

IMPACT OF BRAND AWARENESS ON ENROLLMENT DECISION PROCESS MODERATED BY STUDENTS GENDER FOR HEI

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ABSTRACT

The increasing competition in higher education institutions has made brand awareness an integral part of their marketing activity, to increase student enrollment rate. The study investigates the factors of brand awareness and its relationship with each stage of a student's enrolment decision process, keeping student's gender as moderator. Primary and secondary sources were used to do the research. A structured questionnaire was framed and data was collected from 1000 students from management colleges and schools. Factor analysis, Structural equation modeling and moderation analysis is used in the study. The finding reveals that there is a relationship between brand awareness and students decision-making process. Even when student's gender is acting as a moderator, the impact of factors of brand awareness can be seen on each stage of decision-making process. All five hypotheses were accepted. Factors of brand awareness were identified. These factors showed a significant impact on students' enrolment decision process, even when moderated by students' gender. The article contributes in understanding the role of brand awareness in each stages of enrollment student's decision making for higher education institutions. These institutions should focus more on brand awareness programs as it may result in the increase of student's enrollment number for higher education institution.

Keywords: Branding; Brand recognition; Brand recall; Higher Education; Enrollment; Structural Equation Modeling

1. INTRODUCTION

Zang (2020), states that in the decision-making process of consumers, brand awareness assumes an imperative role. High brand awareness creates an impact in the consumer cognition process in a way that they can easily, with less effort remember and differentiate the brand. In case of low brand awareness, it takes time to create an impact the consumer cognition process. Therefore, consumers prefer those brand which have created brand awareness to those, which have not. Today the development of internet technology has changed the manner in which businesses and communication are done as social media has brought together people from all over the world (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020). Internet today has given the customers the facility to get any required information from different sources.

Consumers can themselves gather the necessary data that they are searching. It is through the sites that brands are speaking with their clients. By utilizing the web, clients have gotten to enormous quantities of data from around the world. With just a tick, customers can gain critical pieces of information about associations and their things and be aware. Therefore, it has become important for organizations to use internet to create and increase brand awareness as it is more advantageous (Jain& Yadav, 2017; Chan et al., 2015). Brand awareness influence the decision making process of a student while deciding for a university and whether to continue or not in the same university for further studies. Brand awareness creates an image of the university, which may attract students. So, if a college or a university have

high brand awareness they will high brand image and will attract more students (Mulyono, H. 2016). Consumers prefer that brand which they have are aware of rather than ones which they are not. This makes brand awareness important in decision-making process (Huang & Sarigollu, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311975.2020.17877332012>). There is a strong tendency to purchase the brand by those consumers who can recognize the brand. In case of higher education institution brand awareness is important as it influences the decision making process if students (Brewer & Zhao, 2010). Brand awareness is the fundamental component of brand equity, which is seen as an important pre-condition of decision-making process for consumers. Brand awareness creates familiarity between brand and the consumer, which may reduce the risk perceived by the consumers related to the brand. Further, brand awareness has two important components one is brand recall and the other is brand recognition. These two components influence the decision making process in their own ways (Moisescu, 2009). One can define brand awareness as the ability of the consumers to recall or recognize the brand during the decision making process or at least know the brand (Keller, 2008). Bunzel (2007) states that in the present scenario there is a high competition in higher education sector just like any other businesses. Therefore, one cannot ignore building brand and creating brand awareness of their institution. The publications give rankings to these institutions are helpful while attracting students. These ranking increases the brand of the college. Therefore, there is no denying of the fact that a college needs marketing, rankings and better brand awareness programs. Acquaintance between a customer and brand creates brand awareness. It creates stimuli like responses from clients where they can go through recalling, recognizing and be familiar with that brand. A brand that as of now exists utilizes a procedure called brand reinforcement to increase their brand awareness (Percy et al., 2006; Islam et al., 2021). According to Gibbs & Dean, (2015) awareness created by higher education institutions will help the students in their decision making process. Higher education enrollment decision is a very big decision for students. A trust has to be their within them for a higher education institution so that they

think about considering that institution for enrollment. Therefore, it is important for the institutions to make students and their customers aware about themselves and the facilities and products that they are offering.

The purpose of the study with research gap is: to show the factors of brand awareness in case of higher education institution. To fill in the gaps of the previous findings which show that brand awareness is important in consumer decision process and help the students in their decision making process for enrollment but does not show the impact that brand awareness may have on the each step of the enrollment decision making. Further, there is not much literature that is available on impact of brand awareness on stages of enrollment decision making process. Therefore, the study fills this gap and shows the impact of brand awareness on student's enrollment decision making process. The study address three main questions: a) what are the factors of brand awareness that influence enrollment decision making process, b) what is the impact of brand awareness factors on enrollment decision making for higher education institution, and c) is the enrollment decision making process moderated by students gender or not.

