meaning, form, sensorial properties, and execution intersect with human experience.

Perceived quality is a game-changer in consumers' decision-making processes and is one key predictor of a product and company's success (Braun et al., 2020).

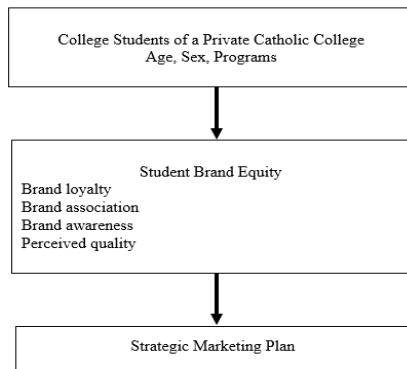


Fig.1. Schematic Diagram of the Study

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Research Design

This research utilized the quantitative-descriptive and comparative research design. The study's respondents were all students enrolled in a Private Catholic College for the Second Semester of the Academic Year 2021-2022. The sample size was 319 students. There were 109 male respondents and 210 female respondents. As per the department, 21 respondents were from Department A, 22 were from Department B, 144 were from Department C, and 132 were from Department D. The researcher utilized stratified sampling to ensure that everyone in the population was allowed to be the study's respondents.

#### 3.2 Research Instrument

An adapted-modified instrument was used to gather the needed data. The questionnaire has two parts; the first establishes the respondents' demographic data. The second part is the question proper about the dimension of brand equity. There are nineteen (19) items under brand equity, six (6) under brand loyalty, four (4) from the brand association, three (3) for brand awareness, three (3) for perceived quality, and three (3) for overall brand perception. The researcher utilized the Likert-type Scale wherein answers to the question were categorized into four (4) levels: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Agree and 4 - Strongly Agree.

#### 3.3 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

This study subjected the questionnaire to content validations using the Content Validity Index based on Lawshe Validity

Model. Five (5) experts evaluated the survey questionnaire. The result of the CVI (content validity Index) was 1.00, and it was valid. For reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was utilized. The Cronbach alpha result was .951, within the reliability index of 0.7 to 1; the research instrument is highly reliable and ensures stable and consistent results.

#### 3.4 Data Gathering Procedure

A request letter was sent to the School President asking permission to conduct the study. After approval was granted, the researcher created a google form format for the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to students through their school accounts. The researcher provided directions in the google form as to what the respondents would answer. The questionnaires were retrieved as soon as the respondents submitted them.

#### 3.5 Ethical Consideration

The researcher informed the respondents that they were part of the study and explained to them the purpose of the study. The researcher guaranteed that there was no violation of women's rights in the conduct of this study. The researcher considered the possible risks and benefits to the respondents, the researcher, and the College. The respondents were assured that their identities would be kept confidential. The respondents' information was only used within the boundaries set by the study. In this study, the researcher ensured that choosing the respondents was fair and unbiased. Appropriate procedures for data protection were observed, and the researcher took extra measures and precautions to protect data from potential loss.

#### 3.6 Statistical Tool

The researcher computed the mean and standard deviation to determine the extent of brand equity of a Private Catholic College in terms of brand loyalty, brand association, brand awareness, and perceived quality. In determining the significant difference in the level of students' brand equity in terms of brand loyalty, brand association, brand awareness, and perceived quality when taken as a whole and grouped according to the demographics of respondents, the t-Test was used to analyze the significant difference when compared to respondents' sex and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in comparing brand equity dimension in terms of departments.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Through the survey conducted, the researcher have gathered the results as follows;

#### *4.1 The extent of Brand Equity, when Taken as a Whole (n=319)*

Results show that, when taken as a whole, perceived quality placed the highest with a mean score of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 0.546, interpreted as a Very High Extent and followed by brand association with a mean of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 0.548. Brand loyalty and brand awareness got a similar mean of 3.11 with 0.515 and 0.551 standard deviations, the lowest among brand equity dimensions.

The data suggest that students regard the Private Catholic College as high quality. They further imply that students prefer the Private Catholic College because of its quality compared to other higher education institutions on the island.

The study by Momunalieva et al. (2020) revealed that students perceive the quality of higher education as relatively satisfactory. Quality is a wide-ranging and active concept conceived differently by different people (Simon, 2019). The quality of education must be viewed from the perspective of customers of educational services, which are the students (Makarova et al., 2021).

#### *4.2 The extent of Brand Equity According to Sex.*

The results, in terms of sex, indicate that female respondents placed higher in all dimensions of brand equity, with a 3.16 mean score and a 0.498 standard deviation for brand loyalty, a 3.19 mean score, and a 0.514 standard deviation for brand association, and 3.12 mean score with a 0.532 standard deviation for brand awareness, all interpreted as High. The 3.30 mean score and 0.534 standard deviations for perceived quality are Very High.

The data imply that females have higher brand equity than their male counterparts. There is a need for the Private Catholic College to consider the responses of male students to improve their perception of brand equity.

