

Brand personality and student consumerism towards higher education in Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

Modern society today relies on the ideology of consumption, not just a marker of the social status of a person or group but a mechanism used by consumers to gain social status or prestige by buying or consuming goods considered high by customers. The increasing reach of consumerism ideology has expanded the traditional definition of a "commodity" into an intangible service, especially in universities' operations. Surveys show that students tend to act as consumers in university education. Consumerism correlates with brand personality. There is a fine line that universities must build and maintain that will enable academics within universities to express integrity and intellectual qualities in both their teaching and research. This expression should include students as participants and recipients not only when they are involved in the class but as participants and recipients in the community in which the University is located.

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Introduction

We find ourselves in the evolution of educational institutions, particularly public education, which leads us to question student consumerism. Education has shifted from being general, concerned with developing democratic citizens and preparing them for roles in the employment structure, to being a tool for the advancement of the business industry. As a result, school and school policies are increasingly focused on education as a credential. (McClure, 2017). Our findings demonstrate student attitudes as customers but differ from many frequently noted faculty-specific concerns. These results provide information about students' perspectives on the rights and obligations of students, faculties, and institutions in Indonesia; This can form the basis for a rich discussion of how to achieve institutional missions in cultures better and is increasingly guided by market ideologies.

Credentials are a proxy for skills and knowledge required by a person in a job and a symbol of his social status. In this way, one can be seen as a helpful tool for social and industrial organizations. However, as a condition of social mobility in a competitive social context, they become competency constructs that are not always related to what happens in social class (Fairchild & Cragg, 2014). This focus on credentials raises questions about one aspect of the growing application of consumerism metaphors to higher education: what do students perceive as the goal of their educational experience, and do they think about their relationship with universities in economic terms?

In an increasingly diverse higher education market, students are "shopping" for the schools and classes they find most attractive, and schools must react to these pressures (Goldrick-Rab, 2006). Documentaries have suggested competition for existing university facilities as a visible "weapon" in university efforts to attract new students (McClure, 2017). In this context, some have argued that aspects of the college experience that prospective students can "see," such as student centers, become more critical for deciding which

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school to attend than the less visible characteristics of academics and distinguished faculty (Fairchild & Cragge, 2014). Universities also behave by providing educational credentials that attract prospective students and closing unattractive education, determining the number of students that can be taught (McClure, 2017), thus this behavioral model. It can be concluded that universities are seen as business institutions rather than public education models, where universities see students as consumers.

The form of the organizational model run by the University or college has influenced student relations with the campus and affected the existing educational process. The research conducted by Snare (1997), shows that paying students are entitled to high grades and academic credentials, demonstrating a passive education model. If viewed as an economic transaction, students as customers may be more likely to see themselves outside the learning process—having a consumer identity rather than a learning identity (Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005). In other words, they are 'recipients' of services, not co-creators of teaching and learning communities (Newson, 2004). Thus, they may want to be entertained (Edmunson, 1997); there is also evidence that students do not want to be made uncomfortable or try too hard (Howard et al., 2002).

This situation shows that the University applies the consumerism model to its students; this is shown by a study conducted by the Delucchi & Korgen (2002) survey of 195 undergraduate students enrolled in a sociology course which reflects the concerns of student consumerism. Most students (73%) in the state university sample reported wanting high grades even if they studied nothing. In comparison, nearly a quarter (24%) expect faculty to consider non-academic criteria when awarding degrees (such as financial aid or graduation). School application requirements). Furthermore, more than half (53%) agree that it is the instructor's responsibility to keep students' attention in class. In comparison, only a third (36%) disagreed with the statement, "If I pay for my college education, I am 'entitled to a degree.'"