Practically it is going to help higher education institutions by giving them a deeper understanding of the role-played by brand awareness in higher education institution thus, helping them in increasing their enrollment number. This will help the institutions to be more competitive. The study shows that on each step of the enrolment decision brand awareness plays a role.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Brand awareness Importance in Higher Education Institution

Higher education is supposed to be vital as it prepares the students for future. For students higher education fills them with three significant needs. One is to get ready for the work market. The students believe that higher education degree is vital for becoming a professional worker and get the job. The second one is self improvement and development. The third is to do good for the society and its development i.e. that is the feeling of commitment that they need to make towards the public (Brooks et al., 2020). Keller (2019) concluded that there is relationship between brands and consumers, as they both existence depend on each other. Brands are

created for consumer and there is value for brands in consumers mind. Students need good higher education institutions and higher education needs good and capable students. There are number of higher education institutions but the one that can position itself well is the one that will attract more good students. Awareness has to be made for everything that the institution can give them, positioning themselves well in the students mind (Mestrovic et al., 2019). According to Gielens& Steenkamp (2019) the internet has created a buzz in the marketing segment and has made everyone dependent on it. By utilizing distinctive advertising on the web devices the associations be it any, are coming in direct contact with their clients. Internet is furnishing associations with significant data in regards to their clients, in this way further providing better facilities to their clients. Therefore, even for higher education institutions it is necessary that they use creative and aggressive marketing strategies (Kusumawati, 2019). Marketing done on the digital platform by the brands create a positive brand attachment between the consumer and the brand , as these marketing campaigns induces brand engagement via social networking sites(Arya et al.,2018; 2019, 2021; Jain et al., 2021; Jhamb et al., 2021).A university needs to be recognized by their names and for this marketing is very important. Therefore, a university cannot ignore brand awareness, for recognition brand awareness has to be created. To create brand awareness different marketing strategies needs to be adopted by the universities (Abbas, 2019). According to Zhou et al., (2021) digitalization has given an online platform which is being used by the marketers to create a brand and increase product awareness all this is a result of advancement in technology. Consumers today by the means of online media communicate, sees reviews, ratings and recommendation for a product and all this influence the purchase decision (Rashid et al., 2022). Bhattacharya & Faisal (2020) stated that Covid-19 gave more reasons to the higher education institutions and universities to use more of social media platforms for branding purpose. Universities with the help of social media can improvise their brand awareness programs and brand performance. According to Arya et al., (2022) marketing activities needs to be refined by brand, as brand communication has influence on consumers.

According to Reddy, et al., (2016) if students are not aware about the facilities and courses that a university is offering them then that little awareness may not be helpful in attracting the students. Hence, may not result in university enrollment.

2.2 The importance of brand awareness in enrollment decision making

Now a day, it has become important for higher education institutions to do branding. Branding increases the enrollment rate of students. They help universities and colleges to attract students (Alam et al., 2019). Khurram (2018) states that when it comes to decision- making process brand recognition and recall has most important role to play. One can either recall a brand while thinking of the product or one can recognize a brand by seeing its symbol and more. Today any information that is required by anyone regarding anything is just a click away because of the internet. Therefore, it has become important to go for online marketing campaigns for all organizations (Jain&Yadav, 2017). Communicating brand using facebook alters the minds of the customers and boost the brand image and loyalty (Handa et al., 2018). Many factors that students consider while making their enrollment decision influence them. The most important is the information. Information that a student has in hands is very important factor. Therefore, higher education institutions need to reach out to their targets to give information. For all this institution needs to see that their marketing strategies are updated as this will help them grow (Cherkunova, 2016 ;Garwe, 2014).According to Shojaee& Bin (2013) in case of online media, the effect of brand awareness is on customer engagement. It is advantageous to use social media to increase brand awareness. These days there are different online marketing techniques with which brand awareness can be created or can be increased (Karam, &Saydam, 2015). Alhaddad (2015) states that for creating brand awareness one can use online media substances like images, graphical data, recordings, and other substance. The posts set up via web-based media providing visual to individuals have more shots at being recalled and recognized by them. Furthermore sending such posts and receiving comments, makes the whole interaction as a procedure of publicizing powerfully. Keuschnigg (2015) if brand

