

**The Identification, Measurement and Competitive Positioning
of a Higher Education Institution Brand in Zambia: The Case
of the Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies (ZCAS)**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research project was to identify and measure the ZCAS brand in the higher education (HE) sector in Zambia and, through the study, identify areas for strengthening the brand's competitive position. ZCAS is earmarked for conversion into a university following the completion of a major infrastructure expansion project that has doubled its service delivery capacity. This transition requires rebranding and repositioning the institution as a university; and this research could play a significant role in this undertaking by providing insights into brand building in the Zambian HE sector.

The research was carried out in two phases. The first research phase was a qualitative multiple case study designed to identify the principal branding elements in the Zambian HE market. Data were collected through three focus group discussions with first year students at ZCAS and twenty semi-structured interviews with marketing executives at ZCAS and twelve universities. Thematic and content analysis of the discussions and interviews revealed that the top five most considered HE branding factors in Zambia are teaching quality, fees, course availability, facilities and employability; while course availability, teaching quality and facilities emerged as the top three sources of competitive advantage. The study also revealed that the most consulted information sources about universities are print media, friends, education expos and electronic media, while the most prolific influencers of student choice are friends, parents and self.

In the second research phase a conjoint questionnaire was administered to 390 first year students in eight HE institutions to establish ZCAS' competitive brand position in Zambia. Five principal branding attributes (i.e. teaching quality, fees, course availability, learning environment and employability) identified in the first research phase were employed in the conjoint analysis. The study revealed that ZCAS has a strong brand position because the most important elements in its brand model, i.e. course availability, teaching quality and facilities, are also the premier brand dimensions in the market.

This study therefore adds to the increasing body of knowledge on HE branding, particularly in developing countries, by developing and then testing a brand orientation model for the Zambian HE market.

DEDICATIONS

To my dear wife Bernadette and children Kelvin, Kasanda, Faith and Mahongo

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I would like to sincerely thank the management of ZCAS for giving me the opportunity to undertake this DBA research. Without your faith in me I would not have taken the first step in this doctoral journey. And to the employees and students of ZCAS who participated in the research, I give my heartfelt thanks. Your support inspired me when the going got tough.

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ACADEMIC REGISTRY



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GLOSSARY

Adaptive conjoint method – this is a methodology for conducting a conjoint analysis that relies on respondents providing additional information not in the actual *conjoint task* (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.411).

Additive model – model based on the additive composition rule, which assumes that individuals just ‘add up’ the part-worths to calculate an overall or total worth score indicating utility or preference (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.411).

Brand – a cluster of functional and emotional values that enables organisations to make a promise about a unique and welcomed experience. It is everything that a product or service means to consumers (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, p.31).

Brand equity – this is the added value that a brand endows a product or service, over and above a similar unbranded product or service (Farquhar, 1989).

Brand oriented – making the most of brand equity by positioning the brands at the core of processes and holistically exploiting the brand internally and externally (Gromark and Melin, 2011).

Choice-based conjoint approach – this is an alternative form of *conjoint task* for collecting responses and estimating the conjoint model (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.410).

Competitive advantage – this is the achievement of superior performance vis-à-vis rivals, through differentiation, to create distinctive product appeal or brand identity (Dibb *et al.*, 2006, p.49).

Conjoint analysis – a de-compositional approach to modeling the relative importance of individual attribute components in creating overall preference for multi-attribute alternatives. Conjoint analysis enables the researcher to measure the value consumers place on individual attributes or features that define products and services (IBM, 2011; Hooley and Lynch, 1981).

Conjoint task – the procedure for gathering judgments on each profile in the conjoint design using one of the three types of presentation method i.e. full-profile, pairwise comparison or trade-off (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.410) .

Content analysis – this is an approach to the analysis of documents and texts that seek to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 291).

Corporate brand – representation of people in the company, their skills, attitudes, behaviour, design, style, language, greenism, altruism, modes of communication, speed of response, and so on; the whole company culture (King, 1991).

Elements of a university brand – these are the factors which prospective students and other stakeholders consider when choosing a higher education institution and indicate strong brand perceptions.

Factor – independent variable the researcher manipulates that represents a specific attribute. In conjoint analysis, the factors are nonmetric. Factors must be represented by two or more values (known as *levels*), which are also specified by the researcher (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.411).

Fractional factorial design – method of designing profiles that uses only a subset of the possible profiles needed to estimate the results based on the assumed compositional rule (IBM, 2011, p.2; Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.411).

Full profile method – this is a method of gathering respondent evaluations by presenting *profiles* that are described in terms of all *factors* (IBM, 2011, p.2; Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.411).

Hold out set or profiles – set of *profiles* that are rated/ranked by respondents but are not used to estimate *part-worths*. Estimated part-worths are then used to predict preference for the hold out profiles to assess validity and reliability of the original estimates (IBM, 2011, p.2; Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.413).

Attribute Level – specific nonmetric value describing a *factor*. Each factor must be represented by at least two levels (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.412).

Monotonic relationship – the assumption by the researcher that a preference order among *levels* should apply to the *part-worth* estimates e.g. closer distance preferred over farther distance travelled (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.412)

Orthogonality – mathematical constraint requiring that the *part-worth* estimates be independent of each other (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.412).

Part-worth – estimate from conjoint analysis of the overall preference or *utility* associated with each *level* of each *factor* used to define the product or service (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.412).

Perceptual maps – visual depictions of consumer perceptions and preferences to identify ‘holes’ or ‘openings’ of unmet consumer needs and marketing opportunities (Kotler and Keller, 2012, p.305).

Positioning - the act of designing a company’s offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of the prospect (target market). It is the creation of a desirable, distinctive and plausible image for a brand that will have strong appeal for the customers in a target market segment (Ries and Trout, 2000).

Profile – by taking one *level* from each *factor*, the researcher creates a specific object that can be evaluated by respondents (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.412).

Reversal – a violation of a *monotonic relationship*, where the estimated *part-worth* for a *level* is greater or lower than it should be in relation to another level. For example, in distance travelled to a store, closer stores would always be expected to have more utility than those farther away. A reversal would be when a farther distance has a larger part-worth than a closer distance (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.412).

Thematic analysis – this is the process of identifying themes in data to find an analytic path within the voluminous data generated by qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.571 - 572).

Traditional conjoint analysis – this is a methodology that employs the classic principles of conjoint analysis in the *conjoint task*, using an additive model of consumer preference and pairwise comparison or *full-profile methods* of presentation (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p. 413).

Utility – an individual’s subjective preference judgment representing the holistic value or worth of a specific object (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.413).

Validation profiles – see hold out profiles.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research on brand management in higher education (HE) in Zambia and sets the scene for the rest of the thesis. Universities world-wide have been facing increasing competition for students due to reduced government spending on higher education and globalization of the HE marketplace (UNESCO-UIS, 2012a, 2012b and 2012c; Whisman, 2009; Roper and Davies, 2007; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006); and the Zambian HE sector has not been spared. To gain competitive advantage, higher education institutions (HEIs) need to become more brand oriented by creating strong brand equity through interactions with internal and external stakeholders to increase their visibility, differentiation and market share (Gromark and Melin, 2011; Baumgarth, 2010; Wong and Merrilees, 2008; Weisnewski, 2008; Napoli, 2006; Ewing and Napoli, 2005; Melewar and Akel, 2005; Hankinson, 2002). In Zambia no published empirical research has yet been carried out on higher education branding; hence the country's HEIs may be ill-equipped to compete successfully both regionally and internationally. This research takes a step in redressing this situation by developing a brand orientation model that can be used to strengthen brand positions of tertiary education institutions with particular reference to Zambia.

After justifying why the research should be carried out and explaining its aim, research question and objectives in sections 1.2 and 1.3, the scope of the research and its contributions are outlined in sections 1.4 and 1.5 respectively. Subsequently the research design and contents of the thesis are delineated in sections 1.6 and 1.7, with the summary of the chapter outlined in section 1.8.

1.2 Research problem and justification for the research

It has long been established in the branding literature that brand equity - the added value that a brand endows a product or service, over and above a similar unbranded product or service (Farquhar, 1989, p. 24) – confers significant benefits to an entity and its various stakeholders (Kotler and Keller, 2012, p.266; de Chernatony and McDonald, 2005). Indeed

various studies have demonstrated that brand oriented organisations (i.e. those that make the most of their brand equity by positioning their brands at the core of their processes and holistically exploit those brands internally and externally) gain competitive advantage and perform better than organisations that are not brand oriented, regardless of whether they are profit making organisations (Gromark and Melin, 2011; Baumgarth, 2010; Weisnewski, 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2008) or non-profit making entities (Napoli, 2006; Ewing and Napoli, 2005; Hankinson, 2002).

A review of the marketing and brand management literature has shown that although there is a reasonable body of work on marketing in higher education (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006), there is a relative paucity of published empirical studies on HE branding (Chapleo, 2011; Waeraas and Solbakk, 2008; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). Africa in general and Zambia in particular is lagging in HE branding research. A few studies have been carried out on HEI branding in Africa. Mpinganjira (2011a) and (2009) and Maringe and Carter (2007) for example, addressed issues related to African students' choice of UK and other HEIs abroad and may not be directly relevant to branding African HEIs. Other studies such as Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei's (2010) study was based on a single Ghanaian university while Mpinganjira's (2012) and (2011b) were based on South African HEI and none of these specifically address the Zambian HE context.

