
Original Article

What's in a university logo? Building commitment in higher education

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ABSTRACT Achieving commitment can be challenging for the service industry, particularly for universities. If these service organizations can align and convey that their identity or image is beneficial toward their stakeholders, commitment is achievable. The present article examines a specific form of brand identity and image, namely brand logo benefit, and establishes that self-congruence is the driver of 'brand logo benefit' and that brand logo benefit positively influences commitment. Drawing on the self-concept theory, the study develops and empirically tests a conceptual model using survey data collected from 478 students in Indonesia. The study demonstrates that self-congruence (actual or ideal) affects the perceived brand logo benefit and brand logo benefit positively affects commitment. In addition, brand logo benefit partially mediates the link between self-congruence and commitment. Results indicate that *actual* self-congruence is a slightly better predictor of brand logo benefit compared with *ideal* self-congruence. Interestingly, *ideal* self-congruence is a slightly better predictor of commitment. Discussions and implications are provided.

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INTRODUCTION

The salient role of brand logos has been documented in the literature (for example, Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001; Bottomley and Doyle, 2006; Ellis-Chadwick and Doherty, 2012; Labrecque and Milne, 2012). For instance, van Grinsven and Das (2014) propose that the design complexity of brand logos influences brand recognition and brand attitude. Walsh *et al* (2010) display that redesigning the logo can impact on brand attitude. Labrecque and Milne (2012) argue that color of the logo can affect brand perceptions. Although these studies examine the role of brand logos toward important marketing constructs (for example, brand attitude, brand likeability), they focus only on the physical aspects of brand logos – color, placement, design and so forth.

Recently, Park *et al* (2013b) investigate the role of the perceived brand logo *benefit* in affecting customer commitment. Brand logo benefit refers to the value associated with the brand logo, such as the display of a specific affiliation or the disclosure of a certain purpose. With the exception of Park *et al*'s (2013b) study, little remains studied in this area. In an attempt to further develop this literature stream, the present study develops and examines a conceptual framework of university brand logo, commitment and self-congruence in the higher education (HE) sector. We note that despite such importance of brand logos, only a limited number of studies have examined the university brand logos in the HE sector, particularly in the context of commitment toward the university (Wæraas and Solbakk, 2009). Following Morgan and Hunt's (1994) definition, commitment in this study refers to the consumers' long-lasting desire to maintain a beneficial relationship with a brand. Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007) note the importance of brand harmonization for HE institutions. Curtis *et al* (2009) demonstrate the role of brand management in ensuring the sustainability of the

HE institution. Recent research (Alwi and Kitchen, 2014) finds that brand image affects loyalty indirectly through satisfaction. However, none of these studies have focused on the importance of the university brand logo, which is considered as one of the key aspects of the university brand's identity (Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001).

In their study, Park *et al* (2013b) focuses only on *normative* commitment – the propensity of consumers to maintain a relationship. Previous research has noted two other types of commitment that are distinct from normative commitment – *affective* and *continuance*. Researchers regard *affective* commitment as the 'hotter' element of commitment (Han *et al*, 2008, p. 25), while Fullerton (2011) argues that *continuance* commitment might have deleterious impact on service relationships. Hence, to explain the relationship between brand logo benefit and commitment further, present study focuses not only on normative commitment but also expands on previous research to study affective commitment.

In addition, research on self-congruence is limited to investigating its impact on favorable consumer behaviors. For instance, Kresmann *et al* (2006) display the role of self-congruence in building brand relationship quality and brand loyalty. Nam *et al* (2011) show, in the context of tourism, that ideal self-congruence affects satisfaction and loyalty. It has also been shown that self-congruence positively influences emotional brand attachment (Malär *et al*, 2011). However, no available research examines the nature of the relationship between self-congruence and brand logo benefit. Moreover, previous research has yet to investigate which consumer self (actual or ideal) is best to target in order to increase commitment (affective or normative).

To the best of our knowledge, this study is first to investigate the role of brand logo benefit and self-congruence on commitment in the context of HE. HE has become

one of the fastest growing service sectors (for example, Curtis *et al.*, 2009; Alwi and Kitchen, 2014), consolidating both international markets and global service systems, and drawing attention to the significance of the HE marketization process (Assad *et al.*, 2013). Researchers argue that such marketization and branding of the HE service sector helps universities to create and maintain a competitive advantage (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007; Curtis *et al.*, 2009). For example, understanding university brands and student perceptions are prominent brand management research topics in the HE sector (Watkins and Gonzenbach, 2013).

