Factors Affecting University Reputation

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Abstract:
This study presents some of the implications for the development of student trust, student identity, and student commitment in the relationship between university reputation and behavioral intention in higher education. It begins with the discovery of the roles of student trust, student identity, and student commitment

Keywords: University reputation, student trust, student identity, student commitment, higher education.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the university operates in a highly competitive market (Del-Castillo-Feito et al., 2020; Lafuente-Ruiz-de-Sabando et al., 2018) where attracting resources has become a complicated task. The current trends of globalization and internationalization have led higher education institutions (HEIs) to receive increasing interest from policymakers and educational leaders (Tran and Villano, 2017). This is because a nation’s human resources significantly affect its socioeconomic development (Agasisti and Pohl, 2012; Tran and Villano, 2017). The globalization of business has been embraced by the higher education sector, in which education is seen as a service that is marketable worldwide. Universities and other institutions of higher education must compete to attract highly talented students, prestigious professors, and effective employees (Del-Castillo-Feito et al., 2020; Hemsley-Brown et al, 2016; Nuraryo et al., 2018; Plewa et al., 2016; Wilson, 2016). Some individuals credit the globalization of universities to the many changes and difficulties that the educational sector is now facing. Despite differences in opinion, school leaders and various other commentators agree that competition between higher education institutions has intensified over the last few years (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Plewa et al., 2016). Education plays an enormous role in a country’s development, and its progress in a given country partly symbolizes that country’s growth in general (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018).

Higher education institutions play an important role in society: they are essential partners of the knowledge-creation and knowledge-exchange networks, and they catalyze innovation, supply tangible benefits of research, and provide consulting and advisory services. Universities are meant to foster progress, build social capital, prepare students for outside realities, provide access to knowledge, and extend the bounds of justice, thereby contributing to the creation and maintenance of a democratic and sustainable society. However, the increasingly competitive and dynamic nature of educational environments raises many challenges, such as declining enrollment. (Dzimińska et al., 2018).

Vietnam, a transitional economy in the Asia-Pacific region, has a population of over 96 million people (Nguyen and McDonald, 2019). In background terms, it is noteworthy that since the mid-1980s, Vietnam has been pursuing a path of market-oriented economic reform. This course of change has helped the economy to free itself from absolute poverty and achieve substantial and sustainable economic growth.

RGDP of Vietnam was 2,563 U.S. dollars (USD) in 2018. In contrast to most other ASEAN member states, their youth literacy rates are relatively high (Salmi, 2019). The Vietnamese general education system is divided into three levels: primary education (grades 1–5), lower secondary education (grades 6–9), and upper secondary education (grades 10–12). Higher education in Vietnam consists of universities and academies, which are classified into three categories: public-, private-, and foreign-related. In 2018, Vietnam had 454 HEIs, including 95 private universities and schools, and there were 2.2 million students in higher education (MOET, 2019).

Vietnam's higher education environment has changed dramatically after two decades of rapid growth. The number of students, institutions, and faculty members has risen dramatically, and a further aspect of the
system's evolution has been the advent of a private education sector. Such improvements have significantly led to economic growth and social progress. However, improvements have occurred more slowly in the governance systems and leadership modes of the framework — a fact that presents certain pressing issues for the future of the system (Salmi, 2019). As in other developing nations, economic reforms in Vietnam (which began in 1986) are strongly linked to the higher education sector. After 33 years of economic reform policy, the master’s training program in Vietnam has increased remarkably quickly. Having begun in 1976 (Hoang Thi Phuong Thao, 2014), the program now encompasses 105,000 students across 180 domestic universities and 212 programs with various joint-training forms (bachelor’s and master’s degrees) and includes partnerships with many reputable global universities and educational institutions (Chen et al., 2017).

Student decisions to continue their education at a particular university in the desired field of study play an important role in their future success. When selecting a university, many factors and possible consequences are part of the decision-making process. If the reality of the university does not match student expectations, their success becomes uncertain. Increasingly intense competition between institutions has made every university aware of the need to fully exploit its assets, maximize performance, and develop a competitive advantage. One way to achieve this has been to develop a reputable name and build trust in the eyes of students (Harahap et al., 2018). When a university has an excellent reputation, students will select that university when enrolling in higher education.