Whisman (2009), Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006) and Caruana, Ramaseshan and Ewing (1998) assert that the HE sector has become increasingly competitive globally. The competition in the HE sector is rising because many governments worldwide are cutting down on resources allocated to higher education (Whisman, 2009; Caruana, Ramaseshan and Ewing, 1998) forcing HE institutions to look for more students to generate extra revenue. Globalization of the higher education marketplace has also contributed to increased competition in this sector (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). Consequently, many HE institutions, and even countries, are now turning to branding as a solution (Whisman, 2009; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007), thereby increasing the need for empirically based HE branding models to be developed.

The growth in global competition in the HE sector can be seen from the increase in mobility of students globally, regionally and even at national level. For example, between

1980 and 2009 the number of internationally mobile students tripled from 1.1 million to 3.4 million (UNESCO-UIS, 2012a). In particular, the level of competition for tertiary students is even higher in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (the region in which Zambia is located) with the number of mobile students representing 4.9% of students enrolled in domestic tertiary institutions in 2008, which was almost three times greater than the global average at 1.9% (UNESCO-UIS, 2012c). Similarly, UNESCO-UIS (2012b) shows that in Zambia the number of students studying abroad, even though relatively small, has almost doubled from 2,535 in 1998 to 4,991 in 2010.

This study is primarily concerned with the identification, measurement and competitive positioning of a higher education institution brand in Zambia. The study does not therefore only help to fill a gap in the branding literature, but also moves forward the agenda for Zambian HEIs to become more brand orientated and therefore more prepared to face the increasing global competition.

1.2.1 Why this research is necessary for Zambia

Zambia is a developing country in sub-Saharan Africa with a population of 13 million people and GDP growth of 7.6% in 2010 (Central Statistical Office, 2011). After gaining political independence from Britain in 1964, the country pursued socialist political and economic policies. Most companies were state owned and controlled, including higher education, until 1991 when the economy was liberalized and capitalist policies adopted in line with IMF and World Bank demands. This shift in ideology encouraged private enterprise, resulting, *inter alia*, in reforms in higher education.

Until 1999, Zambia had two universities only, both of which were public universities. Legislation was passed in that year to allow establishment of privately owned and funded universities (The University Act 1999). Since then many private universities have been set up, 14 of which are currently fully functioning and offering degree programmes at least up to master's degree level (see Appendix 1). The government has also upgraded three former colleges to full university status. The other significant reform in the Zambian HE is the reduction in funding from the government and the requirement for public universities

to generate their own funds to meet their financing needs. Recently the government also announced that the current student bursary scheme where university students are given free full or partial financial assistance would be withdrawn and replaced with a loan scheme. The loan scheme would be targeted at students from financially challenged backgrounds and the loan would be recovered upon graduation.

The increase in the number of universities, coupled with the reduction in funding, imply that competition for students amongst Zambian HEIs has increased and this trend is likely to continue. Universities now need to market and brand themselves to attract and retain students. Even public universities are unlikely to escape the inevitable marketisation of the Zambian HE as they also have to operate in this more competitive recruitment market. Therefore, it is important for HEIs to understand ways to attract students and how to market themselves.

In addition to the increase in local competition, Zambian universities also face increasing global competition. Zambia is one of the countries in the SADC region, a region with a very high student outbound mobility ratio (total number of students studying abroad expressed as a percentage of all students at the same level of education) of 6%, compared to a world ratio of only 2% (UNESCO-UIS, 2012a). Nearly half of these mobile students go to study in South Africa, a country with the most extensive tertiary education systems in the region. Unfortunately, Zambia is not a top destination for mobile staff and students in the region and has been unable to take advantage of the SADC (1997) protocols – which were aimed at enhancing student and staff mobility in the SADC region – to attract staff and students from the region. This has resulted in a ‘brain drain’ as a significant number of staff and students who pursue these opportunities outside the country do not return, robbing the country of critical human capital necessary for development.

Given the above scenario, Zambia needs to position itself as an attractive destination for higher education in the region to reduce the brain drain and foster its development. However, to-date no published research has been undertaken on branding HEIs in Zambia from which universities and colleges can learn how to become more competitive in the region and internationally in terms of student recruitment and retention. As Vrontis, Thrassou and Melanthiou (2007) highlighted in their study, there are differences in student

choice of HEIs (and the consequent marketing/branding implications) between developed and developing countries due to contextual and customer rights differences; hence branding research carried out elsewhere may not be of direct relevance to Zambian HEIs. The design, location and contextual culture of this study are tailored to the Zambian HE sector, making it more relevant and justifiable in addressing brand management in the country's HEIs.

1.2.2 Why this research is necessary for ZCAS

The Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies (ZCAS), the main case study organisation and the researcher's employer, has just completed a major infrastructure expansion project which has doubled its service delivery capacity in terms of classroom space, office accommodation and student hostel bed space (ZCAS, 2011). In order to fully utilise this expanded capacity and also address the increasing competition in the tertiary education market, various stakeholders are considering turning the college into a university in the near future. This transition will inevitably require rebranding and repositioning ZCAS as a university and this research can play a significant role in this undertaking by providing insights into brand building in the Zambian HE sector.

Additionally, ZCAS has over the years diversified its course portfolio from traditional professional accountancy programmes (reflected in its name as Zambia Centre for *Accountancy Studies*) to include professional and academic degree programmes in ICT, marketing, law, banking, procurement, economics and business management (ZCAS, 2011). This implies that ZCAS must rebrand itself to reflect its diversified business model sooner rather than later. This research project is therefore also justified because its outcomes could inform the rebranding process that is now inevitable.

1.3 Research Aim, Question and Objectives

1.3.1 Research aim

As stated above, even though there is substantial literature on HE marketing in general, not much published empirical research has been undertaken on brand orientation in higher education, particularly in Zambia. The aim of this research is therefore as follows:

To identify and measure the ZCAS brand in the higher education sector in Zambia and through the study, identify areas for strengthening the brand's competitive position.

1.3.2 Research question

In order to fulfill the research aim above, the study is designed to answer the following research question:

How can a higher education brand be identified, measured and used for competitive positioning?

1.3.3 Research objectives

In order to answer the research question, the study initially determines the principal branding elements that make up a HE brand model, and which components enhance brand equity in the HE sector based on synthesis of HE branding literature and field studies in Zambian HEIs. The relevant HE branding components identified are then used to determine ZCAS' brand positioning relative to its competitors in the HE sector in Zambia. In line with the research question, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1) RO1: Identify the relevant components that constitute a higher education brand model in the Zambian context.*
- 2) RO2: Based on the brand components identified in RO1 above, identify the current position of the ZCAS brand as a case study.*

- 3) *RO3: Establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia.*
- 4) *RO4: Make recommendations on how ZCAS can strengthen its brand position in the higher education sector in Zambia.*

1.4 Research scope

The research investigates brand management in the higher education sector in Zambia. The sampling frame includes all universities and colleges that offer a minimum of first degree programmes and/or degree equivalent professional programmes in Zambia.

The study was carried out in two phases. The first research phase, whose objective was to identify relevant components that constitute a higher education brand model in Zambia, was a multiple case study of ZCAS and twelve other Zambian HE institutions. The second research phase, whose objective was to measure the extent of ZCAS' brand orientation compared to its competitors in the Zambian HE sector, was conducted in eight of the thirteen Zambian HEIs mentioned above based on the HE branding components identified in the first research phase.

ZCAS, a government owned premier college, was used as the main case study organisation. ZCAS was incorporated under Act No.1 of 1989 as a self-financing, non-profit making body with the mandate to train professional accountants, improve the standing of the accountancy profession in Zambia and undertake research and consulting activities (ZCAS Act 1989). Located in the centre of the capital city, Lusaka, the college has a student population of about 3, 000 and now offers degree programmes up to master's degree level and professional programmes in information technology, accountancy, marketing, banking, economics and other business related fields (ZCAS, 2012). The college completed a major expansion project at a cost of over \$10 million in 2011. The increased capacity and the level at which courses are offered implies that ZCAS is comparable to most HEIs in Zambia, especially private universities and recently established public universities in terms of size, courses offered and market share of the Zambian HE sector.

Even though ZCAS was used as the main case study organisation, it is not the brand model for all other HE institutions in Zambia. Indeed the brand model developed from this research project was used to benchmark ZCAS against its competitors. Nonetheless, it is envisaged that ZCAS generally has characteristics and features of the HE sector in Zambia and typifies all, or most, of the brand attributes/components in the Zambian HE sector because of its ownership and financing structure. For example, as a public institution it is subject to common control by the government as is the case with public universities that are included in the research; on the other hand, as a self-financing commercial organisation, ZCAS faces the same challenges as private universities that form part of the research sample. In addition, the overall objective is not necessarily to identify the definitive Zambian HE brand, but to ensure that the study does not miss out any vital components of what makes a HE brand. ZCAS was therefore chosen as the main case study organisation because of its ‘middle’ position in the HE sector (government controlled, but run as a private commercial HEI) and for access reasons as the researcher is an employee of the organisation.