Greenberger et al. (2008) constructed a 15-item "Academic Rights" scale, which differs from other egotistical psychological constructs such as narcissism and general self-possession. This study provides preliminary evidence that student attitudes toward education deserve scientific attention as unique. In this regard, Bossick (2009) approaches the problem of developing a more nuanced definition of consumerism that describes various dimensions of perspective — academic enthusiasm, academic behavior, desire for goods and services, and job training demands. Based on the Justification theory, several indexes of student consumerism are a step in the right direction. True. In other words, the operational model carried out by higher education institutions runs a business model; This can be seen in the marketing activities done by universities in marketing their educational services. Due to increasing competition between universities globally, there is a need for brand studies. To attract the best students and professors, promote its rankings nationally and internationally, and absorb international students, providing income. In addition, given the increasing complexity of universities as educational and service organizations, branding can help simplify and strengthen the attractiveness of prospective students (Chapleo, 2010). (Demirbag Kaplan et al., 2010) explain that branding for places, such as campuses, is under the control of marketers. One of them is by forming a *brand personality*. They also state that there is very little research on *brand personality*. In addition, consumers prefer to use brands that match their self-perceptions. Therefore special attention to *brand personality* is expected (Demirbag Kaplan et al., 2010). Aaker (1997) believes that the main factors of a brand are identity, distinction, and character. *The brand personality* of a university wants to create a relationship, symmetry, and concordance between students and the University because this concordance creates a positive view of the brand, resulting in brand consumption.

There is a logical connection between the customer-seller view of university education and this attitude. However, previous studies have yet to tell whether this relationship exists. So, universities receive less input in policy making and in implementing the education process, in other words applying market ideology. In this case, students may think they buy educational products without certain beliefs about their effects. Attitude might suggest.

It is this complexity that we are discussing here. We push the empirical agenda further by exploring rather than considering how different attitudes relate to consumerism. Our survey reflects components of the conceptualization of consumerism present in higher education, including specific issues and ideologies involving customer-seller relationships. The broad instrumentation allows us to examine how items cluster together and, more specifically, how students' attitudes about explicit market ideologies relate to attitudes about other issues raised in consumerism discussions.

Literature Review

Theoretical and Conceptual Background

Higher Education Business Model

Education business model with an emphasis on attracting and involving knowledge seekers, where the approach is with an approach to business principles and instruments, where the strategies and policies made are strongly influenced by the market mechanism approach (Donald et al., 2018). Meanwhile, according to McClure (2017), the higher education business model applies the ideology of capitalism in running its organization, where universities profit by selling educational services, and the education model is made by paying attention to market mechanisms. The business principle of generating profit as an external source of funds. McClure (2017) also emphasizes that universities see students as consumers of their service products in this business model approach.

Consumerism

Consumerism is an organized social movement intended to strengthen the rights and power of consumers relative to sellers. Alert marketers see it as an opportunity to better serve consumers by providing more information, education, and consumer protection. American Marketing Association (AMA), "consumerism" is an action taken to protect people from violating their rights as consumers (AMA, 2017).

However, in the public sphere, consumerism is defined differently. Merriam-Webster expanded the definition of AMA to include the theory that increased consumption of goods is economically desirable and for pleasure and the tendency to buy consumer goods (AMA, 2017). This difference can be explained by the attitudes found in the literature:

"if consumers are satisfied with business practices, they will have favourable attitudes towards business activities and unfavourable attitudes about consumerism and government regulation (Bhujan, S.N., Abdul-Muhmin, A.G. and Kim, 2001).

The authors also note that consumers have unfavourable attitudes about business activities and question whether consumer movements or government regulations can control or change this harmful practice (Ger & Belk, 1996). Consumerism is also seen as a country-specific phenomenon by country, priority community, and the potential for road improvement (Ho, 2001).

Consumerism is not limited to tangible consumer goods but has extended to services, including education. The importance of education for the promotion of human rights, improvement of living standards, and preservation of the environment is recognized by the *United Nations Development Program* (Fairchild & Crage, 2014). The world, as one market, has prompted universities to respond to these changes by expanding their reach beyond the boundaries of their traditional students as defined by their financial, social, and country class. To do this, universities export their programs to developing countries to educate aspiring professionals who will develop their homeland within an international framework in their home country. Higher education also provides opportunities for students from developing countries to be educated about the world of practice in the institution's home country. Through developing programs that respond to this, educational institutions engage in consumerism, contributing to changes in consumer attitudes. This change is cyclical in that educational institutions promote knowledge acquisition, which changes consumer attitudes, which in turn changes the perception of knowledge required, which changes consumer attitudes.