In the competition between universities, reputation can be considered one of the most vital issues because it is viewed as an upper hand that competitors can mimic only with significant effort (Chun et al., 2005; Hall, 1992). It is believed that an enterprise’s intangible attributes, such as reputation, are longer-term and more sustainable than the qualities of products or services, and are thus more helpful in giving businesses a competitive advantage. Reputation is one of the essential factors affecting customers' attitudes and behaviors because what people know and believe regarding an organization strongly affects their reactions to that organization. Because of reputation’s importance as a valuable intangible asset, businesses must manage it carefully, understanding both its strategic importance and the potential factors that could enhance it (Berens and Van Riel, 2004).

The contemporary developments in the university system have made a university’s reputation even more consequential. When certain characteristics of universities were camouflaged or otherwise difficult to recognize (Aula, 2015; Engwall, 2007), prospective students, future specialists, backers, and other partners essentially based their discernments about universities on notoriety. Additionally, reputation indicated enthusiasm for a greater number of colleges than beforehand. As the matter of higher education has become increasingly open, state-funded universities that had recently worked inside closed national frameworks began vying for assets. In current higher education, reputation has translated to crucial enthusiasm for the university (Aula, 2015). Hence, the question arises of how to best develop a solid reputation in higher education.

Much research has been conducted on the influence of a university’s reputation. This research showed that a college’s repute is the first mark of a school’s uniqueness (Hemsley-Brown et al, 2016). With the verification of this “brand” theory, reputation grows even more central to promoting a university’s identity and increasing its attractiveness in globally competitive conditions.

2. Literature review

2.1. Reputation

This section first discusses the concept and value of reputation. Next, it treats the university reputation directly. Finally, this research’s main factors for reputation measurement factors are selected.

Corporate Reputation

In marketing and business theory, the idea of corporate reputation has been seen by many authors as an important primary indicator of good results. The definition of corporate reputation first appeared in the list of
the world's most respected corporations in 1983, as compiled by the business journal Fortune. Academic interest in this field has risen exponentially since this first list appeared (Hong et al., 2016; Sokro, 2012). Articles on reputation, image, and corporate identity rose from a total of 12 in 1985 to 6,410 in 2010; Over the same period, scholarly studies on the topic grew from 7 to 390.

In terms of corporate reputation, the importance of these businesses was assessed using a collection of main qualities relevant to hard and soft policy aspects; these characteristics currently include products and services efficiency, financial soundness, human management, social responsibility, creativity, and international competitiveness (Suárez et al., 2020).

Actions to foster corporate reputation among researchers and professionals have attracted great interest. The element with the greatest effect on corporate reputation, along with financial results, was behavior analytics (Suárez et al., 2020). At the same time, Vergin and Qoronfleh concluded that the financial market valuation of the top ten firms saw a 20 percent annual rise between those years. They concluded that reputation is one of the keys to business success and that reputation is based not only on economic data assessment but also on the intangible assets of a company.

What is corporate reputation? Corporate reputation has been described as a cumulative reflection of a company's past behavior and performance which defines the ability of the company to deliver valued results to multiple stakeholders. It assesses the relative position of an organization with staff both internally and externally with its stakeholders in its strategic and institutional climate (Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997; Suárez et al., 2020). Following previous studies, this research defines corporate reputation as the public’s overall evaluation of a firm, or as a perceptual representation of a firm’s past actions and prospects (Dowling and Moran, 2012). A positive or positive reputation indicates that a business has behaved well over time, resulting in higher expectations from clients, stakeholders, and the general public. The reputation was described by previous researchers as an attitude construct consisting of cognitive components (knowledge-based) and affective components (emotion-based). In considering both cognitive and affective aspects, for example, Highhouse et al. (2009) suggested that the information and emotions retained by stakeholders consist of corporate reputation. According to approach theory defined by Fishbein and Ajzen (1977) and Quintal et al. (2010), effective and cognitive reputations, manifesting as affective and cognitive, serve specific purposes for personalities because they are near to the way the community typically thinks while assessing a business. Therefore, when researching the public’s behavior at large, it is necessary to distinguish between the cognitive and affective components of corporate reputation (Suárez et al., 2020).

Reputation is an awareness or judgment which is made not only within the business but also by stakeholders and the community that group affecting or exaggerated by the pursuit of the organization’s intentions. According to studies by Suárez et al. (2020), relevant past, organizational actions are the pillars of corporate reputation (Dutot et al., 2016). Evaluation of the cognitive component of reputation is based on a firm’s past performance. For example, a highly positive reputation (that exists prior to a negative event) tends to suggest to consumers and the public that a firm can minimize uncertainty during the negative event by performing its due diligence and maintaining contractual safeguards (Ryschka et al., 2016).