1.5 Research Contributions

It is envisaged that the findings from this research are of benefit to marketing researchers and practitioners in HE, particularly in Zambia and other developing countries where empirical research on HE branding is at a rudimentary level.

1.5.1 Contribution to brand management in general

As stated above, there is a paucity of published empirical research on brand management in the HE sector in Zambia. The increasing global competition in this sector, as postulated by UNESCO-UIS (2012a), (2012b) and (2012c), Whisman (2009), Roper and Davies (2007) and Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006) however implies that universities and colleges need to embrace branding more than ever before. The significance of this study is that it synthesizes the extant literature on brand management, develops, and then tests a brand orientation model for the higher education sector in Zambia. Even though the model developed might not be directly applicable to universities and colleges in other countries, it could be used as a point of departure for developing brand orientation models suitable for

those jurisdictions, particularly similar developing countries in which HE branding research is non-existent or still in its infancy. The research findings are also likely to add to the increasing body of knowledge on HE branding by reinforcing or disputing existing theories and practices.

1.5.2 Contribution to the Zambian HE sector

In the case of Zambia, no published study has been carried out on branding in general in the higher education sector, despite the increasing level of competition as evidenced by the significant increase in the number of colleges and universities (many of them private and therefore run as full commercial entities), following liberalization of the economy in 1991. The foremost branding components identified by this study can be used by universities and colleges (especially the traditional ones that existed before the economy was liberalized in 1991 and were therefore not subjected to stiff competition) to leverage their brand positions.

1.5.3 Contribution to ZCAS

In the case of ZCAS – the main case study organisation – the research was, *inter alia*, designed to identify the college's comparative brand position in the Zambian higher education sector. Recommendations on how that position could be strengthened were then derived from the study. If adopted and implemented, the recommendations should directly enhance the college's brand orientation and, consequently, its competitive position in the market.

1.6 Research Design

As stated in Sub-section 1.3.2 of Chapter 1, the research question guiding this study is: *How can a higher education brand be identified, measured and used for competitive positioning?* The research was therefore a brand positioning study and a review of the literature was required in order to identify elements of a higher education brand and issues involved in competitive positioning in the HE sector. The literature review revealed that no HE brand positioning study has been carried out in Zambia; hence country specific HE

branding issues are unknown. Accordingly, the research would be executed in two phases. Firstly, a qualitative exploratory study based on HE branding themes identified in the literature review was conducted to identify the Zambian HE brand model. Secondly, a quantitative study based on the brand model identified in the first research phase was carried out to measure ZCAS' competitive brand positioning in the HE sector in Zambia. The research design is therefore as discussed in the rest of this section.

1.6.1 Research Philosophy

The research was conducted using a critical realism paradigm approach to facilitate consideration of both qualitative and quantitative features of an HE corporate brand (Aaker, 2004; King, 1991) in its real world context. Critical realism facilitates the use of mixed or multiple methods during the research, comparing the empirical research with theory and constructing a model based on a synthesis of the two, which is highly appropriate for a study encompassing both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.109).

1.6.2 Research approach and method

This research employed a case study method. Thirteen HEIs participated in the study. The case study strategy has been used in several branding research studies in education settings (e.g. Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei, 2010; Al-Fattal, 2010; Carter and Yeo, 2009; Whisman, 2009; Waeraas and Solbakk, 2008). The study was carried out in two phases. Firstly, a qualitative study (first research phase), involving focus group discussions with ZCAS students and semi-structured interviews with ZCAS staff and HEI marketing professionals, was used to identify HEI brand orientation dimensions (e.g. elements of the brand, influencers of student choice, information sources and HE competitive advantages) suitable for the HE sector in Zambia. Secondly, a quantitative study (second research phase), involving a questionnaire survey was conducted to measure and compare the ZCAS brand against other HE brands in Zambia. The questionnaire survey strategy was reinforced by similar comparative studies on brand orientation (e.g. Gromark and Melin, 2011; Al-Fattal, 2010; Bennett and Ali-Choudhury, 2009; Carter and Yeo, 2009).

1.6.3 Data collection and analysis techniques

Phase I First research phase qualitative data collection and analysis

Data were collected using focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews during this phase of the study. Three focus group discussions were held with students of ZCAS, the main case study organisation. Additionally, twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with business development and brand management executives in ZCAS and twelve other HE institutions. The use of focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews was reinforced by other university branding studies such as Mpinganjira (2012), Chapleo (2011), Bennett and Ali-Choudhury (2009), Waeraas and Solbakk (2008), Ancheh, Krishnan and Nurtjahja (2007) and Maringe and carter (2007).

The focus group discussions and interviews were recorded and transcribed. Atlas.ti software was then used to code the data, create quotations, memos, families and networks and retrieve the data to aid content analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions. These techniques facilitated synthesis of literature-based and field-based branding propositions (Hankinson, 2001; de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo-Riley, 1998).

Phase II second research phase quantitative data collection and analysis

The brand orientation dimensions identified in the first research phase above were used in the construction of a conjoint questionnaire using SPSS Conjoint Orthoplan and Plancards (the software used in the analysis). The questionnaire was pre-coded and pilot tested to enhance its reliability, validity and practicability (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.262 – 263; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.394; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp.341 – 342). The use of a Conjoint questionnaire in this research project was reinforced by other branding studies in a university context, such as Kusumawati (2011), Hagel and Shaw (2008), Soutar and Turner (2002), Moogan, Baron and Bainbridge (2001) and Hooley and Lynch (1981).

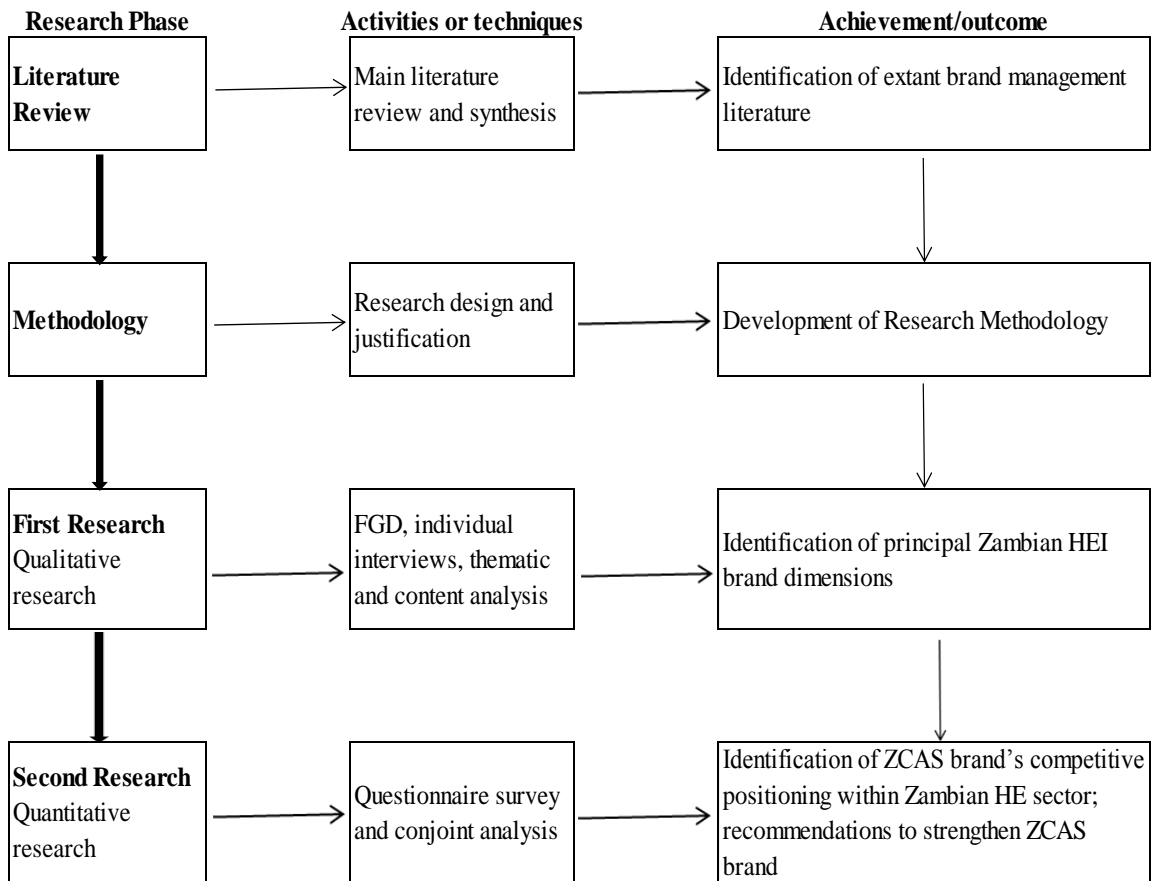
Completed questionnaires were edited to eliminate errors in readiness for further processing (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp.422 – 425; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp.347 – 348) and analysis using the conjoint module in IBM SPSS 20. The seven steps suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010, p.442) were followed in the analysis, the

results of which unveiled students' preferences for the various HE brand orientation dimensions as well as HE institutions in Zambia.