The present study examines the HE sector in Indonesia to test a conceptual framework in achieving commitment. Assad *et al.* (2013) note the lack of empirical research on a marketing orientation of HE institutions from an international perspective, hence Indonesia is chosen for the data collection. According to Beerkens (2007), the HE landscape in Indonesia is very complex and these HE institutions are expected to play a prominent role in strengthening the economy and empowering the regions. Universities in Indonesia could also benefit from the marketization process to improve its public services (Kusumawati, 2010). In addition, Indonesia has been regarded as one of the most attractive, emerging countries – top 20 in the Global Retail Development Index and one of the largest population with growing middle class – which cause it to be a lucrative market for investors (cf. Japutra *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether self-congruence and brand logo benefit help in building commitment in Indonesian HE. Specifically, this study considers two inter-linked research questions:

1. Does a student's self-congruence (actual or ideal) relate to brand logo benefit and contribute to building commitment with the university?

2. Does brand logo benefit mediate the link between self-congruence (actual or ideal) and commitment?

The study contributes to the branding literature in several important ways. First, the present article offers a framework in achieving commitment through self-congruence and brand logo benefit. This study is the first to investigate the role of *self-congruence*, either actual or ideal self-congruence, on brand logo benefit. Second, the present study extends Park *et al.*'s (2013b) study by investigating not only normative commitment but also affective commitment. Third, to the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to empirically test the link between self-congruence and commitment. Fourth, this study focuses on HE sector in Indonesia. Finally, the relative importance of actual and ideal self-congruence toward building brand logo benefit and commitment is shown.

The rest of the article is structured as follows: First, the article presents the theoretical background and the hypothesis development. Presenting the research methods follows, with the subsequent exposition of the findings and discussion. Finally, implications and future research directions are highlighted.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A brand logo refers to the graphic or image representation of a brand that evokes consumers' memory associations of that particular brand (Walsh *et al.*, 2010). According to Park *et al.* (2013b), there are three main benefits that a brand logo may carry: functional, aesthetic and self-expressiveness. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of building commitment in HE services via brand logos.

Self-congruence (actual and ideal) acts as a key driver of brand logo benefit (Hypothesis 1 & Hypothesis 2). The central assumption is that students use brands as a

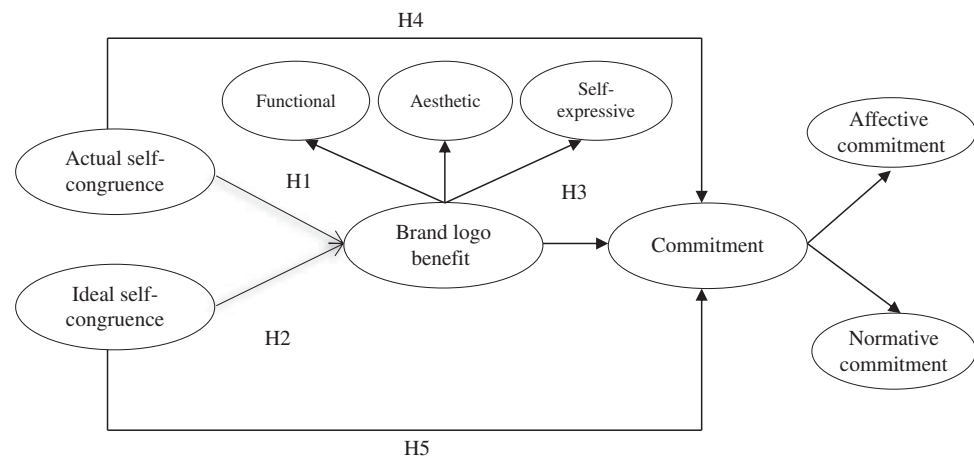


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of attaining commitment in higher education.

way to symbolize themselves to others (Ekinici *et al*, 2013) in order to express their self-concept (Malär *et al*, 2011; Nam *et al*, 2011). They tend to use their university or college to present who they are or who they aspire to be, to others. Thus, the congruity between students' self-concept with the university brands' images positively affects the perceived brand logo benefit.

When a university is able to increase the perceived brand logo benefit, students tend to maintain their relationship (that is, normative commitment) with the university (Park *et al*, 2013b) while at the same time exhibit their emotional connection (that is, affective commitment) (Batra *et al*, 2012). This increased commitment and bonding also holds true if students encounter positive experiences with the university, as positive emotions will be developed (Park *et al*, 2010; Batra *et al*, 2012). For example, if the universities' brand logos help students to find summer jobs (functional benefit), students are more likely to remain committed to the university (Hypothesis 3).

Extant literature has argued that commitment and brand loyalty are two distinct constructs, where commitment acts as the driver of brand loyalty (Pritchard *et al*, 1999; Izogo, 2015). According to these authors,

brand loyalty is more cognitive and missing the affective component, which can be found in commitment. Malär *et al* (2011) have shown that self-congruence (actual and ideal) is a prominent driver of emotional brand attachment. Hence, self-congruence (actual and ideal) positively affects commitment (Hypothesis 4 & Hypothesis 5).