Several scholars defend an integrative view of business and management studies in which the reputation of the corporate behavior of an entity is comprised of, its culture, its appearance, its ethical positions, and how its integrated reputation is managed (Confente et al., 2019; Syed, 2019). In addition, the key distinctions between image and corporate reputation are identified by many scholars: on the one hand, image is linked to the present moment. As a consequence of partial excellence, it generates expectations, and it is hard to calculate. Reputation, on the other hand, is structural; it projects brand identity as a whole, creates value, and can be objectively calculated (Ryschka et al., 2016). Several scholars point out that one of the key conditions of business leadership is reputation (Schoofs et al., 2019).
In the past few decades, corporate reputation has been considered the most valuable intangible asset, one that is difficult to apprise or compare with resources such as money, land, and hardware (Chun et al., 2005; Hall, 1992). Unlike other intangible resources (e.g., trademarks, licenses, and copyrights), corporate notoriety can be achieved accomplished through its separation, for instance, a brand may become prevalent after a brief span or a long length of promotion (Hall, 1992). Thanks to such qualities, corporate reputation cannot be effectively imitated by competitors. Kay (1993) argued that reputation, alongside innovation, creates a unique value for businesses, allowing them to compete in the market.

In a dynamic business environment with high levels of competition, firms are always seeking ways to differentiate their products and build favorable relationships with their stakeholders. Reputation is an essential means by which businesses can maintain both a sustainable competitive advantage and a long-term relationship with stakeholders (Boyd et al., 2010; Roberts, 2002). It has been found that reputation is a rare, valuable asset that is difficult to copy, although its causal factors were unclear (Agarwal et al., 2015; Boyd et al., 2010). Reputation is the most valuable intangible asset, and it helps to maintain the organization’s success throughout its entire lifetime. Moreover, a good reputation helps to protect the organization in times of crisis.

A good reputation is useful in many business activities. When the reputation of a business increases, it attracts investors, improving the organization’s position (Caruana, 1997). A strong reputation also indicates well (fulfilling and dedicated) connections with clients (Helm, 2007). Additionally, it impacts clients' purchasing decisions, as related to both goods and services. Finally, it supports a positive association with representatives and improves worker reliability while attracting high-quality employees (Balmer et al., 1997; Fombrun and Shanley, 1990).

In addition to these non-financial benefits, a firm’s corporate reputation was also closely related to its financial performance (Chun et al., 2005; Roberts, 2002). Roberts (2002) suggested that successful firms had a good reputation and that reputation increases firms’ performance. Chun et al. (2005) additionally found a definite connection through consumer loyalty between corporate reputation and the firm’s financial actions. Firms with a positive reputation were more successful in several financial areas; those firms had lower risks and less volatility in revenues and profits, were less likely to go bankrupt, and had smaller stock price fluctuations (Smith et al., 2010).

As discussed above, reputation confers many benefits to businesses. The development and maintenance of reputation is a vital task that affects a company’s continued existence.

Because of this importance, corporate reputation was considered in various fields of study. In business, corporate reputation was viewed as an image of a company's past achievements. In strategic management, it was viewed as a one-of-a-kind intangible resource that is difficult to imitate (Agarwal et al., 2015). Fombrun's 1996 study was the first to perceive corporate reputation efficiently and is the most broadly referred to (Walker, 2010).

Reputation is based on the thoughts of the organization and the individual. It defines the summative knowledge of a company that key stakeholders or component groups possess. As mentioned earlier, the idea of reputation has been regularly utilized without a reasonable operationalization or a single definition. One of the reasons for this was the number of factors that impact corporate repute: oversight, economy, advertising, business investigation, human science, brain research, and common relationships, for example (Verčič et al., 2016).

Fombrun and Van Riel (1997) employed one of the most common definitions, in which an organization’s reputation is understood as the perceived representation of its past practices, as well as a gauge of its future activities i.e., the broad intrigue that a firm has for its principal constituents and others (Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997). A subsequent expansion of this meaning incorporated that the reputation is an assessment of how an organization is experienced internally, among workers, and externally, between other partners in its institutional environment (Verčič et al., 2016).
These definitions showed that although there were many ways to explain business reputation, it is possible to define it as follows: the product of a process wherein stakeholders recognize and evaluate a firm’s past actions through direct and indirect experiences, forming, as a result, a sense of awareness and trust of the business. Stakeholders then use this result to predict future responses to market conditions. Therefore, this study describes the corporate reputation as a collective awareness of the firm's preceding achievements and its possibilities for stakeholders. The most important stakeholders who influence the reputation of a business are customers and employees (Kitchen and Laurence, 2003).