Baudrillard (Bakti et al., 2019) views the consumption process from two perspectives, namely:

- i. The process of signing and communication means that consumption occurs according to specific rules that give meaning, such as language that conveys meaning in communication.
- ii. The social classification and differentiation process means that objects have become status values in a hierarchy, and consumption distributes those values.

In a consumption society, people buy goods not only because of their usefulness but because of lifestyle factors, for the sake of an image that is directed and formed from an advertisement or promotional process (Bakti et al., 2019). Regardless of the use value and benefits of an item, consumers buy because of the meaning attached to the

Brand Personality

Brand Personality is one part of the strength of a brand that was created to introduce products and maintain them in the market. *Brand Personality* is built by considering the characteristics of existing consumers so that later it will attract consumers' physical and emotional attention in the market. Kotler et al (2020) define *Brand Personality* as "a specific mix of human traits that we can associate with a particular brand," meaning that *Brand Personality* is a specific mix of human traits that we can associate with a particular brand. This human nature is the basis for the formation of *Brand Personality*. The formation of brand personality in a brand will encourage consumers to respond with feelings and emotions to the brand (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2010). It can be concluded that emotions can make consumers feel closer to the product brand. From the understandings put forward by experts, it can be concluded that brand personality is a concept to distinguish a product from other products by making logos, names, brands, and packaging, which are formed and based on the personality possessed by humans to create them—the emotional connection between consumers and a brand.

Brand Personality has a shaping dimension, which gives influence. These dimensions are used as a guide in the formation of *brand personality*. The framework is that *brand personality* is grouped into five main dimensions, namely (Aaker, 1997):

- i. *Sincerity* is a personality that is honest, humble, and straightforward. *Sincerity* manifests honesty in quality, product authenticity, and brand identity with simple traits, such as cheerful and youthful.
- ii. *Excitement* is a dynamic character who is enthusiastic and imaginative in making a difference and innovating.
- iii. *Competence*, namely the ability to be reliable and trusted by customers.
- iv. *Sophisticated* characteristics related to exclusivity are formed by the advantages of prestige, brand image, and level of attractiveness.
- v. *Ruggedness*, namely brand characteristics related to the superiority of a brand in supporting outdoor activities and the strength or durability of the product

Research and Methodology

Participant and Data Collection

The population of this study was students of Pembangunan Nasional Veteran University East Java, Pembangunan Nasional Veteran University Jakarta, Pembangunan Nasional Veteran University Yogyakarta, Airlangga University, Surabaya Institute of Technology, Bandung Institute of Technology, and the University of Indonesia. The respondents used were 500 students, and the survey was conducted using an online questionnaire, where data processing using partial least squares based Structural Equation Modelling (SEM-PLS) to find out the correlation between brand personality and student consumerism attitude.

Measurement

The indicators used in this study were adopted from several previous studies: Students consumerism attitude toward education (Y) variables we adapted from Fairchild & Cragge (2014), and the indicators are:

- i. Y1 I think education is the product I buy
- ii. Y2 my relationship with the University is like customer and seller relationship
- iii. Y3 I believe that most students think that education is the product they buy
- iv. Y4 Students should get tuition fees if it is considered that there is nothing to learn from the class
- v. Y5 I believe students should think that education is the product they buy

and one variable regarding the brand personality (X), is from Aaker (Aaker, 1997):

Sincerity dimension

- i. X1 My campus is an unpretentious campus
- ii. X2 My campus is a vibrant campus

Excitement dimension

- i. X3 My campus is an imaginative campus
- ii. X4 My campus is an up-to-date campus

Competence dimension

- i. X5 My campus is a reliable campus
- ii. X6 My campus is a smart campus

Sophistication

- i. X7 My campus is a successful campus
- ii. X8 My campus is a top-class campus

