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Research paper

Factors Affecting Brand Awareness in Central Region of Malaysia: a Study on FPTT

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Abstract

Brand awareness is the ability of potential consumers to recognize or recall of the certain brand from a certain product category. Brand Awareness has been infiltrated in service sectors across the world as well as education sector. In fact, creating brand awareness in universities is much more difficult than a product as the complexity of marketplace has increased tremendously. This research is to study the factors affecting brand awareness of higher education institution. The study obtained data from 243 respondents including students, parents and workers from central region of Malaysia. In this study, the research design used by the researcher was descriptive research design. The results indicate that service quality, advertising and promotion, reputation and employability have significant relationship with brand awareness of Faculty of Technology Management and Technopreneurship (FPTT).

Keywords: *Accreditation; Advertising and Promotion; Brand Awareness; Employability; FPTT; International Recognition; Reputation; Service Quality.*

1. Introduction

Many firms and organizations have realized that one of their most valuable assets is their products or services associated by brand names (Keller, 2013). It is undeniable that the role of brand management has been evolved to a new significant level in today's global marketplace (Pinar et. al., 2014). One of the challenges in branding services is that they are intangible than products and vary in quality, depending on the person or firm producing them (Keller, 2013). Therefore, branding is critical to service firms (Keller, 2013).

Higher Educational Institutional (HEI) is one of the service firms. Branding of higher education (HE) are considered as one of the most important factors that indicate the success of HEI (Almadhoun et. al., 2011). According to Malaysia Ministry of Higher Education, universities are one of the HEI. Nowadays, a lot of universities find themselves difficult to build a competitive position in the dynamic marketplace (Almadhoun et. al., 2011).

Today, people's desire to achieve university is increasing swiftly since the world is improving its total rate of literacy (Abbas, 2014). As a result, marketing practices have become critical and significant for universities to attract students in the competitive environment (Abbas, 2014). And brand is an important elements in marketing (Vijayalakshmi and Barani, 2015).

Brand equity acts as a bridge for universities to market themselves (Keller, 2013). Before brand equity is developed, brand knowledge is needed in order to create strong brand equity. Brand awareness is one of the components of brand knowledge that can creates differences that drives brand equity (Keller, 2013).

University found that the complexity of competing for students and support has increased in the marketplace (Whisman, 2009). Vijayalakshmi and Barani (2015) also stated that universities have to focus on market orientation. Every potential competitive advantage need to take into account due to the numbers of university in Malaysia have increased (Vijayalakshmi and Barani, 2015). The objective of this study is to investigate how well FPTT is in developing brand awareness so that students, parents and workers could aware of. This research will also allow the researcher to identify the factors in creating brand awareness among students, parents and workers in central region of Malaysia.

Therefore, the researcher comes out with several research objectives of this research as below:

1. to measure the performance level of FPTT in creating brand awareness among students, parents and workers in central region of Malaysia.
2. To identify the factors that determined brand awareness of FPTT among students, parents and workers in central region of Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Brand Awareness of University

Today, there are many HEIs include universities around the world apply marketing theories and gain competitive advantage on an ongoing basis (Abbas, 2014). University branding is a new research field and there are limited studies in this area (Tas and Ergin, 2012). The competition of higher education has increased in developed countries due to globalization changed the way of universities and communication changes (Ahmad and Dar, 2015).

Whisman (2009) argues that the complexity of universities led to the failure of traditional branding approach. Therefore he suggests

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that universities took an inside-out approach to develop the brand. It is not easy to create brand awareness of universities. Universities need to consider about their lifelong sustainability, to satisfy a demanding public and to confront with tough competition like corporation institutions (Whisman, 2009). HEIs include universities need to become more market oriented in order to confront with all the changes (Vijayalakshmi and Barani, 2015).