Summarily, this research will apply the corporate reputation definition to develop university reputation definition from the previous studies.

**University reputation**

Vidaver-Cohen (2007) proposed a conceptual framework for investigating the university reputation. Her proposal suggests business appearance, product and service quality, leadership qualifications, managing styles, departmental social obligation methodology, working environment, and approach to innovation as vital predictors of the firm reputation. Each of these is characterized by many of the reputational qualities that operationalize the measurements. Vidaver-Cohen (2007) utilizes characterized perspectives to create an advantage for organizational reputation, which incorporates the level of execution, items, administrations, initiative, the board, work climate, corporate social responsibility, and creativity. Described measurements were utilized as the building blocks of this exploration. By perceiving the qualities and shortcomings of a college's capacity to meet the desires of its partners, it should become possible to identify the best method of channeling sources and achieve the best outcomes. Further, by inspecting reputation in every partner group independently, it is possible to conceive of possible alternative methods (Verčič et al., 2016).

Reputation is an acute awareness of a particular firm. It is established over a long period of perception and estimation of the company’s achievements (Balmer et al., 1997). It is the assessment made by different people (insiders and outsiders) about the organization’s ability to meet expectations over time (Pérez and Torres, 2017). Alessandri et al. (2006) indicated a relationship between university reputation and performance goals that favored academic accomplishment, outside execution, and passionate commitment. N. Nguyen and LeBlanc (2001) examined the role of institutional image and institutional reputation in securing client loyalty. Their outcomes demonstrated that loyalty would, in general, be higher when the impression of both trustworthiness and administration quality is strong (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001). Reputation is linked to the professional image projection of higher education, which is influenced by the media, alumni track record, and university achievement at the national and international levels.

Reputation refers to the complete impression that individuals construct in their thoughts about something or someone (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018). It involves the feelings, attitudes, stereotypes, ideas, behaviors, and impressions that a person has of an object, person, or organization. University reputation is a complicated construct based on the thoughts of public individuals or those in a university’s staff who have made a differentiating and comparative evaluation of its characteristics (Delgado- Márquez et al., 2013; Chen and Esangbedo, 2018).

This reputation was established by individuals or by the public by way of their distinction between information and disinformation regarding a university (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018). University reputation is the shared knowledge that people had about a school and how it should work. Also, University Reputation can be seen as a perceived external influence, as an organizational reputation, and as identity (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Pérez and Torres, 2017).

In the study of Keh and Xie (2009), three factors create corporate reputation: the focal company was highly regarded, the focal company was successful, and the focal company is a well-established company.

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From a business aspect, organizational reputation can be described as a general assessment of the argument that an organization is primarily successful or unsuccessful (Heffernan et al., 2018). It can also be described as a run-of-the-mill assessment of an organization’s ability to deliver essential results to its partners (Heffernan et al., 2018). A few investigations have discovered an association between strong reputation and organizational personality among workers and customers (Su et al., 2016). People were likely to identify with organizations they saw as having excellent reputations, and they could meet their confidence and self-improvement requests (Heffernan et al., 2018). Fombrun et al. (2004) claimed that firm reputation is one of the critical antecedents of customer organization identity.

According to Heffernan et al. (2018), university reputation, an increasingly market-based system characterized by an educational context, creates powerful brands that have become essential indicators of organizational competitiveness and position. Moreover, the university reputation has been determined to affect supportive behavioral intention among students, as well as student loyalty and satisfaction. Within higher education, student selection of higher education programs has usually been linked to perceived quality and the reputation of the institution awarding the qualification. In other words, the work of Heffernan et al. (2018) examined student's thoughts on external support, and engagement was achieved using a personal-case philosophy. In any case, the fact is that students also perceive the nature of the university that administers the education program, and they make judgments about the quality of its premises, learning innovation, and equipment, just as about the educators. For instance, a student would perceive a large, well-resourced government college administering an external program differently than a small, private foundation providing the same program on one floor of office space.