Ruggedness

- i. X9 My campus is a charming campus
- ii. X10 My campus is a tough campus

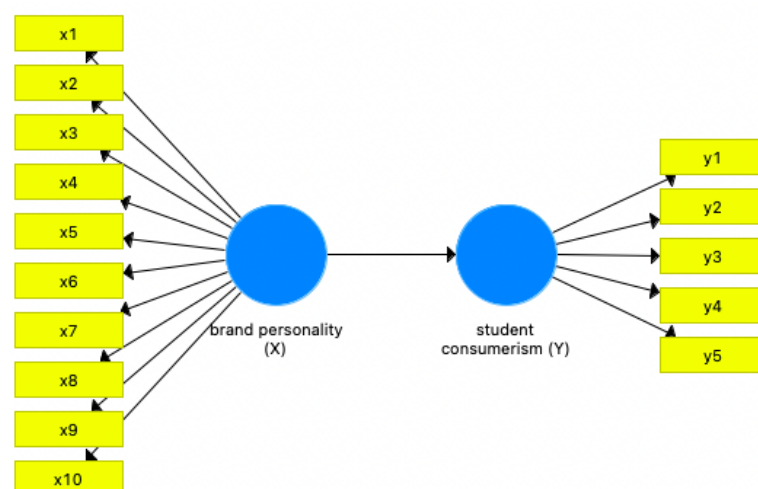


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study; Source: Author

Findings and Discussions

Assessing Measurement Models

Measurement model assessment involves four aspects of each model construct: size and significance of indicator loadings, construct reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Table 1: Outer Loading

Student Consumerism (Y)		brand personality (X)
x1.10		0.865
x1.2		0.897
x1.3		0.884
x1.4		0.863
x1.5		0.859
x1.6		0.912
x1.7		0.896
x1.8		0.833
x1.9		0.855
y1.1	0.860	
y1.2	0.866	
y1.3	0.783	
y1.5	0.777	
x1.1		0.857

Assessment of measurement variables is obtained by running PLS bootstrapping on the Smart-PLS application. When running PLS bootstrapping for the first time, the outer loading value of each indicator is above the value of 0.7; except for the outer loading Y.1.4, so the indicator is removed from the model. After the indicator is removed from the model, PLS bootstrapping is run again and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the loading value shows a number above 0.708; this value has met the validity requirements of a value above 0.708 (Hair and Ringle, 2021) in other words, the questions in the questionnaire that can be understood by respondents, as with the understanding possessed by the researcher.

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Extracted (AVE)	Variance
Student Consumerism (Y)	0.846	0,893	0.677	
brand personality (X)	0.966	0,970	0.761	

Cronbach's alpha is a widely used method of assessing reliability. Reliability test was carried out to measure how far the answers produced were consistent, with the same measuring instrument or question used repeatedly. Table 2 shows the Cronbach Alpha Value of Student Consumerism Variables and Brand Personality is 0.846 and 0.966 respectively, the results between 0.70 and 0.95 represent "satisfactory to good" reliability levels (Joseph F Hair et al., 2019). This validity test is carried out to test the consistency of the indicators/questions in each variable. According to Wong (2013), the variables' indicators are consistent if the composite value is more significant than 0.7. Based on the composite value of all variables, the value is above 0.7, meaning that it is consistent.

The convergent test aims to determine whether the respondent experiences confusion when answering questions in the questionnaire because the influence of the previous question causes it. According to Kock and Lynn, (2012) measure convergent validity can be seen in the average value of the extraction variance (AVE) from one variable to the value of another variable, with an average value equal to or above the AVE value of other variables. Based on Table 2, the AVE Value of Student Consumerism and Brand Personality are 0.677 and 0.761 respectively. The rule of thumb for an acceptable AVE is 0.50 or higher (Joseph F Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Student Consumerism (Y)	brand personality (X)
Student Consumerism (Y)		
brand personality (X)	0,195	

The recommended discriminant validity method is the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of correlations. The HTMT criterion is an estimate of the true correlation between two constructs if they were perfectly measured. High HTMT values indicate a problem with discriminant validity (Joseph F Hair et al., 2019). If the HTMT value is below 0.90, discriminant validity has been established between two reflective constructs. Table 3 shows the HTMT ratio of 0.195 which is lower than 0.90 which means discriminant validity has been established between two reflective constructs

Effect Test of Brand Personality to Student Consumerism

After testing the validity and reliability and passing, we adapt to test the effect of each variable.

