Counting Brand Equity
of Islamic Higher Education In Indonesia:
A Higher School And Islamic School Students' Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to explore brand equity in Islamic higher education (IHE) in Indonesia. This research is field research with a descriptive quantitative approach. Brand equity is measured using Customer-Based Brand Equity - Islamic Higher Education (CBE-IHE): brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. CBE-IHE is the average score of each brand equity asset from 0 to 4. Data were collected by questionnaire and distributed to 1100 students of high school (HS) and Islamic high school (IHS) and 1373 Lecturers/staff/ students of State Islamic University Antasari Banjarmasin. The finding is that CBE-IHE's brand equity index is 2. 15 out of the highest index 4. Brand Awareness of IHE is a major problem of the IHE brand. This study shows that IHE is not at the top of the minds of HS and HIS students. IHE should design a brand communication strategy to increase IHE brand awareness.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty

A. INTRODUCTION

Based on the organizational structure, higher education in Indonesia can generally be grouped into two major groups: HE under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MoECRT), known as General Higher Education (HE), and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), also known as Islamic higher education institutions (IHE). There are 59 IHEs in Indonesia with a state status, consisting of 27 state Islamic universities, 27 state Islamic institutes, and 5 state Islamic colleges, and 874 IHEs with a private status. Thus, the total number of IHEs in Indonesia is 933 IHEs, or 20.61% of the 4528 higher education institutions in Indonesia. The market share of IHEs is 2.15% of the total 9,553,157 students in Indonesia. In IHEs, the number of study programs is limited, making the ratio of study programs to students relatively larger. The competition between IHEs and HEs can be seen from the number of students and study programs in the sample in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Comparison of the Number of Study Programs and Students

No	Universitas	Mhs	Prodi	%
1	Universitas Lambung Mangkurat Banjarmasin	36953	114	
2	Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari Banjarmasin	12727	36	0.3444
3	Universitas Mataram	44368	74	
4	Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram	15257	35	0.3438
5	Universitas Indonesia Jakarta	54457	283	
6	Universitas Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta	71793	82	+0.242
7	Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta	56372	304	
8	Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta	21228	62	0.38
9	Universitas Brawijaya Malang	78951	183	
10	Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang	21660	49	0.27
11	Universitas Airlangga	43695	190	
12	Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya	24330	63	0.557
13	Universitas Hasanuddin Makassar	31922	220	
14	Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar	23906	70	0.75
15	Universitas Riau	35717	122	
16	Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau	32205	57	0.90
17	Universitas Sriwijaya Palembang	39873	120	
18	Univeritas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang	22613	48	0.4
19	Univeritas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara	50454	169	
20	Univeritas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara	33814	62	0.67
21	Universitas Syiah Kuala Banda Aceh	38990	143	
22	Universitas Islam Negeri Ar Raniry Banda Aceh	24303	55	0.623

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The data shows the competition between Islamic higher education institutions (IHE) and general higher education (HE) in Indonesia after the change from state Islamic institutes to state Islamic universities. Despite having the same authority in implementing general

sciences, the number of departments in IHE is less compared to HE. This indicates that the product offerings in IHE are limited.

The role of brand management is increasingly important so universities must build a sustainable branding strategy (Pinar et al., 2011). The number of new students, reduced retention, financial concerns, and competition are strong reasons for developing marketing in higher education institutions (Khattak et al., 2015; Koku, 1997; Williams & Omar, 2014). The success in competition is determined by the university's competitive advantage related to differentiation and low cost (Porter, 1980, 1985). These two factors are reflected in the brand developed by the university. A brand can be defined as a logo, name, design, symbol, or combination of all that is identic with the product and distinguishes it from the competition (Maurya & Mishra, 2012). Brand plays a major role in marketing. Awareness of the public towards a brand is the first step in choosing a product (Ročkutė et al., 2018). Therefore, building a strong brand is a crucial component of marketing strategy (Watkins & Gonzenbach, 2013). In the context of higher education institutions, Chen (2008) emphasized that the brand has a significant impact on choosing a university (Vukasovič, 2015, p. 87). Brand plays a vital role in building the perception of potential students (Rutter et al., 2017).