1.7 Thesis Layout

The main stages in this research project are as illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1 Simplified Research Programme



This thesis consists of five chapters and is structured as follows. After outlining the overview of the overall research programme in this chapter, Chapter 2 reviews the literature on brand management leading to identification of key branding concepts and theory based branding components that may be relevant to brand orientation of colleges and universities in Zambia.

The research methodology is covered in Chapter 3. This chapter outlines and justifies the methodologies for both research phases. The research project employed a case study method and was carried out in two phases. The first research phase was a qualitative study while the second research phase was a quantitative study. The methodologies for the first and second research phases are shown in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 in the methodology chapter. Chapters 4 and 5 respectively outline and analyse the findings from the first and second research phases. The first research phase was exploratory in nature and integrated the outcome of the literature review and synthesis from Chapter 2 with field-based research study outcomes to identify the essential components of what makes a HE brand in Zambia. The second research phase was quantitative and was a survey that utilised a conjoint questionnaire based on the HE branding components identified in the first research phase.

The final chapter draws conclusions from the preceding chapters. This encompasses theoretical and managerial implications with limitations and directions for future research also being noted.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the research topic on brand management in higher education in Zambia. The growing competition in the HE sector is forcing colleges and universities to find innovative ways to attract and retain students; and branding is being seen as a solution. Empirical research on tertiary education branding in Zambia is however lacking. In particular no branding models have yet been developed on how to strengthen HE brands in the country. This research aims to identify and measure the ZCAS brand in the higher education sector in Zambia and through the study identify areas for strengthening the brand's competitive position; and the resulting research question is: *How can a higher education brand be identified, measured and used for competitive positioning?*

It is hoped that the research, its findings and recommendations are of significant benefit to brand management in general, to the Zambian tertiary education sector and to ZCAS. More empirically based research findings should add to the body of knowledge on higher education brand orientation, while context-specific brand orientation dimensions identified

should be useful to HE brand managers in Zambia. In the case of ZCAS, recommendations made could be used to strengthen the college's brand position.

The research philosophy is based upon critical realism, which facilitates qualitative considerations during the exploratory phase of the study and quantitative research later during the comparative stages. The research was carried out in two phases. The first research phase utilised focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews to identify the principal branding components in the Zambian HE sector whilst the second research phase used these components to compare ZCAS's brand standing against its competitors. Thematic and content analysis were used during the first research phase while conjoint analysis was employed in the comparative study.

The thesis is divided into six chapters addressing introductory aspects, HE branding literature review, methodological issues, findings and analysis of the first and second research phases and the conclusion. Chapter 2 which follows reviews the literature on brand management with a particular emphasis on HE branding.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review of the literature on brand management in higher education (HE). The purpose of the review is for the researcher to establish the extant literature on brand management in HE in order to identify any existing gaps upon which to base this study and inform the research. The chapter is accordingly structured as follows: Section 2.2 defines brands, the extent to which branding can be undertaken and outlines their benefits to consumers as well as organisations. The importance of strengthening and leveraging brand equity (that is, being brand oriented) and how this results in enhanced organisational performance, including that of HEIs, is discussed in section 2.3. In section 2.4 the literature on competitive advantages of HEIs is reviewed, while HE branding literature including elements of a HEI brand, influencers of HEI choice, sources of information on HEI and branding in the international HE market is reviewed in sections 2.5 and 2.6, leading to identification of the proposed theoretical framework for this study. The gaps in the HE branding literature which this research is designed to fill are identified in section 2.7, while section 2.8 gives a summary of the chapter.

2.2 Benefits of brands

This section defines brands and brand equity and gives an overview of the development of branding. Subsequently the benefits of branding to firms and consumers as well as the extent to which branding can be applied to HE are discussed.

2.2.1 Introduction

The definition and understanding of the meaning of the ‘brand’ construct has evolved significantly over time. Branding has been carried out for centuries (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, pp. 39-43; Keller, 1998, p.2; Farquhar, 1989). Brick-makers in ancient Egypt, for example, branded their bricks by placing symbols on them to identify their products, while in medieval Europe trade guilds required ‘trademarks’ on their products ‘to assure the consumer of consistent quality and to afford

the producer legal protection in an exclusive market' (Farquhar, 1989). Later uses of 'brand' over the centuries included differentiation of products from those of competitors, legal protection and adding perceived value to products through quality brand associations. It was however not until more recently in 1931 that branding initiatives relevant to firms emerged when Procter & Gamble started placing labels on its products for differentiation purposes (Whisman, 2009).

Earlier definitions of 'brand' tended to focus on visual aspects (de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo-Riley, 1998) such as Farquhar's (1989) view of a brand as 'a name, term, design or mark that enhances the value of a product beyond its functional purpose'. These conceptualizations focused on a brand as an identifier and differentiator of a firm's products based mainly on product performance.

However, brands play many more roles than just as identifiers and differentiators of a firm's products. In their review of the branding literature for definitions of 'brand', de Chernatony and Dall'Olmo-Riley (1998) identified twelve recurring themes which encapsulate a brand: i) legal instrument; ii) logo; iii) company; iv) shorthand; v) risk reducer; vi) identity system; vii) image in consumers' minds; viii) value system; ix) personality; x) relationship; xi) adding value; and xii) evolving entity. This led them to consider a brand as a 'multidimensional construct whereby managers augment products or services with values and this facilitates the process by which consumers confidently recognise and appreciate these values'.

The contemporary view of a brand is even much more complex and holistic. For example, Weisnewski (2011) considers a brand to be:

Everything associated with your organization - all the attributes, both tangible and intangible. It's your logo, your promise, the product or service you deliver, your name - all that and more. It's what you stand for, what you do, what you say, and what you look like. It's everything. It is the beacon that will incite people to join forces with you and make your cause their own.

In his doctoral thesis, Coleman (2011, p.27) takes an equally holistic perspective when he posits that a brand is 'a construct that delivers marketing promises to facilitate the formation of a mutually beneficial and evolving bond between the seller (or corporation) and its stakeholders based on functional and emotional values.'; which seems similar to De

Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace's (2011, p.31) view of a brand as 'a cluster of functional and emotional values that enables organisations to make a promise about a unique and welcomed experience'. Kotler and Armstrong (2012, p. 267) seem to sum it all when they posit that a brand is 'everything that a product or service *means* to consumers'.

2.2.2 Value of brands to consumers

Kotler and Keller (2012, p. 265) posit that branding 'creates mental structures that help consumers organize their knowledge about products and services'. This helps to lower search costs (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, p.56; Dibb *et al.* 2006, pp.316-317; Keller, 1998, p. 7) and clarify and simplify consumers' decision making and reduces risk in the purchase process, especially as consumers' lives become more complicated and time-pressed (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, p.62; Dibb *et al.* 2006, pp.316-317; Suri and Monroe, 2003). Keller (1998, pp.7-8) further suggests 'identification of source of product', 'assignment of responsibility to product maker', 'promise, bond, or pact with maker of product', 'symbolic device' and 'signal of quality' as roles that brands play for consumers. Other benefits of brands to consumers, adapted from Kapferer (1997), are as summarised by Guzman (2005) in Table 2.1 below.

In the context of HEIs and this study, the benefits of branding to consumers would, *inter alia*, relate to decisions they make regarding whether to study in a foreign country or in home country, HEI to study with, qualification to study for, suitable campus location to study from and/or live and whether to stick to the initial decisions made regarding HE choices, make changes or abandon HE altogether.

Table 2.1 The Functions of the Brand for the Consumer

Function	Consumer benefit
1. Identification	To be clearly seen, to make sense of the offer, to quickly identify the sought-after products
2. Practicality	To allow savings of time and energy through identical repurchasing and loyalty
3. Guarantee	To be sure of finding the same quality no matter where or when you buy the product or service
4. Optimization	To be sure of buying the best product in its category, the best performer for a particular purpose
5. Characterization	To have confirmation of your self-image or the image that you present to others
6. Continuity	Satisfaction brought about through familiarity and intimacy with the brand that you have been consuming for years
7. Hedonistic	Satisfaction linked to the attractiveness of the brand, to its logo, to its communication.
8. Ethical	Satisfaction linked to the responsible behavior of the brand in its relationship towards society

Source: Guzman (2005), as adapted from Kapferer (1997)

2.2.3 Value of brands to firms - brand equity

The brand equity construct is arguably one of the most frequently used concepts in the marketing literature (Donlan, 2008, p.65); and yet there is no consensus on a single operational definition, probably due to its complex nature which may result in different studies describing its different aspects (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2009).