Table 4: Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
brand personality (X) -> Student Consumerism (Y)	0,208	0,221	0,043	4,829	0,000

To see if there is an influence between variables, it can be seen from the P-Value; if the value is under 0.05, then the variable influences the affected variable. The form of influence can be seen from the original sampling value; if it shows a positive number, the effect has a positive effect; if it shows a negative number, the effect has a negative effect. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the X1 variable has a positive influence on Y1

Discussion

Characteristics of respondents based on the results of this study, Indonesia Education based on humanities and social sciences is a favorite of students, and it can be seen that the number of students, such as the faculties of economics, business, law, and social and political science, has the most significant number of students out of the total students at universities. University, which is the object of this research. Indonesia is still an emerging world market, where the economy is still primarily supported by the agricultural sector and natural products, such as spices, palm oil, coal, and nickel. While the manufacturing and technology-based industries are still at an intermediate stage, so it makes sense for education be those based on social science are the favorites among students, compared to engineering and technology-based study programs, even though the number of students is cumulatively has a second large portion. The results of this study reinforce that most students, after college, plan to go straight to work, but most choose to continue to the master's program. The job sector of interest is working in state-owned companies, and some choose to work in the private sector and become entrepreneurs, and a small number want to become civil servants.

Interestingly, the number of women who attend college is much higher than men; This shows that the awareness of education at a higher level among women is very high compared to men. From this research, it is also known that although the majority of students who enter this University go through a national test held by the government, which pass through this entrance test, they get relatively cheaper financing tuition than those who enter through the independent admissions route, whose education costs are prohibitive Expensive. The number of students who enter through the independent admissions route, the number is quite large; this shows that students are willing to pay a lot to get higher education, while 90% respondent said that their parents or their families still fund of college funding for these students, the second most considerable amount is financed by scholarships, and very few pay for their tuition. By being financed by parents, there is at least a guarantee of the availability of funds until college is complete. However, it needs to be investigated in the future, does this financial assistance in education tuition, the parents has influence the decision-making process of prospective students in choosing their college majors?

Based on the research that has been done, it was found that students have a view that the University is no longer just a public educational institution that has an idealistic function as a place to gain knowledge and achieve enlightenment in thinking, but they see it as an "Educational Product" which is the same as a product. Moreover, services, in general, show that the ideology of consumerism has been formed in students towards university institutions. With the ideology of consumerism in these students, they see and treat all facilities and activities in the University as a product that they buy to achieve their goals in order to work in the industrial sector; therefore, they are critical of the educational activities they get. Because they think they have bought the product; This can be seen from how they view the University as a product and service in general, with a brand personality; student respondents believe that the University has a brand personality's dimensions: *sincerity*, *competence*, and *ruggedness*. Reliable, intelligent, charming, and challenging. Brand personality helps build meaningful relationships between consumers and brands. In this way, as it contributes to the creation of brand value, it has an important place in the value component of a brand (Aaker, 1997). Brand personality is also a key component in forming a brand image. A well-constructed brand personality will increase brand value because it drives a series of significant and unique brand images (Keller & Richey, 2006). Brand value, reinforced by brand personality, can help differentiate a brand from its competitors (Keller & Richey, 2006) and create higher purchase intentions and higher consumer preferences (Freling et al., 2011) because Brand personality is a framework that helps a company or organization shape how a person

feels about a product or service. A company's brand personality elicits an emotional response in specific consumer segments to encourage positive actions that benefit the company. Customers are more likely to buy a brand if their personality is similar to theirs (Aaker, 1997). Consumer behavior in responding to this brand personality is part of the consumption behavior of a product to fulfill its needs as a product or service consumption activity; in other words, this activity is part of the ideology of consumerism (Kotler et al., 2020).