2.2. Accreditation

In order to improve the Malaysia education standard, the Ministry of Education has enacted the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 and has set up the Malaysian Government Qualifications Agency (MQA) to enforce the Act. This agency is responsible for quality assurance of higher education for both the public and the private sectors. Section 81 of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 (Act 679) provides that the Agency shall establish and maintain a national register known as the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR), containing programmes, qualifications and higher education providers accredited under the Act. Any interested party may refer to the MQR to get verification on the status of any program or course from any HEI.

A university being accredited means that the particular institution has met the quality standard and is being recognized by global. Quality is the key for all the reputed brands and competitive edge to get dominant market share (Ahmad and Dar, 2015). Students will aware and choose to enter to institutions that have been accredited instead of those haven't been accredited because this is one of the criteria for students to get a job or to proceed to Masters Programme. Ahmad and Dar (2015) found that accreditation is positive related to student preferences.

2.3. Service Quality

According to Kuo and Nien-Te Kuo (2011), service quality is based on perspective from customers, assessing the customer satisfaction level with the service provided by a firm. Palli and Mamilla (2012) also stated that service quality concentrates on how to meet customer expectation due to expectations are dynamic and may change over time, from person to person and from culture to culture. It is important for service sectors to increase the construct of service quality (Menon, 2015). Nowadays, universities are more mattered on service quality in order to enhance their educational standard (Palli and Mamilla, 2012).

Quality will be the foremost element in customer evaluation when comes to educational services (Palli and Mamilla, 2012). Takalo et. al. (2013) defined education quality as the features of education elements and using efficiencies and possibilities of those elements, explicit and implicit anticipations and demands of educational customers can be met and their satisfaction can be reached. Services of universities is positive correlated with higher education brand equity (Moghaddam et. al., 2013). Service has significant impact on brand rating in selection of universities (John and Senith, 2013).

2.4. Advertising and Promotion

Promotion can create the awareness dimension (Mourad et. al., 2011). Moghaddam et. al. (2013) validated that promotional activities are the characteristics of the brand awareness. There are many promotional tool can be used by university such as social media (Almadhoun et. al., 2011), education fair (Gębarowski, 2012), billboard (Siddiqi et. al., 2014) and so on to create brand awareness. Formulation of a higher education institutional marketing strategy must consider about: 1.Current programs of the institution and industry. 2. Coming new program and market occasions. 3. Competitors analysis. 4. Institution's positioning in relation to competitors. 5. Select target markets and design the marketing mix (Kotler and Keller, 2012). Sam et. al. (2018), mentioned that in a marketing perspective, consumers need to be provided with items with maximum value.

2.5. Reputation

Herbig and Milewicz (1993) defined corporate reputation as a concept based on internal and external stakeholders' perception in institution. Azoury (2013) also believed that university is the institution that fully depends on its image in order to flourish and survive. An educational brand usually associated to a university's academic image (Vukasovič, 2015). In order to maintain competitive position in the marketplace, universities are combating to build a distinct image or reputation (Azoury, 2013).

According to Ariyarathna et. al. (2015), reputation is one of the main factors affect to consumers equity on higher education. According to Joseph et. al. (2012), image has positive impact on brand rating in selection of universities. Furthermore, reputation assist in conjuring up a level of brand equity in prospective students (Vukasovič, 2015). Competitive edge will be provided to that particular university if the reputation of the university is managed properly (Jawad et. al., 2012).

2.6. Employability of Graduates

According to the official website of The University of Edinburgh, employability is a set of accomplishment- skills, understanding and personal attributes- that make graduated more employment and be outstanding in their chosen affair, which assist themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy, defined by Professor Mantz Yorke (2004). Employability also refer as the quality or opportunity of having a job (Cardoso et. al., 2014). Universities trained the students' employability skills in order to prepare them to enter the labour market (Cardoso et. al., 2014).