In higher education, including Islamic higher education (IHE), brand equity potentially impacts the prospective students, which are high school (HS) and Islamic high school (HIS) graduates. A strong brand will significantly affect the prospective students to select a university. Tina Vukasovič (2015) states that the implication of creating and managing strong universities has an important role in the higher education market (Vukasovič, 2015). Prospective students tend to choose universities with strong brand equity over those with weak brand equity. university's brand equity has an impact on attracting the best prospective students to register as university students (A. Zamani et al., 2018).

Even though it has the same authority as a public university, Islamic university still considers the competition to be limited to the market for Islamic studies. Brand strength is important to attract the best talent so that IHE graduates will have competitiveness. IHEs feel the number of IHE enrollment is still considered to meet expectations because compared with Islamic colleges and institutes, not with general universities as competitors. But, the best prospective students tend not to choose IHE because of their reputation and prestige. Further impact, IHE will not have reputable students who can support the university's reputation. This competition requires IHE to build and manage brands to attract the best HS and IHS graduates. However, IHE is unaware of the level of university brand equity, so there is no empirical evidence as a basis for designing a marketing strategy.

The empirical and theoretical studies about education marketing, particularly marketing for Islamic education, is a new and growing trend. Sholikah et al., (2021) found that the positioning, differentiation, and brand of IHE are inseparable from religiosity. Internationalization is a key element in building the brand of IHE in the Middle Eastern context (Mourad & El Karanshawy, 2013). The service provided by IHE is intended for the Muslim community (Momen et al., 2014). Studies on IHE's brand have generally explored IHE's strengths and uniqueness in Islamic studies and there is a lack of empirical evidence to support these claims. Our review of the marketing literature suggests that studies on IHE's brand equity are limited and there are no studies that have audited IHE's brand equity from the perspective of students as a basis for marketing strategy

Brand equity, especially public services, must depart from customer-based, not financial-based (Bohrer, 2007). Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) of universities, hospitals, and government institutions (non-profit) has to be based on the customer's brand equity. Customer Brand Equity illustrates the customer's reactions to a brand (Kotler & Keller, 2012), whereas the company's brand equity tends to be measured by the company's profit. In other words, the company's high profit reflects the company's strong brand equity. Aaker (1991) states that brand equity is a set of brand assets that enhance value to the customers (Bohrer, 2007). He further mentions that these assets are brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand perceived quality, and brand association. Clarke (2009) and Laczniak, (2004) apply three brand assets to measure Jesuit Higher Education's brand equity: brand awareness, brand loyalty, and perceived quality.

The marketing strategy for the university should be developed based on a brand audit. The brand audit essentially aims to evaluate the level of alignment between the customer's (student) image of the IHE brand and the goals of the IHE brand (Williams & Omar, 2014). A brand audit, including evaluating the level of brand equity, is not a concern for universities, especially public universities, as they feel financially they have received government support. Thus, this article explores the brand equity level from the customer's perspective built on four assets with some adjustments: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (Baalbaki, 2012). The purpose of this research is to determine the level of IHE brand equity, which can help IHE understand the weaknesses of the IHE brand. As mentioned by Darmalaksana, (2017) research on IHE should be meaningful research, this article will propose a marketing strategy for Islamic higher education.

B.   LITERATURE *REVIEW*

1.   *Brand*

The concept of brand and brand equity has been widely adopted by marketing education services. Chen (2008) as quoted by Chen asserts that the brand is a significant influence on the selection of a university. By creating and managing strong universities, brands can have an important role to play in the HE market (Vukasovič, 2015). It represents that brand affects the decision of IHS and SHS graduates to select a university.