Self-congruence and brand logo benefit

The theory of self-concept has become an interest to researchers because consumers evidently reveal themselves through their product and brand choices (Andreassen and Lanseng, 2010). According to these authors, consumers tend to choose products and brands that will enhance their self-image and avoid those that diminish their self-image. According to self-concept theory (for example, Sirgy, 1982), an individual can take two forms of self: actual self and ideal self. Actual self relates to how an individual thinks about his/her current condition according to the reality (who she/he is and what she/he thinks about him/herself at the moment), whereas ideal self relates to how an individual thinks about who she/he aspires to be in the future (for example, Sirgy, 1982; Malär *et al*, 2011).

On the basis of the self-concept theory, Sirgy (1982) introduced, in his seminal work, the notion of self-congruence. Self-congruence refers to the fit between the consumers' self-images or personalities with the brands' images or personalities (Sirgy, 1982; Aaker, 1999). Research on self-congruence denotes that the two forms of self-congruence (actual and ideal) are influenced by two motives, namely: self-consistency and self-enhancement motive (for example, Ekinici *et al*, 2008; Malär *et al*, 2011).

Degeratu *et al* (2000) emphasize that brand name or logo is more important when there is less available attribute information of the product. Recently, Park *et al* (2013b) argue that brands provide three key benefits to consumers: (i) self-identity/expressiveness benefit, (ii) functional benefit and (iii) aesthetic appeal. Consumers' understandings and judgments of a brand logo will affect their relationships with the brand (Pieters and Warlop, 1999; Park *et al*, 2013b).

The idea of self-consistency motive is when students tend to purchase brands that reflect or enforce their actual self. For example, if a student is an environmentalist or a person who highly regards the sustainability of the environment, he/she prefers to choose universities that care for the environment (for example, University of Texas at Dallas – because they have won multiple awards for cutting down on energy). On the other hand, a self-enhancement motive supports the idea that students tend to choose universities that reflect or enforce their ideal self. For example, if a student pictures himself working at the White House in the near future, he or she may choose a university that helps him or her in attaining this objective (for example, George Washington University – because they are well-known for their dedication in preparing future leaders).

Self-congruence has been construed prominently in the marketing literature. For example, in the context of automobiles industry, self-congruence has been found to

predict brand loyalty (Kressmann *et al*, 2006). In another study, Malär *et al* (2011) show that self-congruence predicts brand attachment. More recently, Hosany and Martin (2012) notes self-congruence as one of the central tenets that influences consumer behavior. In the service context, self-image congruency concerns how consumers select and evaluate service brands in accordance with how the service brand's image corresponds to the consumer's self-image as this will enhance the consumer's self-concept (Andreassen and Lanseng, 2010).

Malär *et al*'s (2011) argue that the greater the self-congruity between the brand and the self, the stronger the brand attachment. The present study posits that higher self-congruity between the students and the university brands leads the students to having positive feelings about the university brand logos as they believe that the brand logos provide certain psychological benefit to them. On the basis of the self-consistency motive (for example, Sirgy *et al*, 2000), students will fulfill their need for self-verification (Escalas and Bettman, 2003). Park *et al* (2010) argue that brands are able to provide consumers with a sense of who they really are. The above argument is also valid to ideal self-congruence. Graeff (1996) indicates that consumers' self-enhancement motive is based on their desire to increase their self-esteem.

Students who are enrolled in an HE institution often wear the university brand on their clothes (for example, jumper, t-shirt and so on). In doing this, students are able to express who they really are. For example, if the university is well-known as green and sustainable, by wearing clothes with the HE institution's logo, the students can communicate to others that they are concerned about the planet. They feel that the brand is giving them a sense of gratifying, enriching, or enabling of the self or at least one of them (see Park *et al*, 2013a).

Thus, this study proposes that self-congruence (either actual or ideal) affects brand logo benefit.

Hypothesis 1: Actual self-congruence is positively associated with brand logo benefit.

Hypothesis 2: Ideal self-congruence is positively associated with brand logo benefit.

Brand logo benefit and commitment

Brands are able to become part of an individual's identity and yield certain benefits (Batra *et al*, 2012) and some use brands to express their self-identity (Ekinici *et al*, 2013). Keller (2012) argues that brand knowledge and brand functionality are two important factors that determine the relationships that consumers develop with brands over time. One of the key aspects in a brand is its logo (Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001). Keller (2003) indicates that images (for example, logos) contain concrete or abstract visual information about the brand and that logos are one of the eight dimensions of brand knowledge.

Prior research (Pieters and Warlop, 1999) finds that consumers' visual attention affects brand choice. These authors suggest that consumers choose a brand based on their visual filtering of the brand's elements (name or logo). A logo has been defined as 'a graphic representation or image that triggers memory associations of the target brand' (Walsh *et al*, 2010, p. 76). According to Buttle and Westoby (2006), companies use logos to transmit their unique identity and the ethos of the brands they represent. Klink (2003) suggests that a consistent design in brand names and brand logos can offer support in communicating the pre-determined brand meaning. Recent research (Ellis-Chadwick and Doherty, 2012) notes the importance of displaying the brand logo prominently in marketing emails.