awareness of a product is good then a positive word of mouth takes place for that products brand, thus increasing the number of customers. Such customers will not be affected by the price of the product as they will be ready to pay even if the price is more. According to Vijayalakshmi & Barani, (2015) there is no relationship between gender and brand awareness when it comes to higher education institutions. In addition, creating brand awareness is very important in the selection process of a college for students and for parents as top of the information is created by brand awareness. There are two main components of brand awareness; those are brand recall and recognition. Recalling a brand helps in recognizing a brand also (Rossiter, 2014). In case of high brand awareness, there are more chances for a brand to be recalled, increasing the possibility of brand to be selected by the customer (Lu et al., 2014). Joseph et al., (2014) states that a college's image and brand awareness can be made by the means of branding and communication strategies. In any event, when they are making a visit to the grounds, data assembled from known people and promotions done by, the colleges are significant for sharing data to the forthcoming understudies that prompts understudies taking their choice for choosing the college. A significant relationship was found between brand awareness and the market. The relationship is constructive. Brand gets a good result in the market (Homburg et al., 2010). According to Kim et al., (2008) Recognizing, recalling and creating top of the mind information of a brand are very important factors while going through the process of decision- making. At the hour of choice, brand recalling can happen as they may already have information about the brand. Brand awareness makes relationship of purchasers with that specific brand. At the point when one now knows about a brand, it gets simple for that purchaser to recall the brand. One can recall a brand easily when they have heard about it or have some information about it. Therefore, for any marketing strategy brand awareness is necessary. One should spend on the advertisements as it will help to increase brand awareness because the product or the brand will be seen repeatedly (Gil et al., 2007). According to Coates et al., (2006) familiarity with a brand plays an important role. Usually people will prefer that brand

which they have heard of or have known about rather than the ones, which they have never heard off. According to Macdonald & Sharp, (2000) one major purpose of all marketing activity is to create or increase brand awareness. Promotions are done with the goal that it tends to be recalled by the customers and will be considered by them when they settle on a choice. Higher the brand awareness, higher is the odds of the brand to be chosen by the purchaser.

2.3 College Enrollment Decision Process

According to Klaveren et al., (2019) the enrollment decision of a student and not dropping out from the institution during the first year depends on the information about the positive future performance that the institution can give them. Randall (1986) has stated college selection process, which consists of five steps. First being pre search behaviour where a student firstly decides whether or not he/she wants to really go for his or her higher education studies or not. After this stage is the search stage, where a student has decided to go for higher education studies and now wants to decide a higher education institution to study in. This is a stage where a student is continuously using all the resources for gathering information that they can about different colleges. After collecting information required by them, they move on to the next step that is sending applications. They apply in colleges; here few colleges have been selected to send applications. Most of the time students are not aware about the financial aids that a higher education institution can provide them with. The choice stage is where they get to know about it. Before this stage, they are not sure about how much or if a college is going provide them with the financial aid. This also affects their final choice that they make. As, they have all the information here, so they finally chose a college. After this, the final enrollment decision is left. Here, chances are there that a student may not complete the last stage as he or she may not join the college because of some problems or various other reasons. This is known as the matriculation stage.

3. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

There is not much literature that is available on the impact of brand awareness on enrolment decision making process. Therefore, this study has been done to show the impact

of brand awareness on each stage of the enrollment decision making process. Further, the study also sees whether student's gender act as a moderator or not in between brand awareness and enrollment decision making process. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed for each stage of enrollment decision making process.

According to Gibbs & Dean, (2015) awareness created by higher education institutions will help the students in their decision making process. Higher education enrollment decision is a very big decision for students. A trust has to be their within them for a higher education institution so that they think about considering that institution for enrollment. According to Vijayalakshmi & Barani, (2015) there is no relationship between gender and brand awareness when it comes to higher education institutions. In addition, creating brand awareness is very important in the selection process of a college for students and for parents as top of the information is created by brand awareness. From the above literature, one cannot know the effect of brand awareness on the first stage of enrollment decision making process moderated by student's gender. Therefore, this hypothesis was developed

H0₁: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the pre search behavior of enrolment decision moderated by student's gender

Many factors that students considers while making their enrollment decision influence them. The most important is the information. Information that a student has in hands is very important factor (Cherkunova, 2016 ;Garwe, 2014).According to Kim et al., (2008) Recognizing, recalling and creating top of the mind information of a brand are very important factors while going through the process of decision- making. At the hour of choice, brand recalling can happen as they may already have information about the brand. Brand awareness makes relationship of purchasers with that specific brand. From the above literature, we do not get to know that gender wise there is a difference or not in enrollment search behaviour of information of students for higher education, institution and its relationship with brand awareness. Therefore, this hypothesis was developed. Therefore, this hypothesis was developed.

H0₂: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the search behavior of enrolment decision moderated by student's gender

According to He et al., (2020), for a consumer being aware or familiar with the brand affects the liking for that brand, increasing the possibility of a brand to be chosen by the consumer. In cases of decision with not much involvement, just knowledge of the brand influence, the decision making process of the consumer. According to Popov (2019) the value of the degree, job opportunities and friends and relatives affect the application decision of a student. From the above literature, we do not get to know the brand awareness relationship with application decision stage in the enrollment decision-making process. Also, gender wise there is a difference or not in the application decision making. Therefore, this hypothesis was developed.

H0₃: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the application decision of enrolment moderated by student's gender

Brand awareness is the fundamental component of brand equity, which is seen as an important pre-condition of decision-making process for consumers. Brand awareness creates familiarity between brand and the consumer, which may reduce the risk perceived by the consumers related to the brand. Further, brand awareness has two important components one is brand recall and the other is brand recognition. These two components influence the decision making process in their own ways (Moisescu, 2009).