In the higher education sector, reputation, due to its intangible nature (Suomi, 2014), serves as a sign of quality as well as an indicator of the institution’s capacity to respond correctly to stakeholders’ needs (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001). It reduces uncertainty (Rindova et al., 2005) in stakeholders’ decision-making processes (Hemsley-Brown, 2012; Munisamy et al., 2014). Therefore, achieving a positive reputation is likely determinative of a university’s survival, given the competitive nature of the sector (Alves and Raposo, 2010; Aula and Tienari, 2011).

Despite the importance of achieving and maintaining a good reputation among an institution’s various stakeholders, there is still a lack of clarity regarding its management. This continues to be a challenge for universities (Šontaitė and Bakanauskas, 2011; Vidaver-Cohen, 2007; Volkwein and Sweitzer, 2006; Watkins and Gonzenbach, 2013). Between many explanations for the difficulty, the behind characteristics can be emphasized: (1) the diversity of stakeholders and as a result, the variations in their values (Suomi and Järvinen, 2013; Vidaver-Cohen, 2007), and (2) the ambiguity associated with the various aspects of the educational organizations (Suomi, 2014).

During a certain time, Šontaitė and Bakanauskas (2011) described reputation as a subjective, collective recognition of higher education institutions among all key stakeholders, taking into account their past behavior and communication and their ability to meet standards better than competitiveness.

In the educational field, most academic research has considered a reasonable group of participants (Alessandri et al., 2006; Brewer and Zhao, 2010; Nguyen and LeBlanc, 2001). Ali et al. (2015) pointed out the fact that the make effective decisions and the community under consideration are moderating the reputational value. Consequently, writers such as Suomi (2014) and Vidaver-Cohen (2007) have tried to fill this gap by introducing the analysis of more than one stakeholder.

2.2. Student guidance

When leaving universities, few students have full knowledge of universities. Advice obtained from guidance counselors as well as individual university reviews based on current knowledge and accessible information can be viewed as student guidance (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018). The academic standard of a university will predict
its proposals, a measure of the reputation of the university (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Pedro et al., 2016). The confidence established by learners within the college can potentially influence their friends’ choices when it comes to university enrollment; this can take the form of the university’s perceived service quality (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Shamma, 2012; Twaisi and Al-Kilani, 2015). By being available for consultation and offering the guidance that helps students excel academically, student guardians understand student needs and make contact easier. Such guardians care about the perceptions of their wards as a student, and they can express concerns that affect them.

In one study, students had little understanding of university when leaving high school. They received advice from guidance counselors, individuals who deciphered and assessed a college (this advice was dependent on their experience), and the available data about the college in question (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018). Academic quality predicted college recommendations, which is a form of the university’s perceived service quality (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Pedro et al., 2016). Others were affected by students, who may have been their companions, showing their trust in the school. Perceived administration quality influences student's behavior of encouraging others to take on their college, and it likewise concerns their likelihood of considering other colleges (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Shamma, 2012; Twaisi and Al-Kilani, 2015).

In summary, Plewa et al. (2016) indicated that those who provide student guidance possess the following qualities: they understand student needs, are available for consultation when needed, make interacting with students easy, provide support to help students succeed academically, care about students’ experiences, are good at communicating about issues that concern students, and have useful knowledge of educational systems and procedures.

2.3. **Social contributions**

Social contributions can be viewed as “the complex feedback of a university, responding to the demands of the environment, where all the actions of the university have an impact in the community” (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018). They are the value that a university provides to society (Esangbedo and Bai, 2019). Social contributions can consist of an institutional perspective of moral commitment and duty, which includes the degree to which a university might affect the general public as an organization (for-profit, not-for-profit, or charitable) meeting expectations over time (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Verčič et al., 2016), the rate at which students from this organization find a new line of work, and the frequency with which employees have something positive to state about the university. Alumni associations are the results of the robustness of the connection emerging from positive student experiences, and these associations are in a more authoritative position to profess that university reputation affects degrees (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Plewa et al., 2016). Additionally, the musings of university alumni on the degree of learning and utility of the learned knowledge are an essential measure for passing judgment on the quality and services rendered by the university to its students (Calitz et al., 2016; Chen and Esangbedo, 2018).

Esangbedo and Bai (2019) indicated that social contributions include a university’s duty and ethical contributions to society, the university’s human resource contribution to industries (in the form of graduates), and the evidence of the education that graduates received as students.

Finally, factors that influence an educational institution’s apparent social contributions include MBA student behavior, MBA student importance, MBA student helpfulness, and MBA student educational institution.