Universities should update their curriculum due to advance technology and quick changes in economy (Fiorini, 2011). Employability skills can be achieved through working experiences, entrepreneurship programmes, improving career advice and the use of portfolios (Knight and Yorke, 2003). University students are often learn from the environment and working experiences helped students in requiring skills for success and this will made students more mature, cooperative, able to communicate fluently, build up interpersonal skills and increase their awareness of the culture of workplace (Yorke, 2006).

2.7. International Recognition

One of the most essential decisions that a student need to make is choosing a course or program from a university to study (CIE, 2008). It is important to ensure that qualifications are widely recognized and valued by worldwide (CIE, 2008). The rigid competition between public and private HEIs in Malaysia requires these institutions to become more internationalized (Edrak et. al., 2015). Internationalization is a complicated trend in Malaysia HE industry (Edrak et. al., 2015). Internalization is an undeniable force and catalyst in assisting and stimulating the country to achieve the Vision 2020 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2011). Due to the increasing trend of internationalization, the brand equity and its recognition are critical for most of the universities around the world (Jawad et. al., 2012).

2.8. Performance Management of University

Performance measurement is a critical part of the latest managerialism in higher education (Cave et. al., 2009). Ioana and Adriana (2015) conclude that the models for measuring performance in universities are performance pyramid (Lynch and Cross, 1991), results and determinants framework (Fitzgerald et. al., 1991), balanced scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1992) and performance prism (Neely et. al., 2002).

Student intake is one of the educational performance indicators (Wang, 2010). According to Wang (2010), the intake of students can be divided into bachelors and masters. Intake of bachelor program's students is including the number of intake of first year students, international students in bachelor programs while intake of master program's student is including the number of intake of internal master students and international master students (Wang, 2010). All the indicators can be measured by the number of enrolments in universities and can be compared with the actual number of intake of students against university targets (Wang, 2010).

Hypothesis 1 (H1)
Accreditation will affect brand awareness of FPTT among students, parents and workers.
Hypothesis 2 (H2)
Service quality will affect brand awareness of FPTT among students, parents and workers.
Hypothesis 3 (H3)
Advertising and promotion will affect brand awareness of FPTT among students, parents and workers.
Hypothesis 4 (H4)
Reputation will affect brand awareness of FPTT among students, parents and workers.
Hypothesis 5 (H5)
Employability of graduates will affect brand awareness of FPTT among students, parents and workers.
Hypothesis 6 (H6)
International recognition will affect brand awareness of FPTT among students, parents and workers.

From the hypotheses above, a conceptual framework can be built and shown as Figure 1 below.

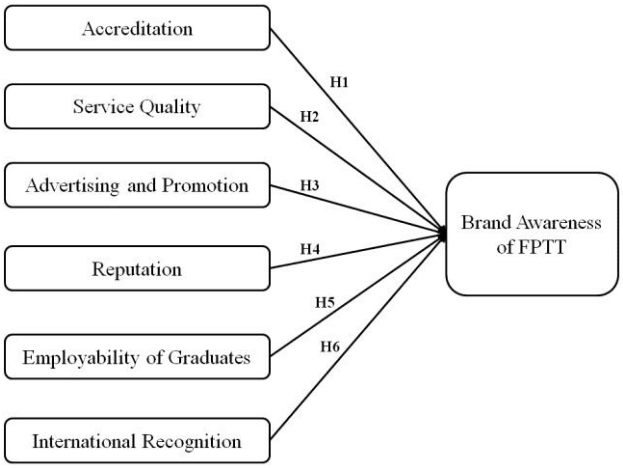


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Scope of the Study

The research model was formulated to investigate the related question through questionnaire outlined in preceding section. This research only focused on the students, parents and workers in central region of Malaysia which is KL and Selangor. The research instruments included a combination of structured questionnaire and surveys will be used for further validation. The results study focused on the performance level of FPTT in creating brand awareness and the factors affecting brand awareness. The data collection was from real time to support the research. The results of the research were used for further validation.

