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## **“Branding Initiatives in Higher Education”- A Study on Some Selected Universities in Bangladesh**

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### **Abstract:**

*We know “Education is the Backbone of Nation”. So, to get better nations, higher educational institution is compulsory needed. It is a matter of sorrow that, not a single Bangladeshi university could keep place in the world ranking position at top. Apart from this, Numbers of Universities all over the world continuously are trying to generate an image or reputation to create a center of attention toward students. Only because of better competition, branding has become more important in promoting a University reputation. But on the behalf of Bangladeshi Universities, it has been observed that lack of branding initiatives is the major fact to keep place in the ranking as well as to become a model institution. That’s why two universities have been selected for taking feedback from the existing students, where out of 2000 registered students 50 students selected by simple random sampling. The research has been done why they chose that particular university for higher education? How did they know about that particular university? What are the factors works in the mind of students before admitting in that university? To get the appropriate answer, researcher goes for research and finally draws a solid recommendation and conclusion.*

**Keywords:** Branding, Initiatives, Higher Education, Strategy, Choice, Positioning, Ranking, Student Impact

### **1. Introduction**

Institutions are focusing on branding and marketing far more than in preceding days. Many have hired marketing professionals from the corporate world and invested noteworthy time and money to create strong institutional brands. Apart from this, there are numbers of issues working to become a Brand. In higher educational institution rapidly growing but regret that about branding policy. Lack of initiatives and circulations are the main barriers. This research has shown what the issues really work in the mind of students is before choosing a university admission. The branding initiatives in higher education is how much effective for ensuring education to all.

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Bangladesh has made marvelous progress in the field of higher education over the last few years. Without higher education, any nation cannot develop. There was a significant need to develop the talent in higher education. As we know, there are 40 public and 95 private universities in Bangladesh for higher education. Here all the universities values are not same. Some universities have high competition and some universities don’t get expected students. At the same time increase in number of varsity has led to competition and considerable amount of seats are vacant. This scenario in higher education domain requires branding which can help to give the varsity the unique position in the market and help in gaining competitive advantage. That’s why this research has been done.

#### **1.2. Literature Review**

The literature review significantly examines prior experiential research that discusses the topic and demonstrates the importance of the research. The review of literature describes branding initiatives in higher education. Although there is too little research on branding in higher education, the researcher provided the literature review. Mazzarol, (1998) has said that Brand is “the guarantee of the bundle of attributes that somebody buys”. These attributes may be actual or deceptive, lucid or touching, tangible or invisible. Brand involves a collection of promises concerning the brand’s physical and emotional benefits to buyers. A university’s brand is a demonstration of the institution’s features that differentiate it from others, mirror its capacity to satisfy students’ needs, create trust in its ability to deliver a certain type and level of higher education, and assist potential recruits to make wise enrolment decisions. Spake, (2010) said that, with strong competition in higher education for qualified students and a hold up in the global economy, university branding initiatives that result in increased staffing are more important than ever. Samsul (2016) researcher has found it is now an axiom that universities in Bangladesh cannot

figure importantly in the global ranking of universities. The status of universities is declining very rapidly at the global level. In fact, all the universities of SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) countries, barring a few, are poorly ranked in international rankings. M.M Shahidul (2017) said preliminary with 6 public universities in 1971 today there are a total of 38 public universities and 93 private universities in the country. Though a high-quality number of universities have been established in forty-six years, but our higher education institutions are not held in high regard. So, it is easy to understand that how much importance of branding in higher education.

## 2. Research Objectives

### 2.1. Broad Objective

Research objective is to examine Branding initiatives in higher education how much effective for taking higher education, does it really work for selecting universities?

### 2.2. Specific Objective

- To examine the existing branding initiatives in higher education.
- To know how branding initiatives can work in higher education.
- To examine the necessity of branding in higher education of Bangladesh.

### 2.3. Research Question

- Is really branding needed for higher education to keep positioning and attract foreign/local students?
- Does Branding really work for selecting universities to take higher education?

### 2.4. Hypothesis Development

Branding is a process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers. With a view to fulfilling the objective some relevant hypothesis has been formulated for this study

- HA: Branding is needed for higher education to keep positioning and attract foreign/local students.
- HA: Students are influenced to choose a University for unique of curriculum, variety of courses and employability.
- HA: Tuitions fee is the great concern to select a University for higher education
- HA: Physical evidence like campus facilities, uniqueness of campus, external ambience and landscape, facilities draw more interest to the students
- HA: Branding Universities give the competitive advantage in the market place.
- HA: Lack of Branding Initiatives keep down the University Ranking in Present age
- HA: Top Universities hold their position in top because of excellent Branding policy.

## 3. Methodology

Basically, Researcher has selected two Universities for research, "Bangladesh University of Professionals" and "Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib University". The research is basically on existing students. Researcher has selected 7 hypotheses on the basis of two selected universities in Bangladesh those are existing students. There are approximately 2000 thousand students these are registered students. From those students, selected just 50 samples by using simple random sampling and giving them a questionnaire where there are 7 statements. Refer that, 50 sample is divided equal proportion of two selected universities. Question pattern based on liker scale. Then Researcher has done analyze by using statistical tools and find out the result. These university potentials potential students gave their statement about choosing university.