Not only for companies, brand logos also offer benefits to consumers. When there is less available attribute information, the importance of brand names or logos increases (Degeeratu *et al*, 2000). In making choices, consumers usually use brand names as a cue to quality (Grewal *et al*, 1998). Brand logos (names only or with symbols) provide consumers with a way to identify the brand and enable faster decision making (Park *et al*, 2013b). In addition, brand logos can present consumers with three types of fulfillment to the self: gratifying, enabling and enriching the self (see Park *et al*, 2013a). For example, the Swiss Army Knives' logo enhances its consumers' sense of efficacy, enabling the self. Thus, brand logo is a valuable company asset and is omnipresent in the marketplace (Hagtvedt, 2011).

Research on brand logo mostly investigates its attributes (for example, color and placing). Labrecque and Milne (2012) examine on how color being used in brand logos affects consumers' perceptions toward the brands. They show that color can affect consumers' intention to purchase. Another research (Bottomley and Doyle, 2006) also show that choosing an appropriate color for brand logos can deliver value to the brands. Recent research (Ellis-Chadwick and Doherty, 2012) finds that managers agree in locating the brand logos at the top left hand corner of marketing emails to be crucial. Nevertheless, research examining the role of brand logo benefit on favorable consumers' behaviors (that is, commitment), particularly in the HE context, is still limited.

Commitment refers to a customer's long-lasting desire to preserve a beneficial relationship with a brand (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Being committed conceive customer to believe that their chosen brand is the best in the particular field (Hill and Alexander, 2000). Not only holding that belief, these authors note that committed customers remain in the business longer, purchase more frequently and less price sensitive.

Affective commitment denotes an emotional attachment to, an identification with and an involvement in the organization, while normative commitment denotes a feeling of obligation to continue the employment with the organization (Meyer *et al*, 2002). For example, students with strong affective commitment toward the university will remain with the university brand because they want to, and those with strong normative commitment will remain with the university brand as they feel that they ought to do so (Bansal *et al*, 2004).

Recall that brand logos are able to provide consumers with three types of benefits (Park *et al*, 2013b). *Functional benefits* are considered as the foundation of the meaningful engagement between consumers and the brands (Keller, 2012). Another research (Giese *et al*, 2014) notes the effect of *aesthetic design* on consumers' purchase decisions. In addition, Hwang and Kandampully (2012) show that if the brands are able to serve their consumers' *self-expressiveness goals*, it is very likely that the consumers will exhibit loyalty toward the brands. Recent study also depicts the relationships between brand logo and normative commitment (Park *et al*, 2013b).

In the context of universities, the students' positive experiences with the brand logo can increase their affective commitment. For example, when students receive summer jobs offer easier because of a reference letter containing the brand logo of their university, it can be said that the brand logo has provided a functional benefit. As a result, this positive experience would create an emotional connection between the students and the university brand or increase the students' inclination to stay with the university. Thus, this study proposes that brand logo benefit affects both affective and normative commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Brand logo benefit is positively associated with commitment (affective and normative).

Self-congruence and commitment

Extant research (for example, Kressmann *et al*, 2006; Nam *et al*, 2011) has shown that self-congruence is a prominent predictor of favorable behavior (for example, brand loyalty). In their study, Kressmann *et al* (2006) argue that self-congruity satisfies consumers' self-consistency and self-enhancement motives, causing them to evaluate their brands favorably. Moreover, Malär *et al* (2011) propose that self-congruence plays a prominent role in building emotional brand attachment.

When the brand logo is able to satisfy consumers' self-consistency (actual self) and self-enhancement (ideal self) motives, consumers will have a certain degree of emotional attachment toward the brand, increasing their affective commitment. On the basis of this bonding, consumers tend to evaluate their brands favorably, increasing their tendency to maintain the relationship with the brand (normative commitment). Thus, this study proposes that self-congruence (either actual or ideal) affects commitment.

Hypothesis 4: Actual self-congruence is positively associated with commitment.

Hypothesis 5: Ideal self-congruence is positively associated with commitment.

METHOD

Measures

For data collection purposes, the study developed a questionnaire. The questions were developed from existing measurements based on an extensive review of previous studies. A back-translation method following Nasution *et al*'s (2011) study was used as the study was conducted in Indonesia using *Bahasa Indonesia*. The questionnaire was formulated in English, translated into Bahasa Indonesia and back translated into English. The back-translation system ensured the

consistency of the real meaning of each item in the original questionnaires and the real meaning from each item in the questionnaire (Nasution et al, 2011).

