STUDENT PARENT PERCEPTION TOWARDS
CONSUMER BASED BRAND EQUITY

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Abstract
It can be argued that parental role in selecting which university should a student candidate take is instrumental. With the rapidly growing Indonesia higher education industries over the last ten years, study in brand equity area focussing on the parent’s perception towards the brand equity of a university become more and more crucial.
This study investigates student parent’s perception using five variables of consumer based brand equity from Lassar et al. (1995) in a private university in Jakarta (University X). There are two different departments to be compared with in order to know whether there are differences in brand equity perception between student parents from both departments.
The result shows most variables are indifference with exceptions in three questions and the three questions relate to performance and attachment concerning quality and long-term commitment. Implication and suggestion have been promoted according to the result.

Keywords: higher education, student parent perception, and brand equity.

1. Introduction
With numerous universities in Indonesia nowadays, competition rate among higher education increased and forced university/higher education institutions providing a better education service in order to stay in the education market. The situation brings benefit to parents...
as well as potential college students as they have more options and they can choose selectively which university they should enroll. Unfortunately, the more choices also means they have to consider more things before making decision.

Among many decision making variables, it can be argued the vision and mission statement of one particular university can lead into good perception since it carries personal message to potential customers (De Gregorio and Sung, 2010; Guido, et al. 2010). The vision and mission statement plays an important role to the decision of whether a potential student should enter the university or, it can be called good brand equity. A lot of extensive studies have been done in the brand equity area to determine relationship between brand equity and consumers over various kinds of industry in various countries, namely the most current such as Hu et al. (2010); Afzal et al. (2010); Chen and Tseng (2010); and Fetscherin and Toncar (2009).

Given that, having a good brand equity also can favor one university among its competitors. Lassar, et al.(1995) suggested to break down the brand equity concept into five variables, i.e.: performance, value, social image, trustworthiness, and attachment.

This study aims to compare and contrast the degree of perception among parents of their students and find out the differences as well as the similarities between the two departments of a particular private university located in Jakarta. The five variables from Lassar et al. (1995) is used to compare two departments, Management and Accounting, at the university. While some similar studies about university’s brand equity had been done previously, such as the work of Soelasih et al. (2010), the uniqueness of this study is focusing on student parents for their importance role in decision making makes this study unique. This study brings new perspective on put more emphasize on student parent since it is believed their role in determining which university should they children go is dominant, especially in Indonesia culture (Ubaydillah 2009, Hartaji and Sedjo, 2009; Saomah 2006). For ethical reason, the name of the university is not disclosed and replaced into “University X” instead.

The rest of this article starts with promoting issues in parental role and relevant brand equity theory, introducing method used in this research, presenting the results, discussing the implications and proposing some relevant suggestions.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Parental Role in Choosing a place to study

While it can be argued by different countries, it is a given fact that most students in Indonesia choose their field and place of study according to their relatives. Indeed, they may have discussion with their siblings and friends but most cases in Indonesia shows that the final decision will be made by the parents. For example, some motivation and encouragement from family group are acknowledged by the study of Hartaji and Sedjo (2009), or different parental style may lead to independency level of the students (Saomah, 2006). The dream of the parent immerse into their suggestion to what they expect their children should be (Psychology article 2009).

Furthermore, Ubaydillah (2009) found out that low level of independency in their children, in most cases is the reason why parent still have strong influence to the student’s choice. Lack of knowledge leads the student to the point that they have to choose because of the social factors driven by the parent’s perception. Ubaydillah (2009) claimed that the role of parents dominates in selecting the higher education for their children.

Next, the study of Alim (2009) indicated that strong or weak financial wealth takes part of the decision as well. Strong financial parents usually urge their children to choose a field of study that is believed can guarantee their children future. In reality, as argued by Alim (2009), it is quite common when one student fails because he/she follows his/her parent suggestion. This situation also happens in most of the Indonesian universities, indicated by the high rate level of dropped out students every year.