Farquhar (1989) defines brand equity as ‘the “added value” with which a given brand endows a product’ while Papasolomou and Vrontis (2006) think that a brand has brand equity ‘to the extent that they have higher brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations and other assets such as trademarks and channel relationships’. Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2009) seem to support this concept of brand equity when they posit that consumers’ perceptions, attitudes, knowledge and behaviors enhance brand equity. Kotler and Keller (2012, p.265) add that the construct ‘may be reflected in the way consumers think, feel, and act with respect to the brand, as well as in the prices, market share, and profitability the brand commands’.

Brand equity has been considered and studied from two main perspectives – consumer based and firm based. Consumer-based brand equity (based on the market’s perceptions), is considered the driving force of increased market share and profitability of the brand, and has received greater attention in empirical studies (e.g. Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2009; Buil, de Chernatony and Martı´nez, 2008; Abimbola, 2003; Yoo and Donthu 2001). This includes studies carried out in higher education e.g. to identify the elements of a HE brand (Kusumawati, 2011; Beneke and Human, 2010; Carter and Yeo, 2009; Wiese *et al.*, 2009; Ali and Miller, 2007; Gray, Fam and Llanes, 2003; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Soutar and Turner, 2002; Mazzarol, 1998). This is because this ‘approach offers insights into customer behaviour convertible into actionable brand strategies’ (Keller, 1993). Conversely, the financial perspective of brand equity (firm-based brand equity), which is usually an estimation of the financial value of a firm’s brand for accounting, merger, acquisition or divestiture purposes has received less attention as it is not relevant to marketing decisions.

Despite the lack of consensus on definitional aspects of brand equity, marketing academics and practitioners seem to agree that having strong brand equity is an asset which confers various benefits on an organisation. For example, Farquhar (1989) found that brand equity increases market share, enables a firm to charge premium prices and endure crisis situations, whilst De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace (2011, p.31-63) and Keller (1993) assert that brand equity can lead to increase in revenue, reduction in costs and more profits resulting from increased consumer loyalty, ability to charge premium prices and reduced vulnerability to competitive marketing activities. Brand equity also enhances competitive advantage (Hunt and Morgan, 1995; Farquhar, 1989), raises competitive barriers and drives brand wealth (Yoo, Donthu and Lee, 2000). De Chernatony and McDonald (2005) assert that a successful brand delivers sustainable competitive advantage and invariably results in superior profitability and market performance. De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace (2011, p.31) highlight legal protection offered by registered brand rights and possibilities for line and brand extensions as further benefits of strong brands. Kotler and Keller (2012, p.266) summarise the key benefits of brand equity to the firm as shown in Table 2.2 below.

2.2.4 Scope of branding in higher education

The contemporary view of ‘brand’ as discussed in subsection 2.2.1 above implies that branding can be applied to anything or anywhere a consumer has alternatives (Kotler and Keller, 2012, p. 265); for example, marketers can brand a physical good (e.g. Ford Flex automobile), a service (e.g. Singapore Airlines), a store (e.g. Nordstrom), a person (e.g. actress Angelina Jolie), a place (e.g. city of Sydney), an organisation (e.g. U2) or even an idea (e.g. abortion rights or free trade). It follows therefore that in the context of universities and colleges, it should be possible to brand the institution as a whole (e.g. Harvard or Cambridge or Oxford), a school within the university (e.g. Stanford Graduate School of Business, Harvard Business School or London Business School), the programmes/courses offered (e.g. Global MBA), key employees such as the vice chancellor, rector or CEO or a specific campus location. Each of these brand concepts would have their own brand equity as defined above and be of benefit to consumers (students mostly) and the firm (the HEI).

Table 2.2 Marketing advantages of strong brands.

1. Improved perceptions of product performance	8. Greater trade cooperation and support
2. Greater loyalty	9. Increased marketing communications effectiveness
3. Less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions	10. Possible licensing opportunities
4. Less vulnerability to marketing crises	11. Additional brand extension opportunities
5. Larger margins	12. Improved employee recruitment and retention
6. More inelastic consumer response to price increases	13. Greater financial market returns
7. More elastic consumer response to price decreases	

Source: Kotler and Keller (2012, p.266)

2.3 Brand orientation

This section discusses brand orientation and its role in enhancing organisational performance of profit-making firms, non-profit making entities and HEIs. Subsequently, the literature on brand building in HE is reviewed.

2.3.1 Introduction

The numerous benefits that arise from having strong brand equity as discussed in Section 2.2 above imply that organisations that strengthen and leverage their brands are likely to be more competitive than those that do not. In other words, the more ‘brand oriented’ an entity is, the greater its brand equity, and the more competitive it should be. Gromark and Melin (2011) synthesized the various definitions of brand orientation in the literature and came up with a comprehensive one:

Brand orientation is a deliberate approach to brand building where brand equity is created through interaction between internal and external stakeholders. This approach is characterised by brands being the hub around which the organisation’s processes revolve, an approach in which brand management is perceived as a core competence and where brand building is intimately associated with business development and financial performance.

2.3.2 Brand orientation and organizational performance

There is a steady growth in the literature on conceptualization of brand orientation (Gromark and Melin, 2011; Urde, 2009, 2003, 1999; Wong and Merrilees, 2007) as well as its operationalisation (Gromark and Melin, 2011; Wong and Merrilees, 2008; Napoli, 2006; Ewing and Napoli, 2005; Reid, Luxton and Mavondo, 2005; Hankinson, 2002). These studies demonstrated that the more brand oriented a firm is, the better its organizational performance becomes. Gromark and Melin’s (2011) study, in particular, found that ‘the most highly brand-oriented companies are almost twice as profitable as the least brand-oriented companies.’ These findings do not only apply to profit making firms (Gromark and Melin, 2011; Baumgarth, 2010; Weisnewski, 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2008), but also to non-profit organisations (Napoli, 2006; Ewing and Napoli, 2005; Hankinson, 2002) where brand orientation enhances performance in terms of fostering the organisation’s communications with its stakeholders, changing public opinion in its favour,

building loyalty amongst its stakeholders, achieving its short-term and long-term objectives and attracting more voluntary income.

It is worth noting that most of the studies linking brand orientation to organizational performance were not based on objective measurements of financial performance, except for Gromark and Melin (2011); this implies bias and reduces the reliability of the findings. Even Gromark and Melin's (2011) research only considered financial performance in terms of one measure of profitability, i.e. return on equity, (ignoring, other profitability measures, cash-flow, long term solvency and shareholder value) and hardly took into account variables that impact on financial performance other than branding. Of course performance measurement has been problematic in marketing generally because of the different conceptualization of marketing inputs where marketers think of marketing expenditure as an investment, but accountants see it as an expense (Reid *et al.*, 2005). This creates challenges of revenue-stream recognition, because apparently suitable measures of marketing expenditure become inappropriate when closely examined from an accounting perspective. However, despite these and other shortcomings in these studies, including doubts over generalisability of some of the findings, it is unlikely that the contention that brand orientation improves organizational performance can be disputed outright, if the various research findings are taken as a whole.

There is no indication in the literature of any study having been carried out that links brand orientation to performance of a HEI; which is understandable, given that brand orientation is still in its infancy (Mulyanegara, 2011). However, a study of Australian and New Zealand universities by Caruana, Ramaseshan and Ewing (1998), although characterized by subjective measurement of market orientation and performance, showed that universities that were market oriented performed better than those that were not, in terms of overall performance and obtaining non-government funding. The positive link between market orientation and performance observed by Caruana, Ramaseshan and Ewing (1998), albeit being indicative rather than confirmatory, can be considered to imply a similar positive correlation between brand orientation and performance in an HEI setting. This is because there is a positive relationship between market orientation and brand orientation as postulated by Reid, Luxton and Mavondo (2005) and empirically verified by Mulyanegara (2011). The implication of this is that HEIs (like other organisations and firms) that are

more brand-oriented should, at least in theory, perform better (however performance is defined) than those that are not.

2.3.3 The brand building process in higher education

Mazzarol (1998) and Shostack (1977) assert that higher education has all the features of a service industry. Nicholls *et al.* (1995) agree with this assertion and observe that higher education marketing is different from the marketing of products. As service providers HEIs need branding more than firms that sell tangible products (Papasolomou and Vrontis, 2006). Branding is even seen as the cornerstone of service marketing for the twenty-first century, where, as opposed to packaged goods where the product is the primary brand, with services the company is the primary brand (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, p.223; Berry, 2000). Pinar *et al.* (2011), Wiese *et al.* (2009) and Mazzarol and Soutar (1999) observe that services marketing is more challenging than marketing a physical product due to the unique characteristics of services – for example, their intangible nature (since they cannot be felt, tasted, seen or touched), heterogeneity (variability in standard of service provided), perishability (cannot be stored) and inseparability (simultaneous production and consumption) (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, pp.209-217).

Many models have been developed for building brands. Guzman's (2005) brand building literature review, for example, identified Logman's (2004) LOGMAN model, Davis' (2002) brand asset management process, Aaker and Joachimsthaler's (2000) brand leadership model and Urde's (1999) core-value based brand orientation model as some of the extant models at the time. All these models emphasise internal processes/structures as a cornerstone for brand building and incorporate both internal and external aspects in the process as recommended by Urde (2003). However, none of them seem to have been based on empirical research and therefore lack the input that would have arisen from practical experience.

