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## What constitutes student–university brand relationship? Malaysian students’ perspective

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### ABSTRACT

The concept of customer-brand relationship (CBR) is becoming increasingly important. However, the description of what constitutes student–university brand relationship is relatively

Underpinned by social exchange theory, this study

proposes student–university brand relationship formation that comprises of utility (UV), hedonic (HV) and relational values (RV) as customer values; brand the antecedents, brand relationship quality (BRQ), as the mediator, relationship quality; brand and brand resonance (BR) as the consequence of CBR. With a set of 701 samples of Malaysian postgraduate students, the structural equation modelling (PLS) was utilized. The results reveal the mediating effect of BRQ in the relationships between customer values (UV, HV and RV) and BR. Therefore, considering student’s psychological ties as the focus in brand relationship strategy can help the university to understand how to create a greater bonding and favourable university’s brand relationship response.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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## Introduction

The growth of the service sector is characterized by customer–brand relationship (CBR) formation because customers tend to perceive all services and products offered as a brand (Berry, 2000). By having distinctive, relevant and strong CBR, it may help reduce customers’ purchase risk (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005) and also act as a powerful means for firms to survive in an industry with intense competition (Huang, Yen, Liu, & Chang, 2014).

Discussions on CBRs have been of particular interest to many service researchers (e.g. Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014; Nyffenegger, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Malaer, 2014; Zainol, Omar, Osman, & Habidin, 2016). Within the Service-Dominant Logic perspective, a brand becomes