Signs and symbols are fundamental ingredients of a brand (Bastos & Levy, 2012). The term branding can be interpreted as a way to distinguish a product from other products.(Kotler & Keller, 2012) Higher education brands, according to Kotler and Keller, could be in the form of symbols or other things that represent the differences with other universities (Kotler & Keller, 2012). In service, such as education service, the name is the brand of service (Ročkutė et al., 2018). The name and abbreviation of the university are taken into consideration when creating the university's brand, which is a crucial component in advertising (Shahnaz & Qadir, 2020)

This difference in service products becomes significant in competition between universities. It is related to human tendencies to be different from the others. The study has shown that a person tends to try to be diverse from others. A path to be different is to use a unique product that is different from those used by others. By consuming the unique product, someone would feel special compared to others (Puzakova & Aggarwal, 2018). The difference in the context of higher education brands is more to performance or types of education services that are not provided by other higher education. Performance and education service products are differentiators from other universities.

2. *Brand Equity*

Brand equity is essential in developing universities, especially in higher education market competition. Brand equity is very important for universities to increase student retention, maintain brand image, enhance financial resources, face competition, or increase enrollment (Waqas, 2022).

Feldwick (1996) defines brand equity in three concepts:
a. the total value of a brand that is separated from the asset when the product is sold. This concept is also referred to as brand value;
b. a strength measurement of consumers' attachment to a brand also referred to as brand loyalty or brand strength;

c. a description of association and consumer confidence in the brand/brand image (Feldwick, 1996).

The elements of brand equity can be grouped into two categories, core and supplementary categories. The core categories are perceived quality, emotional environment, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and knowledge assessment. Supplementary categories yaitu library services, dining services, career development, and physical facilities(Khoshtaria et al., 2020). An expert that is relatively popular and widely known in the field of marketing and often referred to in brand equity studies is Aaker D. According to Aaker (1991), brand equity is a set of brand assets such as name awareness, loyal customers, perceived quality, and association which is associated with the brand and add value to the product or service offered (Vukasovič, 2015).

Brand awareness reflects the power of customer or prospective customer memory about a brand. Hoefler and Keller (2003) assert that brand awareness is about how a customer is "knowing" or "not knowing" about a brand (Bohrer, 2007). Brand awareness is the goal of marketing communication (Macdonald & Sharp, 2003). Aaker (1991) states that brand awareness is the ability of prospective customers to name a brand when a category of products is mentioned. It could be measured using brand recall and recognition (Baalbaki, 2012, p. 20). Brand awareness indicates the level of customer proximity to the brand, product, or service (Shamsudin et al., 2022). Brand equity relates to perceptions of service quality (D. & Prasad, 2021). In this article, brand awareness refers to the university that is first remembered when asked participants (Hakala et al., 2012). Brand awareness can be seen from whether a prospective customer "knows" or "doesn't know" about an IHE. Apart from verbal communication, unlimited communication media, social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter can be very useful to reach prospective customers. The most widely used and most important platform for brand communication in the business world is Facebook. (Voorveld, 2019) In addition to providing verbal information, lecturers and alumni are also encouraged to actively communicate IHE through social media, especially Facebook. Social media plays an important role in increasing the brand value of the university(Nguyen et al., 2021).

The second asset or element of brand equity is brand association which is a positive or negative link toward any brand based on consumers' memories. Aaker explains that brand association is the meaning and anything that is related to the brand that can be memorized by the customers(Aaker, 2009). Keller argues that brand association influencing brand equity must be unique, strong, and favorable (Keller, 1993). If it is adopted to explain the IHE brand

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association, in our opinion, it illustrates the prospect's perceptions or views about a certain memory related to the IHE or vice versa. For example, if an IHE is mentioned to an IHS graduate, the graduate will immediately recall the dormitory for new students or the affordable tuition fee for his parents' condition.