All of the measures within this study were measured using 7-point scale anchored by (1) = 'strongly disagree' and (7) = 'strongly agree'. *Brand logo benefit* was measured using three dimensions on a second-order model adapted from Park et al (2013b) representing functional, aesthetic and self-expressiveness benefit. We used a reflective first-order and reflective second-order as advocated by previous research (Jarvis et al, 2003). A brand logo may reflect various benefits as parts of consumers' beliefs/values that they adhere to (Escalas and Bettman, 2005; Park et al, 2013a, b).

Each of these dimensions was measured using two items. For example, '[Brand name]'s logo provides aesthetic pleasure for me' was used to measure aesthetic benefit. *Commitment* was measured using two dimensions on a second-order model consisted of affective and normative commitment. We also model commitment as a reflective first-order and reflective second-order (Jarvis et al, 2003) as affective and normative commitment, based on meta-analysis study, display strong correlation (Meyer et al, 2002). However, these authors also note that affective and normative commitment are distinguishable components of commitment.

Affective commitment was measured using three items adapted from Mende and Bolton (2011) (that is, 'I enjoy being a student of [brand name]'). *Normative commitment* was measured using three items adapted from Grégoire et al (2009) (that is, 'I was very committed to my relationship with [brand name]').

Before measuring *actual* and *ideal self-congruence*, the respondents were asked to read a scenario-like paragraph. After reading the scenario-like paragraph, respondents were asked to assess actual and ideal self-congruence on a 7-point scale anchored by

(1) = 'strongly disagree' and (7) = 'strongly agree'. This method of measuring self-congruence (direct score formula) has been used by many studies (for example, Ekinci et al, 2008; Nam et al, 2011). The scenario-like paragraph was as follows:

Please take a moment to think about [brand name]. Consider the kind of students of [brand name]. Imagine this student in your mind and then describe this student using one or more personal adjectives such as organized, classy, poor, stylish, friendly, modern, traditional, popular, or whatever personal adjectives you can use.

Finally, *actual self-congruence* was measured using three items adapted from Ahn et al (2013) (that is, 'The image of the typical student of [brand name] is similar to how I am'). *Ideal self-congruence* was measured using three items adapted from Nam et al (2011) (that is, 'The image of [brand name] is consistent with how I like to see myself').

Pretesting

Pretesting was conducted before distributing the questionnaire to the targeted respondents in order to identify whether problems existed within the questionnaire (for example, wording, sequence and appearance) and to minimize issues with the back-translation method.

In the first round of pretesting, the questionnaire was distributed to academics. Subsequently, in the second round of pretesting, the questionnaire was distributed to students. In total, 16 academics and students participated by filling in the questionnaire. Short interview sessions were conducted, with each of them as soon as they finished filling in the questionnaire, asking on the questionnaire design. Some of the questions being asked were as follows: 'Did you find the questionnaire to be readable? Did you find anything confusing? Did you find

anything wrong? Did you find anything similar?' On the basis of the *pretest*, several changes were conducted (for example, wording, shading) to ensure that the questionnaire was correctly conveyed.

Sample and data collection procedure

Data were collected from undergraduate students in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. The questionnaires were distributed in several locations (for example, library, food-court, campus park) through an intercept strategy and were distributed in different days for a week, starting from Monday to Friday. The interviewer asked the participants whether they had participated in the survey at the beginning to make sure that they only participated once.

In total, 489 students participated in the survey. After checking for missing values and incomplete questionnaires, 11 questionnaires were dropped, leaving 478 valid questionnaires for analysis. Most of the participants were female (52 per cent) and currently in their 2nd year (47 per cent) or 3rd year (26 per cent) of study. These participants were originated from either Java (73 per cent) or outside Java (27 per cent). Each questionnaire included the brand logo of the university.

DATA ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Following Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the conceptual framework (Figure 1) was tested by employing a two-stage approach in Structural Equation Modeling – the measurement model followed by the structural model. The two-stage approach was conducted with AMOS 21, employing the Maximum Likelihood method.

Before the two-stage approach was conducted, normality tests were conducted using the value of skewness and kurtosis of each item. The results suggested that the distribution of the data is normal as the

values of the skewness and kurtosis were around the absolute value of -1 and $+1$ (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Measurement model

A measurement model was created in order to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. The goodness-of-fit (GoF) statistics of the measurement model were good. The fit statistics were as follows: $X^2 = 339.03$, $DF = 114$, $X^2/DF = 2.97$, $GFI = 0.93$, $NFI = 0.95$, $CFI = 0.97$, $TLI/NNFI = 0.96$, $RMSEA = 0.06$, $SRMR = 0.05$. As shown in Table 1, the factor loadings of each of the items are within the acceptable range. The factor loadings of almost all of the items are above 0.70, except for one item in the functional benefit dimension (0.68).