### 3.1. Population Definition

- Type of research is Exploratory.
- Population: All the students of Business Administration, Bangladesh University of Professionals and Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib University (Approximately 2000)
- Elements: Students of selected two universities.

### 3.2. Sampling Plan

Sample Unit is selected departmental students of two selected universities for the purpose of research. The sample frame was taken from only the selected department. To conduct this research, Researcher has taken sample as a simple random sampling and the required sample size for conducting this research is 50 students. Sampling Procedure is Probability Sampling (Simple Random Sampling)

### 3.3. Data

Primary data had been collected by own hands which are original data. Face to face conversation with the students, direct observation by the researcher. Secondary data for the purpose of research are collected from different types of website, books, prospectors, magazine, newspaper, related previous research and selected universities website and library.

### 3.4. Research Approach

The research approach is Survey. Survey is made by selected students of Bangladesh University of Professionals and Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib University. Research instrument is Questionnaires with Structure question so that easily give the answer and express pure information by the sample. Likert Scale is the best structured question pattern and in this dissertation paper, Likert scale is used. For analysis of data Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, different tables and graphs were used to make the data meaningful.

### 3.5. Hypotheses Test: Z test

$$Z \text{ test} = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu}{\sigma / \sqrt{n}}$$

$\mu$  = mean value  
 $n$  = sample size  
 $\sigma$  = Standard deviation  
 $\bar{X}$  = Average

Based on our analyzed, we made findings, recommendations, and conclusion. In order to analysis the data a 5-point Liker scale has been used. 1 stands for highly disagreed students, 2 stands for only disagreed students, 3 stands for the neural students, 4stands for agreed students, and 5 stands for highly agreed students

### 3.6. Hypothesis Testing

This Data Has Been Taken From The Questionnaire. There Are 50 Questions for The 50 Respondents. Total Data Put in the Table

	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6	H7
1= Strongly disagree	2	0	2	2	2	4	0
2= Disagree	2	0	4	2	4	4	2
3=Neither agree nor disagree	6	8	8	6	10	10	6
4= Agree	14	12	16	12	16	10	16
5= Strongly Agree	16	20	10	18	8	12	16
Total	160	172	148	162	144	142	166
Average	4	4.3	3.7	4.05	3.6	3.55	4.15
Standard deviation	1.109	0.79	1.11	1.13	1.08	1.299	0.86
Z-cal value	8.55	14.41	6.84	8.68	6.44	5.11	12.13

Table 1

#### 3.6.1. Hypothesis Testing

<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b>	Branding isn't needed for higher education to keep positioning and attract foreign/local students.
<b>H<sub>A</sub>:</b>	Branding is needed for higher education to keep positioning and attract foreign/local students.

Table 2

$$H_0: \mu = 2.5$$

$$H_A: \mu > 2.5$$

$$n = 40$$

$$\text{Here } \bar{X} = 4$$

$$\sigma = 1.109$$

$$Z_{\text{cal}} = (\bar{X} - \mu) / (\sigma / \sqrt{n}) = 8.55$$

At 5% level of significance, follows Z distribution  $Z_{0.05} = 1.645$

Since  $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis is not acceptable. So, at 5% level of significance, it can be said, Branding is needed for higher education to keep positioning and attract foreign/local students.

<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b>	Students are not influenced to choose a University for unique of curriculum, variety of courses and employability.
<b>H<sub>A</sub>:</b>	Students are influenced to choose a University for unique of curriculum, variety of courses and employability.

Table 3

Similarly, we got  $Z_{cal} = 14.47$

At 5% level of significance, follows Z distribution  $Z_{0.05} = 1.645$

Since  $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis is not acceptable. So, at 5% level of significance, it can be said that, Students are influenced to choose a University for unique of curriculum, variety of courses and employability.

<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b>	Tuitions fee is not the great concern to select a University for higher education.
<b>H<sub>A</sub>:</b>	Tuitions fee is the great concern to select a University for higher education.

Table 4

Similarly got  $Z_{cal} = 6.41$

At 5% level of significance, follows Z distribution  $Z_{0.05} = 1.645$

Since  $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis is not acceptable. So, at 5% level of significance, it can be said that Tuitions fee is the great concern to select a University for higher education.

<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b>	Physical evidence like campus facilities, uniqueness of campus, external ambience and landscape, facilities cannot draw more interest to the students.
<b>H<sub>A</sub>:</b>	Physical evidence like campus facilities, uniqueness of campus, external ambience and landscape, facilities can draw more interest to the students.

Table 5

Similarly,  $Z_{cal} = 8.68$

At 5% level of significance, follows Z distribution  $Z_{0.05} = 1.645$ . Since  $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis is not acceptable. So, at 5% level of significance, it can be said Physical evidence like campus facilities, uniqueness of campus, external ambience and landscape, facilities can draw more interest to the students.

<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b>	Branding Universities don't give the competitive advantage in the market place.
<b>H<sub>A</sub>:</b>	Branding Universities give the competitive advantage in the market place.