In this study, we argue that the perception of the price (low or high) of education services is a brand association. This is different from Bohrer's statement (2007) that considers price as a part of perceived quality. In his study of hospital brand equity, he includes the price as an indicator of perceived quality (Bohrer, 2007). However, we tend to argue that brand association related to pricing can affect perceived quality, not as an indicator of quality. High prices can be used as an indicator of high quality when information about products is still lacking, but when information about products is very much obtained by customers, pricing cannot be used as an indicator of quality (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Perceived brand quality is the assumption of customers about IHE associated with the expectation of their study in the future. These assumptions, perceptions, or opinions can be related to the quality of lectures, available study programs, and job opportunities after completing the study. That expectation is reflected in Lazniak (2004) who argues that perceived brand quality is a consumer perception related to the extent of the unique characteristics of academic quality, alumni quality, and other things according to students, lecturers, alumni, or future customers(Laczniak, 2004). Zeithaml (1988), in brief, mentions that perceived quality is the customer's judgment of the product in general whether it is eminent or superior(Baalbaki, 2012). This will convince potential customers to buy products or services. Tiga elemen tersebut Brand awareness, brand image (brand association), and perceived brand quality have an impact on the intention of students to enroll in a university (Shamsudin et al., 2022).

Brand loyalty in the context of higher education, in this case, IHE, cannot be compared to other goods or services. Brand loyalty could not be interpreted as a repeat purchasan because college service users only buy once when they apply as new students. In perspective, customer-based IHE brand equity, and brand loyalty are reflected in positive information about IHE that customers (students, lecturers, education staff, and alumni) deliver to others. Higher brand loyalty emphasizes promotion through positive information by customers, not by repeated purchases (Vukasovič, 2015). Brand loyalty muncul karena kepuasan mahasiswa terhadap layanan di IHE(Phineas Mbango & Kate Ngobeni, 2022).

Although empirically, brand equity is very important in attracting prospective students, research on brand equity in the context of IHE marketing is still very rare. Writings related

to branding focus more on the strengths of Islamic studies in IHEs (Abdullah, 2017; Azra, 2015). The strengths referred to are from the perspective of experts or scholars who want to delve deeper into Islamic studies. Meanwhile, the brand equity of IHEs according to the main market, namely IHE and HS students, has never been studied.

3. *Conceptual Framework*

This study proposed a conceptual framework for accounting brand equity in Islamic higher education as shown in figure 1. The level of brand equity, we call the Customer Based Brand Equity Index (CBEI-IHE).
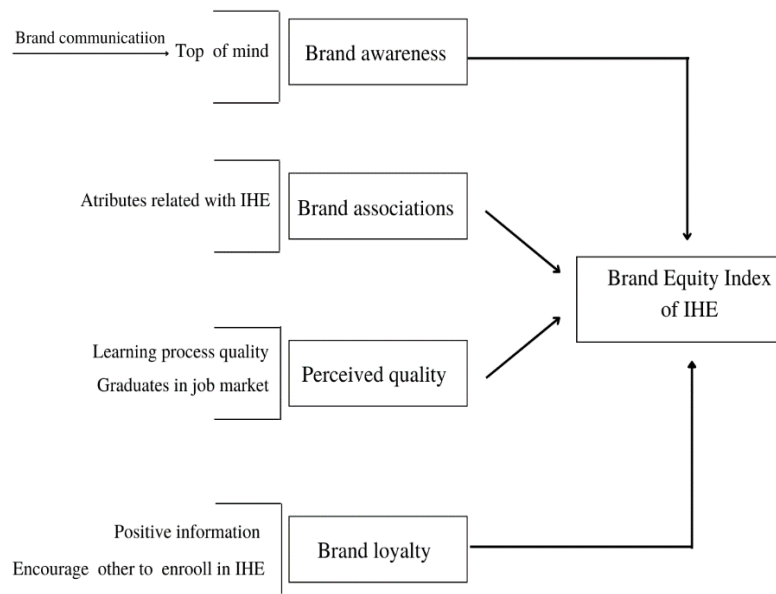

Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework of Islamic Higher Education Brand Equity Index

C. METHOD

This research is field research with a descriptive quantitative approach. Descriptive research is intended to delineate the current status or condition of a population in relation to a specific set of variables (Borland Jr., 2001). The descriptive quantitative approach gathers accurate numerical information from research subjects (Kte'pi, 2017). Simply, the descriptive quantitative approach can compare mean data (Armstrong, 1999).