The convergent and discriminant validity were tested following Fornell and Larcker's (1981) suggestions by using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores. To assess reliability, Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) scores were used. The values of the AVE, α and CR scores are shown in Table 2.

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), convergent validity is achieved if the AVE score is above the 0.50 thresholds. The results show that the AVEs are all above 0.50, indicating that convergent validity is achieved. Next, discriminant validity was assessed. If the AVE score is above the squared inter-construct correlation (SIC), discriminant validity is achieved (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 2, most of the AVEs are above the SIC scores, indicating that discriminant validity is achieved. However, the AVE of functional benefit is slightly lower than the SIC between functional benefit and self-expressiveness benefit ($AVE = 0.60 < SIC = 0.63$). In order to test whether these benefits are two distinct dimensions, an exploratory factor analysis using principle component

Table 1: Scales and factor loadings

Scales		Measurement	Factor loadings
Actual self-congruence		The image of the typical student of [brand name] is similar to how I am	0.91
		The image of the typical student of [brand name] is similar to how I see myself	0.93
		The image of the typical student of [brand name] is similar to how others believe that I am	0.78
Ideal self-congruence		The typical student of [brand name] has an image similar to how I like to see myself	0.83
		The image of [brand name] is consistent with how I like to see myself	0.89
		The image of [brand name] is consistent with how I would like others to see me	0.91
Brand logo benefit	Functional	[Brand name]'s logo represents the functional benefit that I can expect from a brand	0.68
		[Brand name]'s logo ensures me that the brand assists me in handling my problems	0.85
	Aesthetic	[Brand name]'s logo is visually pleasing to me	0.92
		[Brand name]'s logo provides aesthetic pleasure to me	0.91
	Self-expressive	[Brand name]'s logo makes me think that [brand name] makes my life richer and more meaningful	0.84
		[Brand name]'s logo makes me think that [brand name] expresses who I am as a person	0.81
Commitment	Affective commitment	I enjoy being a student of [brand name]	0.82
		I have positive feelings about [brand name]	0.89
		I feel attached to [brand name]	0.80
	Normative commitment	I was very committed to my relationship with [brand name]	0.84
		The relationship with [brand name] was something I intended to maintain for a long time	0.91
		I put efforts into maintaining this relationship with [brand name]	0.92

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and correlations

Construct scale	Descriptive		Reliability		Correlations							
	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1 Actual self-congruence	4.4	1.1	0.90	0.91	0.76							
2 Ideal self-congruence	4.7	1.1	0.91	0.91	0.57	0.77						
3 Functional benefit	4.4	1.2	0.74	0.75	0.21	0.21	0.60					
4 Aesthetic benefit	4.3	1.3	0.91	0.91	0.18	0.17	0.51	0.84				
5 Self-expressive benefit	4.1	1.4	0.81	0.81	0.29	0.24	0.63	0.60	0.68			
6 Affective commitment	4.9	1.2	0.87	0.88	0.37	0.39	0.23	0.23	0.27	0.70		
7 Normative Commitment	4.8	1.3	0.92	0.92	0.33	0.40	0.19	0.21	0.22	0.64	0.79	

Note: The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate squared inter-construct correlations (SIC).

analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. The number of factors was fixed to two factors to determine whether the items

loaded into the other factor. The results show that the two items of functional benefit (0.87 and 0.80) loaded into a different

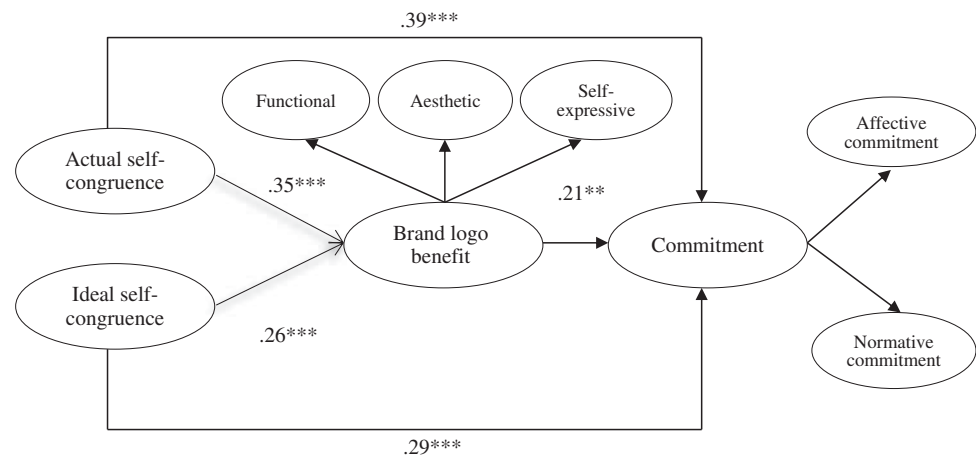


Figure 2: Results of the hypotheses testing.

factor than the two items of self-expressiveness benefit (0.92 and 0.72). In addition, Bagozzi and Yi (1988) indicate that AVE greater than 0.50 is adequate to assess the fit of the internal structure of the model. Reliability is thus achieved as both the α and CR scores were above the threshold of 0.70 (Hair *et al*, 2010).