From the above literature, we do not get to know that brand awareness relationship with choice decision stage in the enrollment decision-making process. Also, gender wise there is a difference or not in the choice decision-making. Students for higher education institution are not known. The hypothesis was developed from the above literature review

H0₄: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the choice decision of enrolment moderated by student's gender

Brand awareness influence the decision making process of a student while deciding

for a university and whether to continue or not in the same university for further studies. Brand awareness creates an image of the university, which may attract students. So, if a college or a university have high brand awareness they will high brand image and will attract more students (Mulyono, H. 2016).

Consumers prefer that brand which they have are aware about rather than ones, which they are not. This makes brand awareness important in decision-making process (Huang & Sarigollu, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311975.2020.17877332012>). According to Misran et al., (2012) career choice and students interest is are the main reason that will lead to matriculation decision. Further, they conducted a study on the engineer students, where they found out that the students were not aware about the dual degree program that the university was offering, in the early stages. This can affect the matriculation decision stage.

The students if are not aware about the different programs that a university can offer them, it may lead to losing students from the final matriculation stage .From the above literature; we do not get to know the brand awareness relationship with matriculation stage in the enrollment decision-making process. Also, gender wise there is a difference or not in the matriculation decision making. The hypothesis was developed from the above literature review

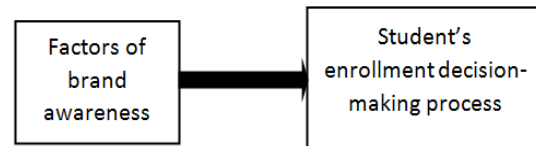
H05: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the student's matriculation decision moderated by student's gender

3.1 Research Methodology

This paper aims to find the relationship between factors of brand awareness and students enrolment decision making process for higher education institutions and also see whether it is moderated by students gender or not. By means of existing literature review the research gap was discern and the impact of brand awareness was tested on each of the steps of the decision making process of students enrollment. Descriptive and exploratory research is used. Factor analysis and structural equation modelling and moderation have been done in the study.

The questionnaire was developed and sample size was kept 1000. This sample was collected in Kathmandu from students who were in colleges, 600 data was collected from management students and 400 from science students.. The population was finite and non-probability convenience sampling method was used.

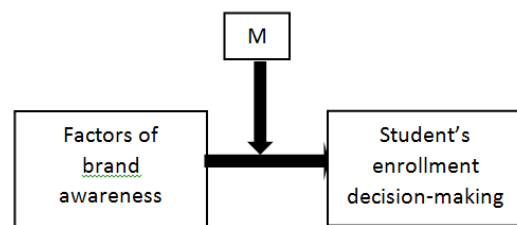
Figure 1: projected model (model we want to test)



Source: Authors

Here with the help of SPSS factor analysis will be done through which factors of brand awareness will be obtained. The impact of factors of brand awareness obtained will be tested by using structural equation modeling technique in AMOS.

Figure 2: projected model (model we want to test)



Source: Authors

For our research after testing the impact of factors of brand awareness on student's enrollment decision-making process, we will put moderation analysis. We will take students gender as moderators and with the help of AMOS and statistical tools; we will get the model for student's gender and the moderation result.

3.2 Data Analysis and Result

Descriptive statistics: Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents, which will make it easy to understand the sample taken for the study.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the Respondents

Simple characteristics		Frequency
Gender	Male	588
	Female	412
Course	Under graduation	384
	Graduation	375
	Post-graduation	230
Age in years	18-20	251
	21-23	328
	24-26	341
	27-29	80

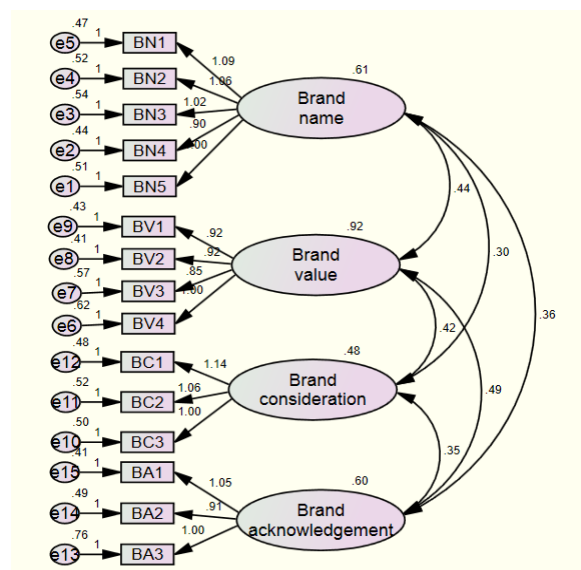
Exploratory factor analysis was done to get the variables from the data set. Kaiser-Mayer-

Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is required to indicate whether to proceed with the factor analysis. KMO value if derived less than 0.05 then one cannot proceed with the data but values nearby 1.0 indicate that data is good to proceed. In this case, KMO is .913 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity < 0.05 thus making factor analysis useful. By using rotation method in factor analysis, 4 factors of brand awareness were identified. Factors loading of these factors are higher than 0.05. Principle component analysis was done and that disclosed factor 1 had 42.569% variance, factor 2 had 10.831% variance, factor 3 had 7.839% variance and factor 5 had 7.011% variance. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis

Attributes	Factor loading			
	Component 1 (Brand Name)	Component 2 (Brand Value)	Component 3 (Brand Consideration)	Component 4 (Brand Acknowledgement)
Brand awareness helps to know about the existence of higher education institution	.745			
I trust more on brand names that I have heard	.799			
Brand awareness creates a positive image	.797			
Brand awareness helps you to be familiar with the brand	.697			
I prefer familiar brand than unfamiliar ones	.735			
I can recognize the brand name by their logo or symbol		.764		
Recognition of a brand name is important to make decision for higher education		.784		
Brand awareness increases the credibility of the college or university		.738		
Brand awareness of a higher education institution increases interest in that institution		.813		
Brand awareness can create a good impression about the brand			.737	
Brand awareness affects the decision-making process			.834	
Brand awareness allows name of the college to be in the minds of the consumers			.689	
While making decision one can recall the names of the brands				.734
Being aware about a college makes you search for more information that college				.710
Brand awareness helps in differentiating the products and services of one institution from others.				.795
Eigen value	6.385	1.625	1.176	1.052
Variance explained (%)	42.569	10.831	7.839	7.011
Cumulative variance explained (%)	42.569	53.401	61.240	68.251
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.913			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6917.737		
	Df	105		
	Sig.	.000		

Figure 3: Confirmatory factor analysis



Source: Authors

Figure 3, shows the confirmatory factor analysis model conducted for the study. Factors that are derived in exploratory factor analysis are confirmed through CFA. For CFA, Amos software was used. CFA was conducted on all four extracted constructs from EFA

using maximum likelihood estimation. From 15 items in CFA there are 5 items on brand name, 4 items on brand value 3 items on brand consideration and 3 items on brand acknowledgement.

The table 3 indicate the result of the CFA model showing model fit. CMIN: 4.577, P: .000, CFI :.956, NFI : .945, RMSEA: .060 , TLI: .945 , GFI: .924 and AGFI .924. This shows the suitability of the model for proceeding further.

Table 4 shows convergent and discriminant validity test that was done to see if there exists any relationship between these constructs or not. For convergent validity the value of CR>0.7 is said to be a good fit and AVE> 0.5 is acceptable value (Tiwari et al., 2021). For discriminant, validity if the diagonal values, i.e. the square of AVE, is greater than the vertical value i.e. the correlation values then it is said to have discriminant validity (Tajpour&Hosseini, 2021). Therefore, we can say that there is a relationship between these factors.

Table 3: Summary of model fit indices

Indicator	Required for Good Fit	Required for Acceptable Fit	
CMIN (Chi-Square/df)	0 ≤ Chi-Square/df ≤ 2	2 ≤ Chi-Square/df ≤ 5	4.577
P value overall	0.05 ≤ p ≤ 1.00	0.01 ≤ p ≤ 0.05	.000
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.97 ≤ CFI ≤ 1.00	0.95 ≤ CFI ≤ 0.97	.956
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	0.95 ≤ GFI ≤ 1.00	0.90 ≤ GFI ≤ 0.95	.947
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	0.90 ≤ AGFI ≤ 1.00	0.85 ≤ GFI ≤ 0.90	.924
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	0.95 ≤ NFI ≤ 1.00	0.90 ≤ NFI ≤ 0.95	.945
RMSEA	< 0.05	<.08	.060
TLI	>.9	<5.0	.945

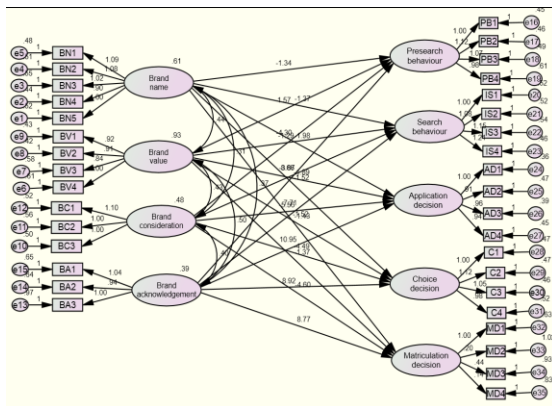
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Table 4: Convergent and discriminant validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	MAX R(H)	Brand consideration	Brand name	Brand value	Brand acknowledgement
Brand consideration	0.766	0.522	0.424	0.768	0.722			
Brand name	0.864	0.559	0.356	0.865	0.559	0.748		
Brand value	0.862	0.609	0.425	0.865	0.633	0.581	0.781	
Brand acknowledgement	0.764	0.521	0.425	0.773	0.651	0.597	0.652	0.722

Source: Authors

Figure 4: Final structure model



Source: Authors

Figure 3 shows the relationship between factors of brand awareness and enrolment decision-making process. The Structural Equation Model was made to test and support the hypothesis using Amos software (Lal & Sharma, 2021). Multiple regression equation was tested using Structural Equation Model. Relationship between factors of brand awareness and students enrollment decision-making process is also shown through it. Sample size was 1000.