In general, the components of social contributions are whether the university strongly supports the community, has a positive social influence and helps graduates secure high-quality jobs.

2.4. **Environment**

According to Fombrun et al. (2000), a good workplace environment is well managed, an excellent business to work in, and an enterprise with good employees. In higher education, environments are the academic
requirements that directly or indirectly impact the quality of students and instructors (Esangbedo and Bai, 2019). A safe, clean, and pleasant environment in which to learn is a primary expectation of students (Badri and Mohaidat, 2014; Chen and Esangbedo, 2018). Safety, one element of a good environment, measures a university’s ability to protect learners from danger (Badri and Mohaidat, 2014; Chen and Esangbedo, 2018). The location where studying occurs is an essential aspect of the student’s activities; protecting it is the social duty of the school. A reputable school should surpass its local nature and gather students from around the world to play out a supporting role in its image, and it should help students to achieve their goals (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Sarwari and Wahab, 2016). The arrangement of electronic-learning programs over the Internet suggests that a university is universally eminent (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Verčič et al., 2016). Del-Castillo-Feito et al. (2020) showed that workplace climate includes several elements: being a good place to work, competent professors, and competent administrative personnel.

The research of Esangbedo and Bai (2019) added several factors for academic environments: being a space in which learners can mingle with other cultures, university ability to protect students from risk, and acting as a social space dedicated to learning.

In general, the components of a good environment are (1) a safe, clean, and pleasant environment for students to learn in, (2) diverse cultural backgrounds, and (3) international renown.

### 2.5. Leadership

There have been many definitions of leadership in organizational reputation, but according to Fombrun et al. (2000), leadership is to have excellent management, to possess a clear vision for the future, and to recognize and exploit market opportunities. Leadership is important to reputation: it conveys a company’s success and performance to the financial community. Dimensions of leadership are intended to assess perceptions of leaders as excellent, visionary managers and strong endorsers of their companies (Fombrun et al., 2015). According to Fombrun et al. (2015), dimensions of a well-led company include: has a positive influence on society, has a strong and appealing leader, has a clear vision for the future, is a well-organized company, and has excellent managers.

For a reputable university, a strong vision of future growth is mandatory because it displays integrity and organization (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Esangbedo and Bai, 2019; Verčič et al., 2016; Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). This vision is perceived in the value of (1) training resources (Ahmed et al., 2010; Chen and Esangbedo, 2018), (2) coursework (in the form of various valuations over the year of school), and (3) the academic staff that presents these materials. Additionally, learner prospects must be considered as part of this evaluation because university practices may be portrayed as university programs for attracting prospective students, from admission procedures to the graduation process (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018). Summarily, the quality of leadership expresses having excellent leaders, prestigious professors, a clear vision for development, the latest technology, and the ability to recognize and exploit market opportunities (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Fombrun et al. 2000; Esangbedo and Bai, 2019).

### 2.6. Funding

Funding has a role in several areas. Reputable universities should be more capable of obtaining government grants, funding contributions from parents and sponsors, and reduced tuition fees from funding bodies in the form of scholarships for students (C. Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; McPherson and Schapiro, 1999). Since parents are the primary sponsors of most education in university, their level of income is a factor influencing the kind of education their students get (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Saleem et al., 2017; West et al., 2017). Tuition fees are the main cost of college (Burgess et al., 2018; Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Verčič et al., 2016), and a university’s ability to attract top student is affected by its provision of scholarships (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Flavell et al., 2018). Funding is related to the income of parents/sponsors, tuition, and scholarships. In
summary, funding is indicative of the cost of living at a university, as well as its finances, scholarships, research grants, and tuition fees.

2.7. Research and development

To promote knowledge transfer, change, creativity, innovation, and national development, universities should be able to optimize funded research. In today’s knowledge-based economy, industrial development and university research production are interrelated; research helps to boost and promote scientific and technical breakthroughs (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; D’Este and Patel, 2007; Hamdan et al., 2011). Essential study procedures from university administrations are stretched to the colleges to organize, and colleges worry about the vital task (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Nelson and Rosenberg, 1993). Universities’ research output can be estimated by the number of articles (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Frenken et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the goals, outcomes, and accomplishments of these studies should be open to the scientific community (Chen and Esangbedo, 2018; Kheiry et al., 2012). Consequently, R&D can be stated as a link between industry and In the form of key projects, as is evident in academic journals, the university. Finally, research and development affect a university’s technological trends, key national projects, laboratory equipment, and library.