Other researchers have taken a more empirically based approach in developing brand building models. For example, de Chernatony, Drury and Segal-Horn (2003) developed the cog wheel model based on research involving brand consultants. More recently,

Wallstrom, Karlsson and Salehi-Sangari (2008) developed an internal corporate brand building model based on the literature and case studies of three companies that had undergone brand building in Sweden and concluded that the process involves three distinct stages, namely carrying out a brand audit, choosing the brand identity and designing a brand position statement, although some minor differences exist within each stage.

Although published instances are uncommon, several HEIs have successfully undergone brand building processes. These include the California State University (Celly and Knepper, 2010), Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Curtis, Abratt and Minor, 2009) and Troy University (Lee *et al.*, 2008), with the first two processes adopting and successfully applying Wallstrom, Karlsson and Salehi-Sangari's (2008) brand building model. Two branding issues appear to have been eminent in these branding efforts and these may apply to other HE branding attempts and require further elaboration as follows.

Firstly, there was focus on internal branding or an 'inside-out' approach to building the brand in all the three HEI brand building cases mentioned above, which is regarded as a sound basis for building strong lasting brands (Whisman, 2009; Urde, 2003). Building strong brands through internal branding may not only be desirable for attracting students, but also necessary for student retention (defined by Berge and Huang, 2004, as the 'continued student participation in a learning event to completion, which in higher education could be a course, programme, institution, or system'). Models developed to enhance student retention focus on strengthening academic and social systems of the institution to encourage student involvement (Tinto, 2007; Berge and Huang, 2004) which is also the objective of the inside-out approach to brand building.

Secondly, there was an emphasis on use of the corporate or company brand by the different business units in the university instead of focusing on individual product/service brands (Celly and Knepper, 2010; Curtis, Abratt and Minor, 2009). King (1991) saw the corporate brand as representing 'people in the company behind it, their skills, attitudes, behaviour, design, style, language, greenism, altruism, modes of communication, speed of response, and so on - the whole company culture, in fact'. The corporate brand is often considered as one of a firm's most valuable assets (Kotler and Keller, 2012, pp. 263-279; Keller and Lehmann, 2003). According to Interbrand (2012), for example, all the top one hundred

most valuable global brands between 2001 and 2011 have been corporate brands. It therefore seems reasonable to assert that HE brand building efforts should focus on internal systems and aim at strengthening and leveraging the corporate brand.

2.4 Competitive advantages of higher education brands

Dibb *et al.* (2006, p.49) defines competitive advantage as ‘the achievement of superior performance vis-à-vis rivals, through differentiation, to create distinctive product appeal or brand identity’. Kotler and Keller (2012, p.311) have a similar view, but think that most competitive advantages are not sustainable. Instead competitive advantages should be leveraged to create new advantages and used to benefit customers i.e. converted into customer advantages.

2.4.1 Sources of competitive advantage

A brand’s competitive advantage arises from two sources, namely cost leadership and differentiation (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, pp.324-329; Dibb *et al.*, 2006, pp.49-50; Porter, 1985, p.3). These two sources are not mutually exclusive and can be applied to entire markets or focused on market niches. The various generic strategies which can be adopted are shown in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1 Generic strategies for brand

Competitive scope	Broad	Broad cost	Broad differentiation
	Narrow	Focus cost	Focus differentiation
		Low cost	Value-added
Competitive advantage			

Source: De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace (2011, p.337)

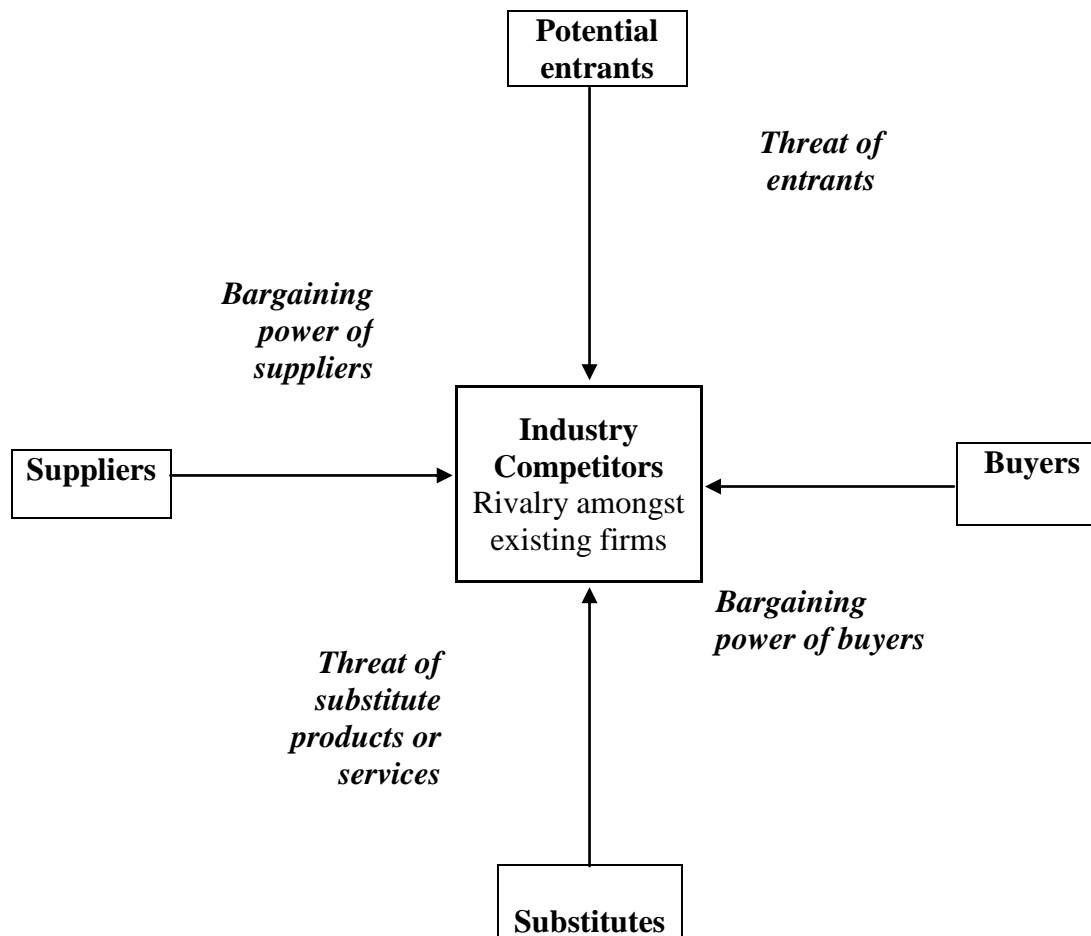
Cost leadership creates value for consumers because it costs them less to buy the brand than competing brands offering similar benefits ('cost-driven' brands e.g. EasyJet, McDonald's, Aldi, Lidl and Travelodge), while differentiation creates unique benefits for consumers ('value-driven' brands e.g. Apple Mac, Porsche and Harrods' Food Hall) (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, pp.324-329). Kotler and Keller (2012, p. 312) suggest that differentiating a brand from competing brands can be achieved in several ways including functional excellence; having better trained employees (employee differentiation); superior distribution channel coverage, expertise and performance (channel differentiation); powerful, compelling images that appeal to consumers' social and psychological needs (image differentiation); and a better and faster service delivery system (service differentiation). Cost leadership can be achieved through selecting cheaper sources of raw materials, volume discounts, economies of scale, use of technology in production, dealing with large order customers only, rationalizing the product/service range, gaining experience faster than competitors and reducing service levels (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, pp.323-324).

In order to compete effectively, a firm should understand its micro and macro competitive environments (Kotler and Keller, 2012, pp.298-301; De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, pp.324-329; Dibb *et al.*, 2006, pp.50-52). Porter's Five Forces model (with competitors, suppliers, buyers, substitute products and new entrants as the forces) shown in Figure 2.2 below or similar adaptations such as Interbrand Five Forces (competitors, distributors, consumers, corporation and macro-environment) that influence brand potential can be used to analyse the competitive environment (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, pp.58-63; Dibb *et al.*, 2006, pp.51-52; Porter, 1985, pp.4-5). Originally designed for commercial organisations, these models can be applied to higher education because of the competitive environment in which HEIs are now operating and their increased commercialisation and marketisation. Porter's model for example, has been used in studies in higher education such as Huang's (2012) and Mazzarol and Soutar's (1999) research on competitive advantage in Taiwanese and international HE respectively.

2.4.2 Competitive brand positioning

Ries and Trout (2000) view positioning as the act of designing a company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of the prospect (target market). Dibb *et al.* (2006, p.49) offer a similar definition when they state that brand positioning 'is the creation of a desirable, distinctive and plausible image for a brand that will have strong appeal for the customers in a target market segment'. Positioning can be done to 'a piece of merchandise, a service, a company, an institution, or even a person' (Ries and Trout, 2000, p. 2).