3.2. Sample

The target respondents chosen by the researcher were students, parents and workers from the central region of Malaysia which are Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The questionnaires were distributed to 243 respondents where these respondents were chosen by using probability sampling method. The reason for the researcher to distribute 200 questionnaires was because there were researchers got the results by choosing to distribute 200 questionnaires in the previous studies. The researcher has divided target respondents into three specific groups. First group was the STPM, matriculation, diploma and bachelor degree students. The second group was the parents. The third group was workers.

3.3. Measures

Multiple regression analysis was used for analysis in this study.

3.4. Statistical Method

SPSS software (IBM SPSS Statistics 22) was used to run the analysis in the study.

4. A Step Before the Final Submission

4.1. Validity Analysis

According to Simon M.K.(2011), before the final form of the questionnaire is conducted, it is recommended that the researcher to conduct a pilot study in order to determine if the items are yielding the kind of information that is needed so as to give advance warning regarding weaknesses in a proposed study. In this study, the researcher has done a pilot test by distributing the questionnaire to 41 respondents. It came out with the result as shown below.

Table 1: Validity Test

Item	Value	Critical Value (0.05)	Conclusion	Critical Value (0.01)	Conclusion
1	0.440	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
2	0.718	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
3	0.847	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
4	0.752	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
5	0.833	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
6	0.741	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
7	0.406	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
8	0.667	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
9	0.840	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
10	0.758	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
11	0.841	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
12	0.778	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
13	0.861	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
14	0.574	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
15	0.814	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
16	0.737	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
17	0.788	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
18	0.791	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
19	0.846	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
20	0.514	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
21	0.770	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
22	0.669	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
23	0.886	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
24	0.707	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
25	0.587	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
26	0.750	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
27	0.828	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
28	0.794	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
29	0.897	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
30	0.779	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
31	0.756	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
32	0.701	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid

33	0.666	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
34	0.708	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
35	0.691	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
36	0.663	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
37	0.566	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
38	0.874	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
39	0.896	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
40	0.874	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid
41	0.958	0.312	Valid	0.403	Valid

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

From the table above, the results showed all the variable items were valid when had been compared to the table of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. All the results showed all the variable items were more than the critical value of 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance.

This pilot test has proven that the target respondents are able to understand the questions in the questionnaire. The researcher created the questionnaire in English and Malay language so that the respondents feel comfortable when answering questionnaire.

4.2. Reliability Analysis

In this study, the researcher used the internal technique which is Cronbach's Alpha. Below here is the table to illustrate the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient range and its strength of association.

Table 2: Guidelines for Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Range	**Strength of Association**
< 0.5	Unacceptable
0.5 to < 0.6	Poor
0.6 to < 0.7	Questionable
0.7 to < 0.8	Acceptable
0.8 to < 0.9	Good
0.9	Excellent

Source: George and Mallery (2003)

Table 3: Reliability Scale of All Variables

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.953	41

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

Table 3 above showed that the Cronbach's Alpha for all independent and dependent variables and computed to test the reliability of the research. There was a reliability analysis between three independent variables and one dependent variable and also a total of 41 items to be measured by using the result of 243 respondents. The rule of thumb for the reliability test is that 0.7 or higher represents good reliability. Therefore, the value of Cronbach's Alpha of this research was 0.953 where it showed that the result computed was considered an excellent reliable.

Table 4: Reliability Scale of Accreditation

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.822	6

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

Table 4 showed the value of Cronbach's Alpha of Accreditation was 0.822 where it showed that the result computed was considered a very good reliable.

Table 5: Reliability Scale of Service Quality

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.864	7

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

Table 5 showed the reliability scale of Service Quality. The value of Cronbach's Alpha of service quality was 0.864 where it showed that the result computed was considered a very good reliable.

Table 6: Reliability Scale of Advertising and Promotion

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.852	6

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

The reliability result of Advertising and Promotion shown in table 6 was a Cronbach's Alpha statistic of 0.852. The result was very good and showed that the reliability of questions under this independent variable was very high.