The data is collected through a survey of 1100 high school (HS) and Islamic high school (IHS) students in South Kalimantan. The sample chosen is based on Slovin's criteria. The survey aims to measure the level of brand awareness, brand association, and perceived quality. To measure brand loyalty, the survey is distributed to 278 lecturers, 97 staff, and 998 students of UIN Antasari. The questionnaire used has been validated through trials on 30 different respondents. Then, the data is analyzed using Excel 2011 for Mac version 14.3.8.

IHE Customer-Based Brand Equity Index (CBEI-IHE) is designed based on four brand equity assets of Islamic Higher Education (IHE): brand awareness (BAw), brand association (BA),

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perceived quality (PQ), and brand loyalty (BL). The four assets are further elaborated on valuation items which theoretically are elements of each asset.

The questionnaire consists of the participant's identity and questions about the participant's perception of brand equity assets. The questions on the questionnaire are in two forms, an open-ended question to measure BA which allows participants to freely answer the first university they remember, and closed-ended questions to measure BA, PQ, and BL. Questions with codes BL1, BL2, and BL3 are asked of students of UIN, while codes BL1, BL2, and BL3a are asked of lecturers and education staff of UIN. Question and code as shown in Table 2

Table 2. Questionnaire

Code	Question item	Theoretical Basis
BAw1	Which university do you remember first?	Brand awareness is the university that is first remembered when asked to participants (Hakala et al., 2012).
BAw2	Which Islamic religious university did you remember first?	
BA1	When you mention UIN Antasari, what is the first thing you remember that is related to UIN Antasari?	Brand association is the meaning and anything that is related to the brand that can be memorized by the customers(Aaker, 2009)
BA2	What do you like about the things related to UIN Antasari?	Brand association influencing brand equity must be unique, strong, and favorable (Keller, 1993)
PQ1	In your view, is the lecture process at UIN Antasari qualified, and will it meet your expectations??	Perceived brand quality is a consumer perception related to the extent of the unique characteristics of academic quality, alumni quality, and other things according to students, lecturers, alumni, or future customers(Laczniak, 2004)
PQ2	In your view, how is the quality of UIN Antasari graduates when competing for jobs?	
BL1	Do you tell others about the advantages/positive things of UIN Antasari?	Higher brand loyalty emphasizes promotion through positive information by customers, not by repeated purchases (Vukasovič, 2015).
BL2	Have you ever advised other people to study at UIN Antasari?	
BL3	In general, are you satisfied with the lectures you have attended at UIN Antasari?	Brand loyalty arises from satisfaction with the services provided in the IHE (Phineas Mbango & Kate Ngobeni, 2022).
BL3a	In general, are you satisfied with your work at UIN Antasari?	

After the data is collected, the CBEI-IHE index is calculated as follows:

First, brand awareness is measured by counting the number of universities mentioned by the first participant (top of mind). Only the university most frequently remembered first will score 4; second, The PQ index is set based on the percentage of participants who like the IHE brand association. PQ scores 1 if all (100%) participants like the UIN brand association or will score 0.89 if 89% of participants like the IHE brand association; third, the scores of the PQ and BL assets are set based on the average of each asset;

The scores of all assets are processed to obtain the CBEI-IHE with the following formula:

$$\text{CBBE\_IHE} = \Sigma \frac{\text{BAI}}{4}$$

In this equation, it can be seen that the total value of the four brand asset indexes (BAI) is divided by four to get the value of Islamic Higher Education Customer Based Brand Equity (CBEI-IHE).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. *Brand Awareness*