Figure 2.2 Porter's Five Forces



Source: Porter (1985, p.5)

Kotler and Keller (2012, p.298) assert that 'positioning requires that marketers define and communicate similarities and differences between their brand and its competitors'. They recommend three stages, namely:

- a. Determine target market and competitive environment;
- b. Identify optimal points of difference (PODs) (unique and superior brand attributes or benefits perceived desirable, deliverable and differentiating by consumers) and points of parity (POPs) (essential brand attributes or benefits shared by other brands). Choice of specific PODs and POPs can be done using perceptual maps - visual depictions of consumer perceptions and preferences to identify 'holes' or 'openings' of unmet consumer needs and marketing opportunities. Perceptual maps are discussed in Sub-section 2.4.3 below.
- c. Create a brand mantra ('brand essence', 'core brand promise' or articulation of the heart and soul of the brand) to summarise the positioning and essence of the brand.

Product/service and corporate brands can be positioned on the basis of *attributes* at the lowest level (e.g. a toothpaste's innovative ingredients and good taste) or desirable *benefits* (e.g. the toothpaste's cavity prevention and teeth whitening benefits) or better still on the basis of *beliefs and values* (e.g. emotions such as 'healthy, beautiful smiles for life') in the case of toothpaste (Kotler and Armstrong, 2005, p.250). Various competitive positions can also be adopted in different market segments; for example as 'market leader' (single brand enjoying the largest individual share in the market), 'market challenger' (non-market leader that aggressively tries to capture market share from rivals), 'fast mover' (rapidly growing small rival), 'market follower' (low-share competitor without resources or commitment to challenge for extra market share) or 'market nicher' (competitor that specializes by focusing on narrow range of products or consumers) (Dibb *et al.*, 2006, pp.52-53).

2.4.3 Perceptual maps

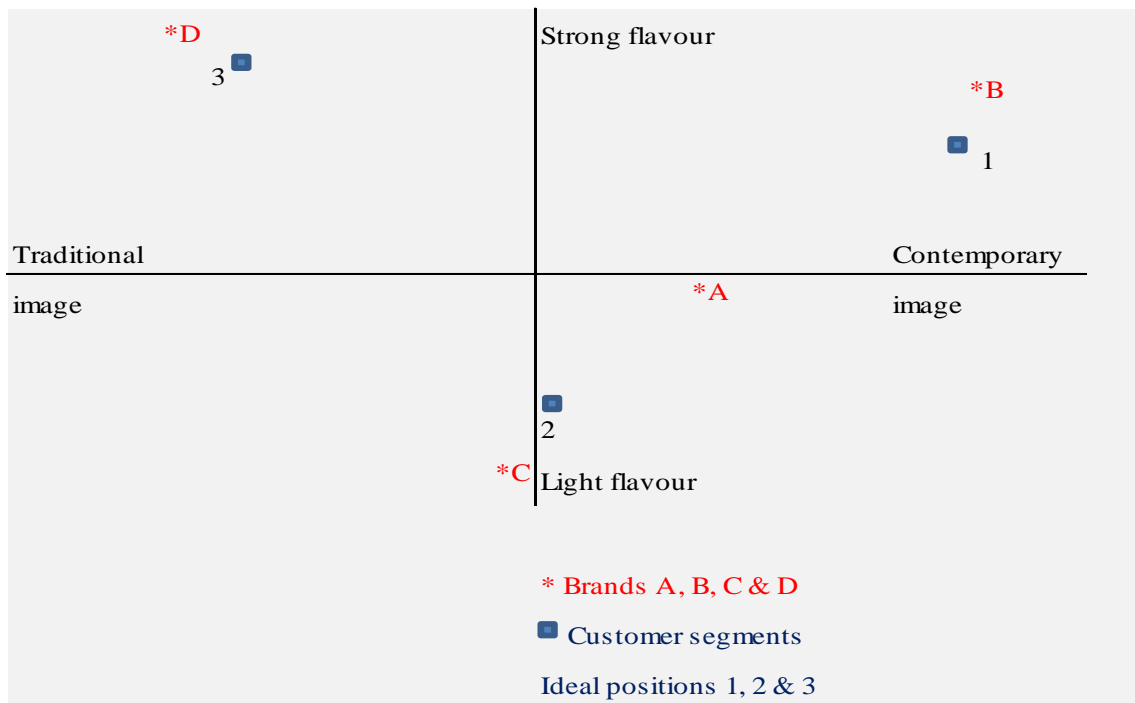
Kotler and Keller (2012, p.305) define perceptual maps as 'visual representations of consumer perceptions and preferences'. By depicting consumers' views on products/services using various attributes, marketers can identify consumer needs that are yet to be met and marketing opportunities yet to be exploited. Kotler and Armstrong (2005, p.217) refer to perceptual maps as positioning maps or perceptual positioning maps. These maps can be used in planning positioning strategies because they depict consumers' views

of an organisation's brands versus competing brands on principal buying dimensions. The company's offerings can therefore be more appropriately positioned or repositioned.

An example of a perceptual or brand map adapted from Kotler and Keller (2012, p.306) is shown in Figure 2.3 below. This map suggests that even though Brand A is seen as more balanced in terms of both taste and imagery, no market segment seems to desire this balance. This brand may therefore need to be repositioned. According to Fill (2006, pp.378-379) brand maps can serve several roles including:

1. Determining the level of competition in a market (the closer the brands are clustered together, the greater the competition).
2. Identifying substitute products – substitute products are normally close to each other on the map.
3. Identifying ideal brands i.e. the most preferred combination of brand attributes in a market. The ideal brand's position can be used to position or reposition an organisation's brands.
4. Developing and evaluating the effectiveness of marketing strategies in affecting consumer perceptions.

Figure 2.3 Hypothetical beverage Perceptual map: current position



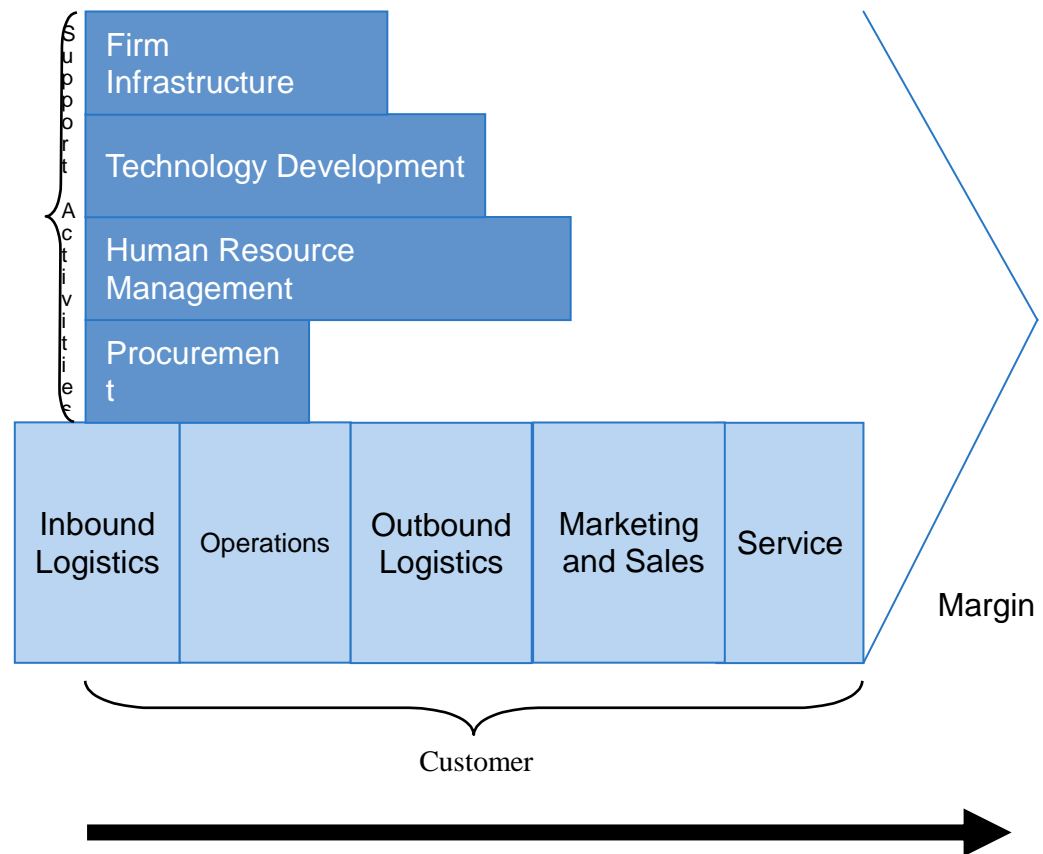
Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller (2012, p.306)

2.4.4 Identification of a firm’s specific competitive advantages

Once the competitive environment is understood, De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace (2011, pp.333-334) and Porter (1985, pp.33-34) recommend that specific competitive advantages of a brand can be identified by using Porter’s value chain model shown in Figure 2.4 below. Porter (1985, p.33) states that the value chain ‘disaggregates a firm into its strategically relevant activities in order to understand the behavior of costs and the existing and potential sources of differentiation’. This involves analysing the primary or value creating activities (in-bound logistics, operations, out-bound logistics, marketing and sales, and service) as well as the supporting activities (firm infrastructure, human resource management, technology development and procurement) in the brand’s value chain as well as those of key competitors in each distinct market segment to identify the activities the firm does better or cheaper. Even though Porter’s value chain seems more suited to the manufacturing industry and therefore not directly applicable to higher education, the

concept of using a firm's value chain (whatever it may be) to identify specific competitive advantages should be valid even to a HEI.