Structural model

Before testing the research hypotheses, common-method variance was checked. Du *et al* (2007) suggest that in a study where data are collected using similar types of response scales (for example, Likert-type scales) and from the same respondent, common-method variance may pose a problem. Following previous research (Podsakoff *et al*, 2003), common-method variance was checked using Harman’s single-factor test. On basis of the data, the unrotated factor solution revealed three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The result accounts for 69.63 per cent of the total variance, where the first factor accounts for 49.70 per cent of the total variance. This suggests that common-method variance does not pose a significant problem as there was no general factor in the unrotated structure (Du *et al*, 2007).

A structural model (Figure 2) was built to test all of the research hypotheses within the conceptual framework. The GoF statistics of the structural model are good. The fit statistics are as follows: $X^2 = 349.67$, $DF = 124$, $X^2/DF = 2.82$, $GFI = 0.92$, $NFI = 0.95$, $CFI = 0.97$, $TLI/NNFI = 0.96$, $RMSEA = 0.06$, $SRMR = 0.05$. Table 3 displays the results of the hypotheses testing.

As shown in Table 3, self-congruence (actual and ideal self-congruence) explains 33 per cent of the variance in brand logo benefit, whereas self-congruence and brand logo benefit explain 59 per cent of the variance in commitment. All five-research hypotheses are supported at the 99 per cent confidence level. For Hypothesis 1, the results support that actual self-congruence has a positive relationship with brand logo benefit (SPC = 0.35, $t = 4.50$, $P < 0.001$). Testing Hypothesis 2, the findings support that ideal self-congruence positively affects brand logo benefit (SPC = 0.26, $t = 3.39$, $P < 0.001$). Hypothesis 3, which states that brand logo benefit associates positively with commitment, is supported (SPC = 0.29, $t = 5.43$, $P < 0.001$). Finally, Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5, which states that actual and ideal self-congruence positively influence commitment are supported

Table 3: Results of the hypotheses testing

	Relationships	SPC	t-value
Hypothesis 1	Actual self-congruence→Brand logo benefit	0.35	4.50***
Hypothesis 2	Ideal self-congruence→Brand logo benefit	0.26	3.39***
Hypothesis 3	Actual self-congruence→Commitment	0.21	3.07**
Hypothesis 4	Ideal self-congruence→Commitment	0.39	5.74***
Hypothesis 5	Brand logo benefit→Commitment	0.29	5.43***
Variance explained (R^2)			
Brand logo benefit		0.33	
Commitment		0.59	

* $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$.

Note: SPC = Standardized Path Coefficient.

(SPC = 0.21, $t = 3.07$, $P < 0.01$ and SPC = 0.39, $t = 5.74$, $P < 0.001$, respectively).

DISCUSSION

Theoretical contributions and managerial implications

Extant research (for example, Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001; Bottomley and Doyle, 2006; Walsh *et al*, 2010; Ellis-Chadwick and Doherty, 2012) in the branding literature has touched upon examining the role of brand logo. However, many of these studies (for example, Labrecque and Milne, 2012; van Grinsven and Das, 2014) focus their examination on the design of the brand logo and its consequences. Park *et al* (2013b) argue another form of brand logo, namely brand logo benefit, which consists of three benefits (functional, aesthetic and self-expressive). According to these authors, brand logos that are noticeable but not able to convey these benefits will fail to reach their potential advantages.

The study offers several contributions: First, the study offers a conceptual framework in achieving commitment through self-congruence and brand logo benefit. This contributes to the branding literature by highlighting that actual and ideal self-congruence act as the driver of brand logo benefit. The study also extends previous

studies (for example, Kressmann *et al*, 2006; Ekinici *et al*, 2008; Malär *et al*, 2011) by showing that self-congruence not only influences brand attachment, consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty but also influences brand logo benefit.

Second, we extend Park *et al*'s, 2013a, b study by not only accounting for normative commitment but also affective commitment. This study corroborates to their result by showing that brand logo benefit is positively associated with normative commitment. In addition, this study also shows the association between brand logo benefit and affective commitment – which is based on emotional bonding. Affective commitment is in the heart of the firm to develop and maintain the marketing relationships with customers, because it psychologically links the customer values to firms' values (Pritchard *et al*, 1999; Bansal *et al*, 2004; Zhang and Bloemer, 2011). In addition, Fullerton (2003) also concludes that affective commitment is a more powerful determinant of consumer retention. The present study also displays this in the context of HE services, while Park *et al* (2013b) is in the context of corporate brands within a Fortune 500 (for example, Nestle).