Brand awareness, in this recent study, could be seen from brand recall, which is the response of prospective customers of Islamic higher education (read: State Islamic University Antasari or UIN Antasari), when asked about the higher education they can recall first (top of mind). Brand recall is indicated by a brand that is mentioned for the first time among other higher educations that are recognized. In other words, the first higher education referred by is the higher education which has been recognized by the customer, while the higher education referred by hereinafter is the higher education which is not better recognized by the customer. Top of mind university as shown in Table 2
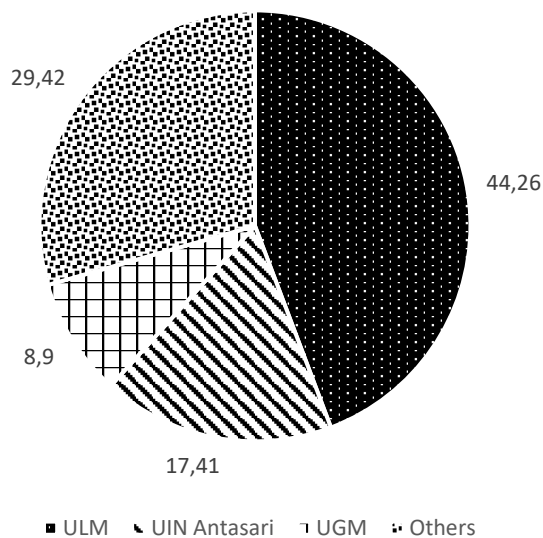
Figure 1. Top of mind

Lambung Mangkurat University (ULM), the largest university in Kalimantan, is first remembered by the majority of high school (HS) and Islamic high school (IHS) students in South Kalimantan. State Islamic University Antasari (UIN) was first remembered by 17.41% of the participating students, giving a score of 0 for IHE's brand awareness. This means that the majority of students do not know about the IHE brand. However, if the Islamic label is used as a brand recognition, 62.07% of HS and IHS students are more aware of the UIN brand than other Islamic universities or colleges in South Kalimantan. This reveals that IHE is more recognized as an Islamic university for Islamic studies.

Compared to the perspectives of HE and IHS students, IHE brand awareness according to Islamic high school (IHS) students perspective is also lower than the HE brand awareness. UIN is only first remembered (top of mind) by 23.28% of IHS students, while ULM is first remembered by 38.35% of IHS students. The brand awareness of IHE for high school students can be understood as lower. The UIN brand is only top of mind for 13.8% of high school students, while the ULM brand is top of mind for 47.83% of high school students.

These findings provide evidence that brand awareness is the most basic issue of the IHE brand. This weakness will be discussed in the following section.

2. *Brand Association (BA)*

Brand association reflects students' memories of IHE when being mentioned about the things associated with it. The memory would have an impact on the selection of a higher education. According to 47% of participants, the brand association value of IHE is a

university that teaches religious and general sciences and 32% of participants say that UIN only teaches Islamic studies BA of UIN is shown in Figure 2.
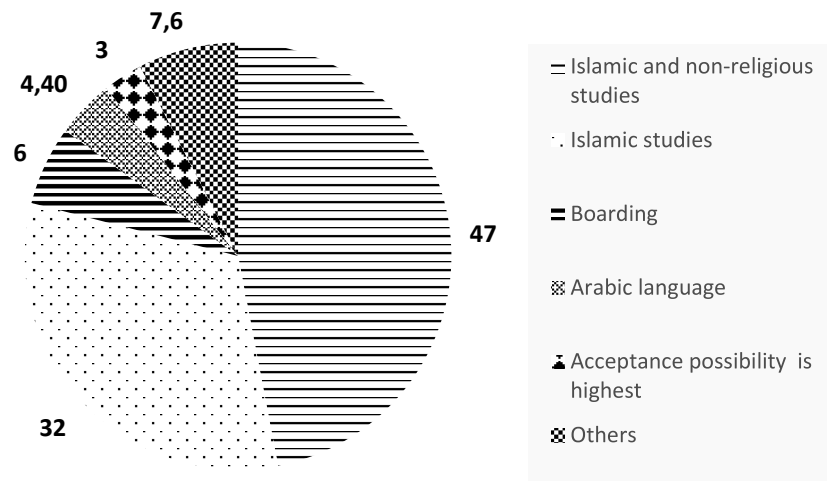

Figure 2. BA of UIN

In addition to the association, IHS and HS students also consider an Islamic university as a university that requires boarding, studying Arabic, and having easy entry exams. Nevertheless, as many as 91% of IHS and HS students say that they like IHE brand associations. The BA of IHE index is 0,91. In the context of education, liking does not mean selecting or having an enrollment intention to IHE. IHE students are not 94 % of IHS and HS graduates in South Kalimantan.