The results support the study of Çera et al. (2018) that shows differences in male and female students' views. The demographic variable of sex influences the importance of the brand equity dimension (Girard & Pinar, 2020).

#### *4.3 Extent of Brand Equity According to Departments.*

Regarding brand loyalty, Department A got a mean of 3.20 and a standard deviation of 0.502, and Department B got a mean of 2.94 and a standard deviation of 0.463. Moreover, Department

C got a mean of 3.29 and a standard deviation of 0.462, while Department D got a mean of 2.94 and 0.515.

For brand association, Department A got a mean of 3.05 and a standard deviation of 0.595. Department B got a mean of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 0.420, while Department C got a mean of 3.34 and a standard deviation of 0.484. On the other hand, Department D got a mean of 3.01 and 0.577.

Regarding brand awareness, Department A got a mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 0.520, while Department B got a mean of 3.09 and a standard deviation of 0.414. Department C got a mean of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 0.499, and Department D got a mean of 2.97 and a standard deviation of 0.598.

On the perceived quality dimension, Department A got a mean of 3.22 and a standard deviation of 0.370. Department B got a mean of 3.20 and a standard deviation of 0.336. Department C got a mean of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 0.496, and Department D got a mean of 3.16 and a standard deviation of 0.620.

It can be established from the results that Department C generated a higher response in all dimensions, where all were interpreted to a Very High Extent. At the same time, the three programs rated High Extent in all dimensions.

Data imply that the students of Department C have an outstanding perception of brand equity compared to students of other programs. There is a need for the Private Catholic College to improve the perception of students enrolled in other programs, as brand equity is also manifested in how students are satisfied and loyal to their particular program.

The results establish a significant association between customer satisfaction and brand equity (Tanveer & Lodhi, 2016). Retamosa et al. (2020) cited students mentioning different satisfaction levels and loyalty depending on their degree course. Borishade et al. (2021) suggested that delivering quality services should be targeted toward satisfying the student, which will help build their loyalty to the institution.

#### *4.4 Comparative Analysis in the Extent of Brand Equity of a Private Catholic College in terms of Brand Loyalty, Brand Association, Brand Awareness, and Perceived Quality According to Sex.*

Data yielded similar results for brand association, brand awareness, and perceived quality, which quantified that there is no significant difference in the extent of brand equity of a Private Catholic College in terms of sex. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. However, brand loyalty generated a p-value of 0.014, indicating a significant difference, thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

A notable inference in the brand loyalty dimension is that the result suggests that there are substantial differences in the responses of students in terms of their sex. In contrast, data infer nothing in brand association, awareness, and perceived quality. The data suggest that male and female students have significant differences in the extent of brand loyalty. The result implies that there is a need for the institution to look at this dimension. It connotes that in terms of brand loyalty, there are loyal students and those who are not loyal. Student loyalty affects the students' behavior toward the Private Catholic College, which has a ripple effect on the institution regarding its marketability.

The study by Dimitrova and Ilieva (2021) stated that the loyalty shown by the students should also be considered from behavioral and attitudinal perspectives because they are the actual users of the educational product produced by the institution. Higher educational institutions must try their best to meet students' expectations to satisfy them, which will go a long way in promoting loyalty (Synodinos & Sharp, 2019).

#### *4.5 Comparative Analysis in the Extent of Brand Equity of a Private Catholic College in terms of Brand Loyalty, Brand Association, Brand Awareness, and Perceived Quality According to Department.*

In table 5, the results show that when departments compare all the dimensions of brand equity, a p-value of 3.779 for brand loyalty and a p-value of 8.086 for brand association indicate no significant difference. Thus, the researcher concludes to reject the null hypothesis. Brand awareness yields a p-value of 0.001, while perceived quality has a p-value of 0.002, indicating a significant difference at a 95% significance level. Therefore, the study can conclude that there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

The result suggests that in terms of brand loyalty and association, the researcher found nothing, that everything is possible for both variables. Data further suggests a statistically significant difference between considerations; not all responses per department are similar. Evidence shows a statistically significant difference between brand association and perceived

quality dimensions. It implies that students' perception and responses to brand awareness and perceived quality varies when compared per department.

According to Azzari & Pelissari (2020), knowing a brand is not enough to generate consumers' purchase intent; brand awareness is the first step in building brand value for consumers. The study by Gusti Noorlitaria et al. (2020) emphasized that perceived quality positively and significantly affects brand and purchase intention.

## **V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

### *5.1 Findings*

It was found that when the brand loyalty dimension was compared according to sex, there were substantial differences in students' responses, while none were in other dimensions. When students were grouped and compared according to departments, it was found that there were significant differences in the brand association and the perceived quality dimensions and nothing in the brand loyalty and brand awareness dimensions.

### *5.2 Conclusion*

From the results, the researcher concludes that the brand equity of a Private Catholic College in Negros Island, Philippines is essential for students enrolled in Academic Year 2021-2022, specifically in brand loyalty, brand association, and brand awareness. The result means that the students prefer to study in this Private Catholic College because of its brand name or distinctiveness.

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