Table 7: Reliability Scale of Reputation

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.787	6

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

The reliability result of Reputation shown in table 7 was a Cronbach's Alpha statistic of 0.787. The result was good and showed that the reliability of questions under this independent variable was high.

Table 8: Reliability Scale of Employability

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.885	6

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

Table 8 showed the value of Cronbach's Alpha of Employability was 0.885 where it showed that the result computed was considered a very good reliable.

Table 9: Reliability Scale of International Recognition

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.716	5

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

Table 9 showed the value of Cronbach's Alpha of International Recognition was 0.716 where it showed that the result computed was considered a good reliable.

Table 10: Reliability Scale of Brand Awareness of FPTT

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.898	5

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

The reliability result of reputation shown in table 10 was a Cronbach's Alpha statistic of 0.898. The result was very good and showed that the reliability of questions under this independent variable was very high.

4.3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 11: Model Summary

Model Summary[b]				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.515[a]	.265	.246	.47367
a. Predictors: (Constant), International Recognition, Accreditation, Advertising and Promotion, Reputation, Service Quality, Employability				
b. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness of FPTT				

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

Table 11 displayed the value of R = 0.515 and the coefficient of determination (R square) of 0.246. This suggested that the Brand Awareness of FPTT was influence by Accreditation, Service Quality, Advertising and Promotion, Reputation, Employability and International Recognition by 24.6%. The rest of the portion, (100% - 24.6% = 75.4%) 75.4% was influence by other non-stated causes.

Table 12: ANOVA

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.100	6	3.183	14.188	.000[b]

	Residual	52.951	236	.224		
	Total	72.051	242			
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness of FPTT						
b. Predictors: (Constant), International Recognition, Accreditation, Advertising and Promotion, Reputation, Service Quality, Employability						

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

F-test is used to determine whether the model is a good fit for the data. The significant testing is used to test the relationship between variables and the result of the significant value will tell if there is a statistically significant correlation between variables. Based on Table 12 above, it computed the F value was 14.188 and the significant value, $p < 0.01$. It was clear that all of the independent variables were statistically significant influencing the dependent variable.

Table 13: Coefficients

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.612	.385		1.589	.113
	Accreditation	.171	.087	.131	1.964	.051
	Service Quality	.258	.103	.201	2.502	.013
	Advertising and Promotion	-.298	.103	-.218	-2.891	.004
	Reputation	.423	.136	.267	3.110	.002
	Employability	.241	.117	.183	2.064	.040
	International Recognition	.014	.116	.009	.118	.906
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness of FPTT						

Source: Data Analysis with SPSS

Based on Table 13 above, all the independent variables have the significant value, $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$ accept for Accreditation ($p= 0.051$) and International Recognition ($p = 0.906$). The Y intercept of the model is labelled as the constant and had a value of 0.612. The unstandardized coefficients (B), the standardized coefficient (Beta), and the significant level were determined by t-test. The unstandardized coefficient (B) is the partial regression coefficients as the values were taken into account the other predictor variables in the model and they will perform the predicted change in the dependent variable for every unit increase in the predictor.
Based on Table 13, the linear equation was developed (1).

$$y = 0.612 + 0.258x_2 – 0.298x_3 + 0.423x_4 + 0.241x_5 \quad (1)$$

Definition 2.1:
x_2= *Service Quality*
x_3=*Advertising and Promotion*
x_4= *Reputation*
x_5= *Employability*

Table 14: Number of FPTT New Students from Year 2009-2016

Year	Number of FPTT new students
2009	176
2010	239
2011	224
2012	219
2013	234
2014	252
2015	295
2016	376

Source: *Bahagian Pengurusan Akademik* UTeM

Based on Table 14, the numbers of FPTT new students were increasing. There were only 176 new students in 2009. In 2010, the number of new students increased by 63. However, the number of new students decreased to 224 and 219 in 2011 and 2012. The number of new students increased to 234 in 2013 and increased continuously in 2014, 2015 and 2016 where the numbers of FPTT new students were 252, 295 and 376.