3. *Perceived Quality*

According to Laczniac (2004), perceived quality is indicated by unique characteristics such as the quality of learning, alumni's workplace, and morals(Laczniak, 2004). Therefore, in this study, the perceived quality of IHS could be seen from their assumptions of the strengths and weaknesses of HIS and the ease of getting a job. This study considers these two questions to be easily understood by IHS and HS students.

The researchers found that the quality of IHE rated by IHS and HS students is 3.7 out of 5. The score is from the average of higher education quality assessment with an average score of 3.9 and the chance of the graduates to get a job is 3.7. The quality of the campus, in students' assumption, is very likely to be good or bad only in terms of the buildings and campus environment. In addition, the finding illustrates that IHS and SHS students presume that the job opportunities of IHE graduates are relatively small. It is related to their assumption that IHE focuses more on religious education. A as result, in their opinions, IHE alumni is relatively more difficult to find job than general university alumni.

4. *Brand Loyalty*

Brand loyalty is indicated by the information provided by students, faculty, education staff, and alumni to other communities, and the satisfaction they feel while studying or working at IHE.

Table 3 shows that first, the education staff brand loyalty at IHE is relatively lower compared to students' and lecturers' brand loyalty index. Education staff tend to measure satisfaction with the salary or income they earn; and second, the brand equity assets index for brand loyalty is 4 out of 5. It shows the level of brand loyalty is relatively high.

Tabel 3 IHE Customers Brand Loyalty

No	Indicator	Average
1	Student (Main Customer)	4,09
2	Lecturer (Internal Customer)	3,97
3	Education Staff (Internal Customer)	3,79
4	Alumni	4
	Index	4

5. Indeks Brand Equity IHE

Compiling from the previous section, the index of each brand equity asset is displayed in Table 4. The results of the brand equity assets calculation through the CBEI-IHE model show that IHE's brand equity index is 2.15 out of 4 the highest index. The reason that the brand equity index is at a moderate level is the low index of brand awareness. The majority of students did not mention IHE as the first HE they recalled, therefore, the index of IHE's brand awareness is 0.

Table 4. Brand Equity Assets Index

No	Brand Equity Assets	Average	Max Score
1	Brand awareness	0	5
2	Brand Association	0,91	1
3	Perceived quality	3,7	5
4	Brand loyalty	4	5
	Indeks	2,15	4 (max)

The index shows that brand awareness is the main cause of IHE's low brand equity. Even though another element relatively is higher, brand awareness is fundamental for branding. This represents that IHE is not in the first place in the minds of potential IHE customers, so it needs follow-up from the university.

E. DISCUSSION

This research found that the fundamental problem of the Islamic Higher Education (IHE) brand is its low brand awareness. This is a significant issue since the first step in building brand equity is brand awareness (Vukasović, 2022). This weakness is relevant to the initial purpose of establishing IHE, which was limited to providing prospective employees for the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA).IHE's initial goal was established in 1951 to provide Islamic religious teachers, researchers, administrative staff, and religious court judges at the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA)(Nakamura & Nishino, 1993). Education in Indonesia is divided into two from early childhood education to tertiary institutions: Islamic education under MORA and general education under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology(Wicaksono & Friawan, 2011).   Students who wish to become employees at MORA or become teachers at private Islamic schools will continue their education at IHE(Hefner, 2009).   Therefore, IHE is known in a limited circle so brand awareness does not grow fast. This causes IHE not to be the main choice of HIS and HS graduates(Nata & Sofyan, 2021).