Table 5 shows that the model is acceptable. CMIN (Chi-Square/df): 5.596, P : .000, CFI: .876, NFI: .854 and RMSEA: .068 shows that our model is acceptable.

Table 5: Summary of model fit indices

Indicator	Required for Good Fit	Required for Acceptable Fit	
CMIN (Chi-Square/df)	$0 \leq \text{Chi-Square/df} \leq 2$	$2 \leq \text{Chi-Square/df} \leq 5$	5.596
P value overall	$0.05 \leq p \leq 1.00$	$0.01 \leq p \leq 0.05$.000
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	$0.97 \leq \text{CFI} \leq 1.00$	$0.95 \leq \text{CFI} \leq 0.97$.876
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	$0.95 \leq \text{GFI} \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq \text{GFI} \leq 0.95$.840
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	$0.90 \leq \text{AGFI} \leq 1.00$	$0.85 \leq \text{GFI} \leq 0.90$.813
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	$0.95 \leq \text{NFI} \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq \text{NFI} \leq 0.95$.854
RMSEA	< 0.05	$< .08$.068
TLI	$> .9$	< 5.0	.864

Source: Authors

Table 6: Relationship between factors of brand awareness and students enrollment decision

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
presearch_behaviour	<---	brand_name	-1.340	.573	-2.341	.019	par_33
search_behaviour	<---	brand_name	-1.369	.512	-2.672	.008	par_34
application_decision	<---	brand_name	-1.982	.727	-2.727	.006	par_35
choice_decision	<---	brand_name	-1.518	.591	-2.567	.010	par_36
matriculation_decision	<---	brand_name	-1.426	.588	-2.423	.015	par_37
presearch_behaviour	<---	brand_value	-1.575	.544	-2.895	.004	par_38
search_behaviour	<---	brand_value	-1.295	.486	-2.665	.008	par_39
application_decision	<---	brand_value	-1.893	.689	-2.749	.006	par_40
choice_decision	<---	brand_value	-1.525	.561	-2.718	.007	par_41
matriculation_decision	<---	brand_value	-1.374	.558	-2.464	.014	par_42
presearch_behaviour	<---	brand_consideration	-4.298	1.418	-3.031	.002	par_43
search_behaviour	<---	brand_consideration	-3.867	1.268	-3.049	.002	par_44
application_decision	<---	brand_consideration	-5.560	1.797	-3.094	.002	par_45
choice_decision	<---	brand_consideration	-4.494	1.464	-3.069	.002	par_46
matriculation_decision	<---	brand_consideration	-4.600	1.457	-3.157	.002	par_47
presearch_behaviour	<---	brand_acknowledgement	8.660	2.525	3.430	***	par_48
search_behaviour	<---	brand_acknowledgement	7.715	2.259	3.415	***	par_49
application_decision	<---	brand_acknowledgement	10.950	3.197	3.425	***	par_50
choice_decision	<---	brand_acknowledgement	8.920	2.606	3.422	***	par_51
matriculation_decision	<---	brand_acknowledgement	8.771	2.590	3.387	***	par_52

Source: Authors

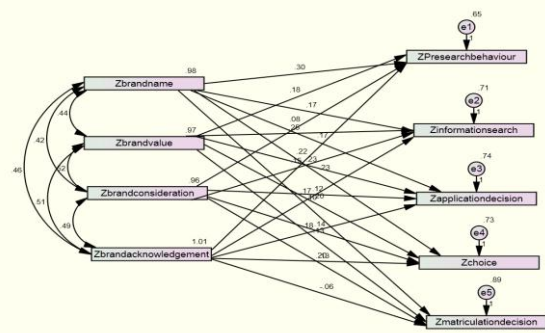
The table 6 shows the relationship between factors of brand awareness and students enrollment decision-making process. The impact of brand name on pre-search behaviour, search behaviour, application decision, choice decision and matriculation decision is ($\beta = -1.340$ & $p = .019$), ($\beta = -1.369$ & $p = .008$), ($\beta = -1.982$ & $p = .006$), ($\beta = -1.518$ & $p = .010$), and ($\beta = -1.426$ & $p = .015$) respectively. The impact of brand value on pre-search behaviour, search behaviour, application decision, choice decision and matriculation decision is ($\beta = -1.575$ & $p = .004$), ($\beta = -1.295$ & $p = .008$), ($\beta = -1.893$ & $p = .006$), ($\beta = -1.525$ & $p = .007$) and ($\beta = -1.374$ & $p = .014$) respectively. The impact of brand consideration on pre-search behaviour, search behaviour, application decision, choice decision and matriculation decision is ($\beta = -4.298$ & $p = .002$), ($\beta = -3.867$ & $p = .002$), ($\beta = -5.560$ & $p = .002$), ($\beta = -4.494$ & $p = .002$) and ($\beta = -4.600$ & $p = .002$) respectively. The impact of brand acknowledgement on pre-search behaviour, search behaviour, application decision, choice decision and matriculation decision is ($\beta = 8.660$ & $p = .000$), ($\beta = 7.715$ & $p = 0.000$), ($\beta = 10.950$ & $p = 0.000$), ($\beta = 8.920$ & $p = 0.000$) and ($\beta = 8.771$ & $p = 0.000$). The value of P in case of all the variables is less than 0.05 showing a significant relationship.