Because students view higher education as an educational product service, they expect to be treated as ordinary consumers who have bought a product in a store, such as a relationship between the consumer and the seller. According to them, quality educators can be seen from their expectations, namely teaching and learning activities that can create exciting and interactive teaching and learning atmosphere in the classroom by presenting lecture materials that are relevant and applicable to industry needs, especially when they enter the world of work. Because college is like buying a product, they expect a clear teaching contract, so they know what they will get after giving this Education product. They also hope to have good interpersonal relationships with their lecturers, which requires lecturers to provide dynamic and interactive classes and have personal attention to each student.

Most of the respondents have plans after graduating from college to work, for they prepare themselves for their plans; therefore, students have high hopes for the University, hoping to provide career development assistance. When looking for work, which is counseling, providing course materials that can prepare them when looking for work, university-facing materials help them in employment because, for them, good workers are the result of a good education from the University. Even though they see the University as a product they buy, they do not expect their tuition to be returned. If they feel that the University's teaching materials and services are not under the course contract or their expectations, the most important thing is that they can graduate from college and get a diploma, which they can use to find work in the future. It shows that universities are the only legal credentialing bodies that issue important documents as legal evidence of job application requirements.

These findings raise interesting questions about the challenges of consumerism and the mechanisms that affect classrooms and universities. The impact of students viewing education as a purchased product may be less significant than is usually emphasized in the discourse on the topic. It is interesting that although students hope to receive professional, good service, and educational materials relevant to their plans to work after college, they are not too demanding that these are all available. If they do not get all of them, it should be in the principle of consumerism ideology, and consumers can demand more. Quality products and services ensure consumers' needs are met without harm by spending money on buying these products and services; This does not mean that students do not have faculty-related attitudes, such as focusing on job preparation rather than solid student work habits. Attitudes about authority can remain a potential implication of the broader application of the consumerist model to higher education, regardless of whether students adhere to the seller-customer ideology or not. While faculty who change courses and administrators who cater to student demands have been criticized for contributing to a reversal of authority, the existing literature on student evaluation of teaching makes a compelling reason why professors might confer authority on students—they are responsible for the custom nature of service more than learning (Pacho, 2020). Allowing the customer to be "right" can erode faculty authority by shaping how professors structure and teach classes, regardless of student attitudes about being a customer.

Similarly, students who approach education as a credential or a means to potential future earnings certainly have implications for the meaning of learning and student-faculty interactions. With the ideal ideology of consumerism, high consumer demands should spur the production of increasingly quality products and services when the consumer does not get what he needs; This shows that the impact of universities with the traditional model as a good product can be eroded if the brand is not monitored carefully (Lamming, 2001). Emphasis on the high value of institutional reputation management is mandatory in today's world of instant communication (Woyo et al., 2014).

Conclusion

The University aims to educate those who will create the world's future and inform today's world. The role of education is vital in today's rapidly developing environment. In this role, universities are accountable to students educated in these environments and the population in which those students live. University stakeholders express the impact of rampant consumerism; This has been noted to have negative consequences, such as universities responding to their student base by guaranteeing degrees regardless of the effort expended, a decline in the quality of graduates, and a reaction to this decline in quality by the industry. They were establishing its universities and educational programs that are starting to expand—attracting students who should have attended traditional universities and the public perception of universities being of lower standards and thus increasing the difficulty for graduating students to find jobs and devaluing degrees, which in turn Thwarts the goal of global expansion. It is essential to consider whether students can be given responsibility as education consumers and, if so, under what conditions.

Universities and funding sources must be able to meet and collaborate on the issues most relevant to the world as they operate. The promise of improving living standards and wage opportunities through education must be weighed against its implications. If universities do not actively respond to their consumer base, others will, and universities will suffer losses in both reputation and ability to respond to an ever-evolving world. On the other hand, if universities are held accountable for the strict mandate of the term "consumerism" when applied to their students, the quality of education offered will be negatively affected. If universities do not allow the professor component that drives growth in academia and commerce, society will lose one of its most significant resources.

There is a fine line that universities must build and maintain that will enable academics within universities to express integrity and intellectual qualities in both their teaching and research. This expression should include students as participants and recipients not only when they are involved in the class but as participants and recipients in the community in which the University is located.

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