5. Conclusion and Future Recommendations

5.1. Discussion of Research Objective

Objective 1: To measure the performance level of FPTT in creating brand awareness among students, parents and workers in central region of Malaysia

Based on Table 14, the number of FPTT new students' intake has increased by 200 students or 113.64% in these 9 years period (2009-2016). As mentioned in Chapter 2, student intake is one of the educational performance indicators. From Table 4.27, the researcher concluded that FPTT have good performance in creating brand awareness.
Objective 2**:** To identify the factors that determined brand awareness of FPTT among students, parents and workers in central region of Malaysia.
Based on the output of multiple regression in Table 13, the significant of Accreditation of 0.051 greater than 0.05, this can be concluded that Accreditation has no significant relationship with Brand Awareness of FPTT. This may due to there are so many universities and colleges in Malaysia including public and private have been accredited by MQA. It seems that accreditation is very normal among university and college. Therefore, people may not really care about accreditation if they didn't prepare to enter a certain university or college.
For Service Quality, the significant value was 0.013 smaller than 0.05, this showed strong significant between Service Quality and the dependent variable which was Brand Awareness of FPTT. This may due to people are starting to regard service quality as one of the important elements in every industry. As a customer, they expect to be respected, to be heard and to be satisfied internally. They feel that they are the one who pay the money so they should receive at least a basic service quality. According to Menon (2015), universities need to satisfy its stakeholders and bring a quality service continuously to attain sustainability in a aggressive service environment.
Then, for the third independent variable, Advertising and Promotion, it scored a significant value of 0.004 smaller than 0.05, this can be concluded that Advertising and Promotion has a significant relationship with Brand Awareness of FPTT. According to Mourad et. al. (2011), promotion can create the awareness dimension. Moghaddam et. al. (2013) also stated that promotional activities are the characteristics of the brand awareness.
For Reputation, the significant value was 0.002 smaller than 0.05, this showed strong significant between Reputation and the dependent variable which was Brand Awareness of FPTT. According to Vukasovič (2015), an educational brand usually associated to a university's academic reputation. Azoury (2013) also believed that university is the institution that fully depends on its image in order to flourish and survive.
For Employability, the significant value was 0.04 smaller than 0.05, this showed a significant relationship between Employability and the dependent variable which was Brand Awareness of FPTT. Graduates are essential to possess both knowledge as well as relevant soft skills that will improve their competency to enter into the dynamic market (Kaur et. al., 2008). According to Azian and Mun (2011), a research done by the Malaysian Employers Federation displayed that 68% of employers selected communication skills as the most vital skill during job application.
Lastly, for International Recognition, the significant value was 0.906 greater than 0.05, this showed that no significant relationship between International Recognition and the dependent variable which was Brand Awareness of FPTT. This happened

may because of FPTT is a new faculty in UTeM and FPTT just got accredited by MQA in the year of 2013. Therefore, FPTT has not finished its' preparation of promoting itself to global yet.

5.2. Recommendations for Future Study

For future research, the researcher recommends that future researcher to do FPTT's other brand elements such as brand image, brand associations and so on. Next, focuses only in central region of Malaysia is not enough. It is highly recommended including all the states in the country when conducting research because it tends to have different thinking about the Brand Awareness of FPTT among students, parents and workers.
Besides, the researcher recommends that future researchers to find out the ways and solutions to increase brand awareness of FPTT. Since the factors have weak to moderate relationship with brand awareness of FPTT, future researcher can help FPTT to find out solutions to increase the brand awareness of FPTT.
Moreover, future researchers can focus on the comparison of brand awareness between FPTT and other faculties in UTeM or other similar faculties in other public or private universities.

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