3.3 Student's Gender Moderation Analysis

Moderation has been done to see if of factors of brand awareness on each stage of the students' enrolment decision process is

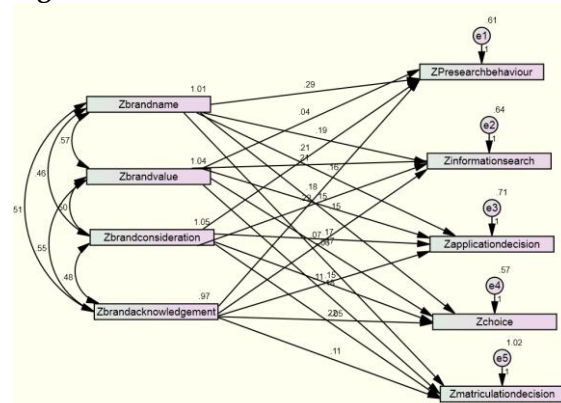
moderated by student's gender or not. Moderation is done with the help of Amos and statistical tool. Figure 3 shows the male moderation and figure 4, female.

Figure 5: Male moderation



Source: Authors

Figure 6: Female moderation



Source: Authors

Table 7: Relationship between factors of brand awareness and students enrollment decision keeping student gender as moderator

		Male		Female		z-score	
		Estimate	P	Estimate	P		
ZPresearchbehaviour	<---	Zbrandname	0.296	0.000	0.288	0.000	-0.122
ZInformationsearch	<---	Zbrandname	0.170	0.000	0.186	0.000	0.250
Zapplicationdecision	<---	Zbrandname	0.169	0.000	0.158	0.003	-0.157
Zchoice	<---	Zbrandname	0.231	0.000	0.152	0.001	-1.235
Zmatriculationdecision	<---	Zbrandname	0.095	0.043	-0.056	0.044	-1.903*
ZPresearchbehaviour	<---	Zbrandvalue	0.185	0.000	0.042	0.008	-2.144**
ZInformationsearch	<---	Zbrandvalue	0.249	0.000	0.206	0.000	-0.617
Zapplicationdecision	<---	Zbrandvalue	0.231	0.000	0.146	0.007	-1.197
Zchoice	<---	Zbrandvalue	0.196	0.000	0.167	0.000	-0.435
Zmatriculationdecision	<---	Zbrandvalue	0.128	0.012	0.184	0.004	0.689
ZPresearchbehaviour	<---	Zbrandconsideration	0.083	0.055	0.207	0.000	1.978**
ZInformationsearch	<---	Zbrandconsideration	0.152	0.000	0.215	0.000	0.967
Zapplicationdecision	<---	Zbrandconsideration	0.122	0.008	0.172	0.000	0.755
Zchoice	<---	Zbrandconsideration	0.143	0.002	0.151	0.000	0.132
Zmatriculationdecision	<---	Zbrandconsideration	0.129	0.010	-0.048	0.041	-2.291**
ZPresearchbehaviour	<---	Zbrandacknowledgement	0.222	0.000	0.182	0.000	-0.613

Zinformationsearch	<---	Zbrandacknowledgement	0.168	0.000	0.072	0.040	-1.408
Zapplicationdecision	<---	Zbrandacknowledgement	0.181	0.000	0.114	0.035	-0.944
Zchoice	<---	Zbrandacknowledgement	0.195	0.000	0.219	0.000	0.362
Zmatriculationdecision	<---	Zbrandacknowledgement	-0.063	0.021	0.106	0.045	2.069**

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

Table 7 shows the relationship between factors of brand awareness and students enrollment decision-making process was tested by taking students gender as moderator. The significant value of brand name, brand value, brand consideration and brand acknowledgement on pre-search behaviour in case of male is (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.055), (p = 0.000) and female is (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000) respectively. Hence, our null hypothesis is accepted. *H0₁*: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the pre search behavior of enrolment decision moderated by student's gender.