Brand awareness is very important in inter-university competition. University reputation determines brand awareness(Brewer & Zhao, 2010). This reputation can be seen from the number of research articles indexed by the Scopus database which are still lagging behind HE (Darmadji et al., 2018). Brand awareness has a positive effect and will increase competitiveness (Yu-Ting Teng & Kai-Ping Huang, 2022). Information about the brand is related to brand awareness, brand awareness is correlated with brand attitude related to purchase intention (Hsing-Yu Chen & Kai-Ping Huang, 2022). Brand awareness has a direct impact on the intention to use the product(Le Thai Phong et al., 2021). This is different from the opinion of students who argue that perceived quality is the most important dimension of brand equity(Pinar et al., 2014). Brand awareness that doesn't exist will cause potential customers to look to many other brands(Hoyer & Brown, 1990).

Low brand awareness is caused by several factors. Universities located in cities tend to have higher brand awareness than universities located in other areas(Foroudi et al., 2017). Positive information about the university online (eWOM) has a positive effect on the university's brand equity, whereas negative information has only a slight effect on brand equity(Carvalho et al., 2021). Marketing in a wide area will attract media that will increase brand awareness(Liu, 2013).

The quality of students has an impact on brand awareness (Liu, 2013). The quality of students has an impact on brand awareness (Puan Rachmadhani et al., 2018). Advertising on social media has an impact on university brand awareness(Saydan & Dülek, 2019).

Advertisements on television that are filled with humor will affect university brand awareness(Arzu Kalafat Çat & M. Serdar Erciş, 2016).

Brand awareness can be built through brand communication. Brand communication must reach all ages because the process of choosing a college has started since primary school. The process of choosing a tertiary institution starts when students are taking basic education in grades 7 - 9 at an elementary school /Islamic elementary school(Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000). Brand awareness in the pre-admission phase through infrastructure, student and alumni recommendations, media influence, entrance exams, cost, and location of the university(Khanna et al., 2014) Social media is a significant tool for increasing brand awareness(Barua & Zaman, 2019). Brand awareness is created with promotional tools such as websites, banners, positive alumni information, and church announcements(Heer, 2020). In the context of IHE, announcements are made through the mosque. Positive alumni information is a representation of loyalty and satisfaction. Alumni satisfaction and loyalty are related to IHE's ability to build a career(Rafik & Priyono, 2018). Education that is not beneficial for work careers will cause alumni to be disloyal and dissatisfied. So, they will tell positive WoM about IHE to the public. It does not have an impact on brand awareness.

Social media marketing activities: entertainment, interaction, trend, customization, and word-of-mouth have an impact on brand equity(Kim & Ko, 2012). Social media activities have a significant impact on social identification(Chen & Lin, 2019). Social identification is a reflection of brand awareness. Social media that has entertainment elements can strengthen brand awareness(Cheung et al., 2019). Social media is used to increase university pride, develop connections, and build brand equity(Hussey, 2011). Social media activity in the form of social networking (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+), Microblog (Twitter), and content communities (YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, and Flickr) have a significant impact on brand equity(Lim et al., 2020). IHE in Indonesia has used social media platforms but has not had an impact on brand awareness because followers are dominated by IHE students themselves.

F. CONCLUSION

Brand equity of Islamic higher education (IHE) is left behind HE.'s low brand awareness IHE. IHE feels that it has uniqueness and excellence in Islamic studies so it has never seen IHE as a brand from the perspective of prospective students. This study illustrates that IHE's brand awareness requires treatment to compete with HE.

This study recommends that IHE managers need to be aware of brand awareness of IHE and overall university brand equity elements. As stated (Stukalina & Pavlyuk, 2021), brand

equity has an impact on the marketing strategy that will be developed. IHE leaders need to carry out IHE branding strategies that are in accordance with IHS and HS. The transformation into an Islamic university provides a branding mandate that can compete with other universities. Brand communication must be in a wide area and reach all parties, including elementary school students who are in the pre-disposition stage for HE selection.

The findings of this study clearly show the increasing importance of research on marketing for IHE, especially brand and marketing strategy. However, this research has limitations in terms of sample size, making it unable to serve as a generalization regarding the brand equity of IHE in Indonesia. Thus, this research proposes future research to examine the brand equity of all Islamic universities in Indonesia in the context of science and technology programs and career opportunities for Islamic university graduates.

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