2.8. Student trust

Since its mobilization by psychologists in the 1950s, the concept of trust has developed in many different fields. In a marketing context, consumer trust arises when one party in a commercial transaction has faith in certain specific features of the other. From a psychological perspective, the function of trust is to reduce customer anxiety in awkward situations in the decision-making process. This leads to a reduction in transaction costs because less information searching and checking are necessary (Kramer, 1999). Many authors have stressed the importance of trust in achieving organizational success. Confidence can provide a sense of security, which will help an organization survive a complex environment.

Thomas (2009) defines beliefs as “expecting a positive outcome, the outcome that a customer may receive based on the expected action of another party.” In a situation where clients feel defenseless, they depend on positive associations (trust), diminishing their vulnerability (Aydin and Ozer, 2006). In short, trust is faith in an organization that works dependably, without destructive activities, such as the two parties are mutually advantaged. Trust is viewed as an extension of experience; it is foreseeing the future.

Even though ideas of reputation and trust are distinct and unique, organizations that have positive reputations reasonably foster more significant levels of certainty among clients. These bring about improved impressions of trust towards the organization and decreased views of risk (Heffernan et al., 2018; Keh and Xie, 2009. Trust may be portrayed as a client's belief that an organization would not act dishonestly—that it would provide its products at the expected quality (Anderson and Weitz, 1992; Heffernan et al., 2018). Trusting clients accept that they will be protected and that an organization will act uprightly (Heffernan et al., 2018; R. M. Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Trust is a complex construct that contains a psychological component, which depends on a shopper's information on the firm and its capacities, and a functional component, which is the passionate bond, created over time, between the individual and the organization (Dowell et al., 2015; Heffernan et al., 2018).

Student trust in a university had been shown to yield many positive results, including improved student loyalty and increased likelihood of enrolling in a university’s program (Heffernan et al., 2018; Meer and Chapman, 2014).

The study of Liu et al. (2019) indicated that trust is to possess a high level of confidence in partners, to accept that partnership will put an organization’s tendencies in a pivotal position, and to be willing to make essential contributions to the partnership.
Finally, in the research of Rather (2018), factors of trust were whether a brand was trusted, whether it was perceived as honest, whether it was perceived as safe, and whether customers relied on it.

2.9. Student Identity and Student commitment

Customer identity is an essential yet underused construct. Customer identity helps to clarify the relationship between workers and their company, as well as the relationship between customers and their goods consumed. Brand researchers in particular believe that consumer identification with a brand culture can affect brand-related purchasing behaviors and the length of the community. Customer identity is a distinct notion from the identification of consumers with the brand of a business, its target markets, and its prototypical consumer. To demonstrate, when businesses adopt a multi-brand strategy for all goods or services or operate in a wide variety of market areas, the identification of consumers with a business can vary significantly from their identification with their particular brand. A business with a high customer identity can benefit from consumer loyalty to existing products, willingness to try new products, spreading positive word-of-mouth, and resistance to negative brand-related information. (Keh and Xie, 2009).

In the educational market context, students are considered as customers. Their identity refers to learners who feel that they belong to (identify with) the evaluation of a university’s performance (Mitchell et al., 2018). This description demonstrates both a useful element and an awareness of the importance of a university. Learners who feel accepted, and who seem to be at a university where they belong, may have an emotional connection with their university. On the contrary, some learners feel that they are not accepted at a university and may wish to withdraw. This is accompanied by cognitive assessments of the importance of universities to their future success, although students may feel relieved because the university is quite costly. Some individuals, because of their negative academic experience, may protect themselves by believing that graduation is not necessary for their success (Mitchell et al., 2018).

The research of Nuraryo et al. (2018) expressed that the corporate-identity component focused on business conditions: the quality of marketing. The usual rule in the market was that prospective students would often attend a leading school because of its overall reputation. Universities were highly successful in their attempts to gain what they had set out for by rallying their tools and means to impart their identities to groups.

Keh and Xie (2009) indicated that corporate identity included the following statements: The organization's successes were their company's successes; Their company was very interested in what others think about the focal company; If a story in the media criticized this organization, their company would feel embarrassed; When someone praises the focal company it feels like a compliment of their company.”

The study of Liu et al. (2019) showed that identity included these statements: The business is invaluable in collaboration; they are pleased to be a member of the organization; the organization is ready to be consistent and has a philosophy of working together; reputation is decided and accepted by the coalition; participation in the collaboration is acceptable.