The significant value of brand name, brand value, brand consideration and brand acknowledgement on search behaviour in case of male is (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000) and female is (p = 0.000), (p = 0.008), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.040) respectively. Hence, our null hypothesis is accepted.

H0₂: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the search behavior of enrolment decision moderated by student's gender

The significant value of brand name, brand value, brand consideration and brand acknowledgement on application decision in case of male is (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.008), (p = 0.000) and female is (p = 0.003), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.00), (p = 0.035) respectively., our null hypothesis is *H0₃* is accepted.

H0₃: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the application decision of enrolment moderated by student's gender

The significant value of brand name, brand value, brand consideration and brand acknowledgement on choice decision in case of male is (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.002), (p = 0.000) and female is (p = 0.001), (p = 0.007), (p = 0.000), (p = 0.000) respectively. Hence, our null hypothesis is accepted.

H0₄: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the choice decision of enrolment moderated by student's gender

The significant value of brand name, brand value, brand consideration and brand acknowledgement on matriculation decision in case of male is (p = 0.043), (p = 0.043), (p = 0.010), (p = 0.021) and female (p = 0.044), (p = 0.004), (p = 0.004), (p = 0.045) respectively. Hence, our null hypothesis is accepted.

H0₅: - There is an impact of brand awareness factors on the student's matriculation decision moderated by student's gender

The significance value is less than 0.5 for all the factors. Hence, our null hypothesis: *H0₁*, *H0₂*, *H0₃*, *H0₄*, *H0₅* are accepted.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study concludes that there is a significant relationship that exists between factors of brand awareness and students enrollment decision process. Also, while putting student's gender as moderator the study shows that there is a significant impact of factors of brand awareness on student's enrolment process for higher education institutions. Sample was collected from 1000 students. The study has identified five factors of brand awareness by using SPSS tools and checked the factors by means of Confirmatory Factor Analysis model developed with the help of AMOS. As shown in table 4, the model was fit to proceed further. Validity by means statistical tools was tested and was fit to go with as shown in the table 5. Structural equation modeling analysis was used to show the impact of factors developed on student's decision-making process. A clear impact of brand awareness factors can be seen in the final structure model, on each stage of the enrolment decision process of the students. When tested if it was moderated by student's gender, then we can see the impact on each stage again.

There is limited literature available that shows the influence of brand awareness on higher education institutions enrollment decision making. However, there is a relationship between brand awareness and students enrollment decision making process, is supported by the earlier studies. Zang (2020),

states that in the decision-making process of consumers, brand awareness assumes an imperative role. Brand awareness influence the decision making process of a student while deciding for a university and whether to continue or not in the same university for further studies. Brand awareness creates an image of the university, which may attract students. So, if a college or a university have high brand awareness they will high brand image and will attract more students (Mulyono, H. 2016). Gibbs & Dean, (2015) awareness created by higher education institutions will help the students in their decision making process. Higher education enrollment decision is a very big decision for students. There is a strong tendency of a consumer to purchase the brand which they can recognize. In case of higher education institution brand awareness is important as it influences the decision making process if students (Brewer & Zhao, 2010). Bunzel (2007) states that in the present scenario there is a high competition in higher education sector just like any other businesses. Therefore, one cannot ignore building brand and creating brand awareness of their institution.

The present study had used student's gender to see the moderating effect on relationship between brand awareness and enrollment decision making process. Amos has been used to do moderation analysis, by the result of which the study could see that, there is a moderating effect of student's gender. Thus, result of this study deviates from the previous study done by Vijayalakshmi & Barani (2015) as in their study they stated that there is no relationship between gender and brand awareness when it comes to higher education institutions. The previous study had taken only engineer students to see this relationship whereas, the present study is based on data collected from schools and management colleges. Through which the study concludes differently and shows the there is a relationship between gender and brand awareness when it comes to higher education institutions.

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study will be very useful for administration department especially for those who are involved in institution marketing program and admission department. The study will give insight knowledge of the

brand awareness and its importance in higher education institution. It will help the institutions to understand the factors of brand awareness and thus, utilize it to create new strategies to attract students. Thus, giving new ideas to face the competition and increasing the chance to increase the enrollment number. Understanding brand awareness will give new ways and ideas for marketing strategies. Clear strategies can be formed for each stage of the enrolment decision process of the students, by the institutions. Focusing on each of the stages of the enrolment process it is possible for the institution to come out with more strategies to attract the students, fit for their institution.

6. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The study is subjected to few limitations. The study does not cover the fees of higher education institutions that may have an impact on brand awareness and students decision. The study does not see the impact of brand awareness on male and female decision-making process separately on each of the step of enrollment decision making process. Therefore, further studies can be done on these areas. The study also does not show the differences of the impact of factors of brand awareness on each stage of enrolment process. The models in this study can be considered and the study can be expanded to other industries.

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