Third, this is the first study to empirically test the link between self-congruence and commitment. As has been discussed above, commitment and loyalty are two distinct

constructs, where commitment displays more affective components compared with loyalty (for example, Pritchard *et al*, 1999; Izogo, 2015). Hosany and Martin (2012) summary on self-congruence studies also displays that this link has not been examined. The results show that self-congruence positively affects commitment (affective and normative).

Fourth, this present study extends the literature (for example, Walsh *et al*, 2010; Park *et al*, 2013b) by displaying the role of self-congruence and brand logo benefit on commitment within the Indonesian HE services sector. Inadequate research has addressed the complex nature of brand identity toward commitment particularly in the context of HE services, with only limited research (for example, Watkins and Gonzenbach, 2013; Alwi and Kitchen, 2014) actually investigating the function of brand logos. The study posits that university brand logos are utmost relevant to students, that is, the institution's brand logo where they study displays their desired identity and image. HE is a growing service industry; it has been noted that in the United States, the HE sector has become one of the fastest growing service industries (Curtis *et al*, 2009). Hence, the study of brand logo in HE services may be of great relevance to both academics and service managers alike.

Fifth, the article displays the relative importance of actual and ideal self-congruence toward building brand logo benefit and commitment. Of the two self-congruence types, actual self-congruence is a slightly better predictor of brand logo benefit. This finding corroborates Malär *et al* (2011), which shows actual self-congruence as a better predictor of emotional brand attachment. Moreover, Graeff (1996) notes that ideal self-congruence is a better predictor of favorable consumer behaviors for hedonic products. As HE service in itself is more on the utilitarian rather than hedonic, this may explain why actual self-

congruence is a better predictor than ideal self-congruence. Interestingly, ideal self-congruence is a slightly better predictor of commitment. This may be explained by the student's expectations of what their ideal life could become once they graduate and how it may affect their propensity to stay committed.

Each and every university has their competitive advantage and marketing plan. Most of these institutions, however, often promote their ability to help the students achieve their *ideal* self. Although this is important, the results of this study also display the importance of *actual* self-congruence in predicting brand logo benefit, which in turn leads to increased commitment. Thus, university managers should pay special attention and promote that the institutions also cater for not only the ideal self but also the actual self. For example, if a market survey finds that most of the students think of themselves as socially responsible, managers – together with the faculties – should hold specific social events involving these students. This is not difficult and targeting these students should be easy, as admission to a university and HE services require the students to submit their resume and personal statement. With such data, managers can communicate to both current and prospective students with more targeted promotion, catering toward the students' actual self.

The market these days is cluttered; therefore, brands must be crystal clear about what they expect the consumers to remember and think about them (Park *et al*, 2013b). Thus, managers need to start thinking on managing the brand logos more systematically in order to communicate the benefits. For example, placing the brand logos appropriately might help to achieve this objective (Ellis-Chadwick and Doherty, 2012). Simultaneously, by increasing the congruity between the brand and the students' self, such commitment may also be

achieved, and as Japutra *et al* (2014) suggest, self-congruity is one of the key drivers of brand attachment.

Further research

Although the present study develops important insights into the role of self-congruence and brand logo benefit in achieving commitment (affective and normative), this study was conducted in the context of HE services. Further studies should replicate the model and apply it to other context (for example, retailing) and across categories (goods and services) in order to generalize the findings of this study. Furthermore, the data collected for this study was within a particular culture (Indonesians). It would be worthwhile to expand this study to other cultures.

The results indicate that actual self-congruence is a slightly better predictor of brand logo benefit compared with ideal self-congruence. Previous research shows mixed results in terms of the relative impact of actual and ideal self-congruence. It would be interesting to test the relative impact of self-congruence on brand logo benefit in other contexts to know whether actual or ideal self-congruence is more important than the other. Further, related to the issue of measurements, the study adapted and employed Park *et al*'s (2013b) scale to measure brand logo benefit. However, the reversed item scales had to be dropped because of their low loadings. Future research should also replicate the scale in order to know whether this scale can be generalized across categories and cultures.

Finally, an avenue for future research could be to include other variables in order to extend the model. Future research could investigate the antecedents of brand logo benefit, which captures both cognitive and affective components. Related to the dependent variables, this study only examined commitment. It would be fruitful to

include other important consequences, such as word-of-mouth. Future studies could also include probable moderating variables. Wirtz *et al* (2013) suggest that there are three factors influencing commitment to engage in online brand community: (i) product factors (for example, product involvement), (ii) customer factors (for example, customer expertise) and (iii) situational factors (for example, the size of the community). These factors may be researched upon in the HE services sector to expand on the model developed in this study.

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