Rather (2018) recognized the following factors: When someone criticizes that brand, it feels like a personal insult; When the author talks about that brand, the author usually say ‘we’ rather than ‘they’; That brand’s successes are the author’s successes; When someone praises this brand, it feels like a personal compliment.

Commitment is one of the essential concepts in marketing research and is rooted in the social exchange theory. Rather (2018) and Moorman et al. (1992) defined commitment as “an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship.” Some researchers have confirmed commitment as the essential determinant of creating and sustaining long-term relations between trading companions (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Rather, 2018). Based on the literature, the research defined customer commitment as a commercial partner’s willingness to maintain a significant and lasting connection (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Rather, 2018).
Student commitment alludes to the inspirational demeanor and conduct of undergraduates who related to their leaders and were happy to engage in comparative endeavors (Chen, 2018). As per experts’ hypothesis, a more grounded expert duty of students means a more grounded learning inspiration (Chen, 2018). The shared-character model additionally states that the higher the perceived level of individuals, the more constructive people in their movement are; that is, the one affirms an expert, the more valuably and enthusiastically they carry out their responsibilities (Chen, 2018).

The research of Keh and Xie (2009) detailed factors that indicate commitment: “My company does not feel a strong sense of ‘belonging’ to the focal company; It would be very hard for my company to leave the focal company right now, even if we wanted to; The company deserves my company's loyalty; It would not be too costly for my company to leave the focal company soon; My company would not leave the focal company right now because we have a sense of obligation to them.”

The study of Liu et al. (2019) specified that commitment in learning is: to perform such that future agreements won't easily break; accepting that a business will agree to its duties; cooperating with individuals from the organization; the organization was being faithful to the partnership.

In the study of Rather (2018), factors of commitment were: feeling committed to a brand; being proud to belong to a brand; being a loyal customer of a brand; caring for the long-term success of a brand.

3. Methodology

This study aims to explore the relationship between university reputation and behavioral intention. With the help of the survey’s seven-point Likert scale (higher numbers indicate greater agreement), we verify our model with two official datasets for the relationship between UR and BI in Vietnamese higher education in Vietnam. Our dataset had eleven factors: six independent factors, four intermediate factors, and one dependent factor. There were 1,538 individuals and 49 items captured in the data. Adanco was used as the statistics processing and analysis software. The scale's reliability and validity were checked by Cronbach's alpha (α), average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR). SEM was utilized to examine the model's hypotheses (Hair et al., 2017; Hair Jr. et al., 2016; Henseler et al., 2016; Latan and Noonan, 2017; Sarstedt et al., 2019). A Cronbach’s alpha coefficient higher than 0.6 would guarantee the scale's reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). CR is better than 0.6 and must be greater than 0.5. The theoretical framework used was PLS-SEM. And when multicollinearity occurs, this approach can manipulate several independent variables. PLS can be performed from a series of one or more independent variables as a regression model, estimating one or more dependent factors, or it can be completed as a path model. The set of independent factors can be related to several dependent factors by PLS. (Hair et al., 2017; Hair Jr. et al., 2016; Henseler et al., 2016; Latan and Noonan, 2017; Sarstedt et al., 2019).

The quantitative analysis frame starts with the specification of structural models and measurement scales, followed by the collection and examination of data. Next, we established the PLS-SEM approach for the thesis in Vietnam (Thien, 2018) and provided all the important considerations when conducting this analysis, as illustrated in Figure 1.
4. Result and conclusion

Based on the literature review, a model with twelve hypotheses is designed to investigate the research problems and develop the hypotheses. Figure 1 - the dissertation model—presents the recommended model for this research into students’ intentions when it comes to their choice of master’s programs in Vietnam.
The main purpose of the dissertation was to develop and test a model of the relationship between university reputation and behavioral intention in higher education that was based on signal theory and the theory of planned behavior (TPB). According to the TBP described by Fishbein and Ajzen (1977) and Quintal et al. (2010), emotional and psychological reputation, as affability and ability, serves specific functions for individuals since it is nearer to how the general public ordinarily thinks while assessing a university. For higher education institutions, reputation has become important, and universities have been working hard to boost their reputations. With the higher education sector becoming more available, it is now important to compete for funding for state schools that historically worked within comfortable national structures. It is necessary to build and maintain a sustainable reputation in higher education, but it ensures inclusive and equal education and study opportunities for all.

References