Table 6

Similarly,  $Z_{cal} = 6.44$

At 5% level of significance, follows Z distribution  $Z_{0.05} = 1.645$

Since  $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis is not acceptable. So, at 5% level of significance, it can be said that Branding Universities give the competitive advantage in the market place

<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b>	Lack of Branding Initiatives don't keep down the University Ranking in Present age
<b>H<sub>A</sub>:</b>	Lack of Branding Initiatives keep down the University Ranking in Present age

Table 7

Similarly,  $Z_{cal} = 5.11$

At 5% level of significance, follows Z distribution  $Z_{0.05} = 1.645$

Since  $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis is not acceptable. So, at 5% level of significance, it can be said that, Lack of Branding Initiatives keep down the University Ranking in Present age.

<b>H<sub>0</sub>:</b>	Top Universities don't hold their position in top because of excellent Branding policy.
<b>H<sub>A</sub>:</b>	Top Universities hold their position in top because of excellent Branding policy.

Table 8

Similarly,  $Z_{cal} = 12.13$

At 5% level of significance, follows Z distribution  $Z_{0.05} = 1.645$

Since  $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$ , the null hypothesis is not acceptable. So, at 5% level of significance, it can be said that - Top Universities hold their position in top because of excellent Branding policy.

### 3.7. Research Findings

According to the survey and calculation on the basis of students (respondents), Researcher has found that the entire null hypothesis is rejected and belief of researcher alternative hypothesis is accepted. Summary are given below.

Hypothesis No	Null or Alternative Accepted	% of Agree
Hypothesis No 1	Null rejected	75% students are positive
Hypothesis No 2	Null rejected	80% students agree
Hypothesis No 3	Null rejected	65% students agree
Hypothesis No 4	Null rejected	75% students agree
Hypothesis No 5	Null rejected	60% students agree
Hypothesis No 6	Null rejected	55% students agree
Hypothesis No 7	Null rejected	80% students agree

Table 9

Although this research has been done on the basis of existing students, researcher just made a Yes, No question on Potential students who are eager to continue their study on selected two universities. There are approximately 30 potential students.

- How do you know about this University by advertising?  
Yes / No  
75% replied Yes from BUP Potentials students.  
62% replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.
- Do you think this university is a Brand?  
Yes / No  
86% replied Yes from BUP Potentials students.  
55% replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.
- Do you think that; this University gives all kinds of facilities for the student? How do you know by any sources?  
Yes / No  
85% replied Yes from BUP Potentials students.  
73% replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.
- Do you think that quality teacher is hired by University? How do you know by somebody else?  
Yes / No  
78% replied Yes from BUP Potentials students.  
60% replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.
- Do you think that cost of education of this university is reasonable? Are information available in website?  
Yes / No  
55% replied Yes from BUP Potentials students.  
70% replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.
- Do you think that this university has an identity in the job market?  
Yes / No  
75% replied Yes from BUP Potentials students.  
40% replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.
- Why do you want to pursue your higher education in this university for standard quality of education?  
Yes / No  
80% replied Yes from BUP Potentials students.  
62% replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.  
60% replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.
- Do you think that this University has reputation and ranking in top?  
Yes / No  
75% replied Yes from BUP Potentials students.  
60% replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.
- Do you like the campus atmosphere of this university?  
Yes / No  
78% replied Yes from BUP Potentials students.  
85 % replied Yes from SFMU Potentials students.

#### 4. Recommendation

There are some recommendations according to the findings. Those are given below.

- It is proved that “Branding is needed for higher education to keep positioning and attract foreign/local students.” So, if any institution wants to get tremendous response from the prospective students, no doubt to take branding initiatives.
- Students are influenced to choose a University for unique of curriculum, variety of courses and employability. This statement is absolutely true so on the behalf of any varsity these things should be pointed.
- Tuitions fee is the great concern to select a University for higher education it is proved. So, university should take proper initiative for less tuitions fee with standard quality teaching.
- Physical evidence like campus facilities, external ambience and landscape, facilities draw more interest to the students so it should keep it up and continuous development should have needed.
- Branding Universities give the competitive advantage in the market place which is absolutely true so university should have branding initiative more.
- Lack of Branding Initiatives keep down the University Ranking in Present age, so the more branding the more development to keep position at the top.
- Location advantage, uniqueness of campus, green campus, availability of Instruction facilities are core values of University branding so more emphasize on beautification on campus.
- Successful Branding Universities help the student for getting good Career because numbers of reputed company mentioned university name in their job circular. So, keep it up. Websites, leaflets, social media, advertisement are vital part to build University brand. So more emphasize on it and create positive attitude toward students and people.
- Top Universities can hold their position in top because of excellent Branding policy which is absolutely true. So excellent branding policy is needed and no compromise on it

#### 5. Conclusion

The research shows that Branding is really needed for higher education because if any students choose a university for higher education, that university is well known to everyone it gets the first priority. The common psychology of the students that if the university has good reputation, brand value, brand equity and circulation in the country and abroad it will get extra advantage in the field of job market and society. So, there is no doubt about branding initiatives in higher education. It is mandatory part though university is not a business but if a student's gets benefit in their career so why not branding initiatives taken?

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