Figure 2.4 Porter's Value Chain



Source: Adapted from Porter (1985, p.37)

2.4.5 Sustaining a service brand's competitive advantage

De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace (2011, pp.340-343) assert that there are several ways in which a service brand's competitive advantage can be sustained. In general, a firm should focus on different value chain activities from those of rivals and/or perform similar activities in different ways. More specifically, the brand's reputation (regarded as 'a view someone takes over time of the brand, which they then use to anticipate the brand's future performance' (p.341)), is regarded as presenting the most effective barrier to competition. The culture of an organisation, reflected in the behaviour, actions and attitudes of staff, i.e. the 'emotional' component of the brand is another difficult competitive advantage for

competitors to imitate (pp.341-342). Customer service is yet another competitive barrier that is difficult to emulate and can help to sustain a brand as is the case with Disney, Federal Express and MacDonal'd's (p.343). De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace (2011, p.343) and Ries and Trout (2000, pp. 21-32) think that being the first into the prospect's mind or into the market is a sure way of sustaining competitive advantage. This arises from cost advantages of economies of scale and the learning curve effect (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, p.343) as well as the difficulty of dislodging the first brand 'imprinted' into the prospect's mind (Ries and Trout, 2000, p.22).

2.4.6 Specific competitive advantages of universities

Several conceptual and empirical studies have been carried out to identify competitive advantages of HEIs. In the international HE environment, Mazzarol and Soutar (1999) conceptualised that the variables that strengthen the competitive advantage of an education institution could include the institution's 'quality of image', 'market profile', 'coalition formation', 'degree of forward integration into the export channel', 'organisational expertise and quality of staff', 'possession of a client oriented/ innovative culture' and 'effective use of information technology'. More recently, Morrisha and Leeb (2011) investigated country of origin effects as a source of competitive advantage. Although based on a small sample of Chinese parents and students and therefore results could not be generalized, this study identified language, social (safety, lifestyle and enjoyment), environment (clean and beautiful) legal (visa and work permit) and economic (fees and financial assistance) as the country of origin factors that can be exploited to gain competitive advantage in the international HE market.

In the UK HE, Lynch and Baines (2004) used the resource-based view (RBV) approach to strategy development (a commonly used method of identifying competitive advantages) to identify 'bundles of resources' which give HEIs competitive advantage. Their preliminary findings suggested the following as possible sources of competitive advantage for universities:

1. Relationships/partnerships (architecture);

2. Innovation (teaching, research and third-core funding e.g. new courses and research patents);
3. Reputation (creation of an image of quality, the generation of a strong market profile and the development of offshore teaching operations in coalition with overseas partners);
4. Knowledge base (research and teaching technologies, particularly distance and e-learning); and
5. Particular core competence (e.g. processes underpinning teaching, learning and assessment, vocation and alumni relations).

Huang's (2012, p.167) doctoral thesis found five types of internal resources that drive the strategy and the competitive advantage of higher technical and vocational education institutions in Taiwan. These were 'human resources' (deemed to be the most important), 'marketing capabilities', 'curriculum', 'financial resources' and 'R&D capabilities' (deemed to be the least importance).

In the Zambian context no research has been carried out to identify the sources of competitive advantage in HE. This implies that Zambian HE marketers are not aware of the specific empirically based competitive advantages that should be leveraged and converted into customer advantages for sustainability and positioning purposes (Kotler and Keller, 2012, p.311). The current research, whose objectives include identification of the Zambian HE brand and recommendation on how ZCAS' brand positioning can be strengthened, takes a step to redress this situation.

2.5 Branding higher education

Although some writers have questioned the role and practice of branding in HE (Chapleo, 2010; Waeraas and Solbakk, 2008; Jevons, 2006), there is general agreement that branding is beneficial to HE. Whisman (2009) and Roper and Davies (2007) for instance, argue that branding is as relevant in HE as it is in commercial organisations. Palacio *et al.* (2002) assert that a strong university brand signals excellence of a university, while Bennett and Ali-Choudhury (2009) typify a university's brand as 'a manifestation of the institution's features that distinguish it from others, reflect its capacity to satisfy students' needs,

engender trust in its ability to deliver a certain type and level of higher education, and help potential recruits to make wise enrolment decisions’.

However, as Chapleo (2011) observes, university branding ‘has so far received limited scrutiny among academics’, even though the situation is now changing for the better. This is particularly the case in Africa where published HE research hardly exists. This study seeks to take a step towards remedying that situation through work designed to highlight branding issues in the Zambian HE context and offer suggestions for further empirical work.

Accordingly, this section reviews the literature on HE branding by considering the elements of a university brand in sub-section 2.5.1. These are the factors which prospective students and other stakeholders consider in choice of HEI and indicate strong brand perceptions, a summary of which is given in Table 2.3 below. Sub-section 2.5.2 discusses the sources of information about HEI while in sub-section 2.5.3 the parties that influence student choice of HEI are discussed. These issues all play a role and must be considered in designing HE branding strategy.

2.5.1 Elements of a university brand

Several studies have been carried out world-wide in the recent past to identify the elements of a university brand. Many of these studies have focused on HE branding for international marketing purposes and are discussed below in Section 2.6 on branding international HEIs. This section addresses HE branding issues relevant to choice of home country HEIs. Table 2.3 below is a summary of the branding attributes discussed in this section.

In their study of UK and Malaysian HE branding, Carter and Yeo (2009) found that out of thirty-one possible reasons that influence students’ choice of university, eight most important reasons namely ‘cost of programme and living expenses’, ‘reputation of courses’, ‘reputation of university for employability after graduation’, ‘location (city)’, ‘quality of course information/learning materials’, ‘safety in country’, ‘international reputation of the institution’ and ‘relevance of courses’ were cited by more than 40% of both UK and Malaysian students. Despite this study being limited to only one HEI in each

country, the findings were echoed by similar studies in other parts of the world in terms of the factors considered by students in choice of HEI. For example, Ali and Miller (2007) in their study of student choice of an Australian university found that students considered 'interest in course area', 'employment opportunities', 'course reputation' and 'university reputation'; while Al-Fattal's (2010) study of parents and students' choice of Syrian private HE identified six variables namely 'teaching and learning', 'informal reputation', 'convenience', 'administrative', 'social' and 'economic' issues.

Carter and Yeo (2009) also investigated students' views on the top six reasons for not choosing a university and found that students considered 'Locality' (23.1%), 'Distance from home' (21.9%), 'Expensive fees' (20.9%), 'Unsafe campus' (17.9%), 'Irrelevant course' (17.9%) and 'Bad reputation' (16.9%) as reasons for not selecting a university.'

In sub-Saharan Africa, Ivy's (2008) study of MBA students at a South African university identified 'programme' (choice of majors, electives), 'prominence' (reputation), 'price' (tuition), 'prospectus' (communication through direct mail), 'people' (interactions with faculty, staff, and other students), 'promotion' (publicity and e-media), and 'premiums' (mixture of various offerings) as various marketing activities and tools they were exposed to in the selection of the business school. Beneke and Human (2010) and Wiese *et al.* (2009) also studied choice factors considered by South African students, but instead targeted undergraduate students. The former found in order of importance, 'quality of teaching', 'employment prospects', 'campus safety and security', 'academic facilities' (libraries and laboratories), 'international links' (study and job opportunities), 'language policy' and 'image of higher education institution' as factors considered in choice of HEI; while Beneke and Human (2010) identified, in order of preference, 'reputation', 'location', 'campus safety', 'tuition fees', 'financial aid offered' and 'ease with which accepted' as the top six factors considered.

The rating of some of these factors, especially safety and security seems to reflect the specific characteristics of the country, such as the high rate of crime and unemployment in South Africa. Of more interest in the context of the current study is the difference in the factors and preferences between them, given that the three research projects above were carried out in the same country within a two year time frame. One would have expected

Beneke and Human (2010) and Wiese *et al.* (2009) in particular to identify the same (or at least very similar) factors and preferences since both had undergraduate students as respondents. The differences in the factors and their ratings therefore suggest that even within the same country potential students at different levels of career progression and from dissimilar backgrounds may consider and rate university choice criteria differently. Consequently student recruitment strategies may need to be tailored to address specific market segments.

In Ghana, Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei's (2010) study, albeit based on a single university and therefore results not generalisable, identified 'availability of desired programme', 'academic reputation', 'quality of teaching', 'ability to get a job upon graduation', 'study leave with pay', 'matured student population' and 'recommendation by relatives' as factors considered in choice of the university. Of these elements 'study leave with pay' and 'matured student population' are not in line with the literature in this area and seem to reflect the demographic characteristic of the sample in which 75% were mature students already in employment and may not therefore be relevant in branding other universities; while 'recommendation by relatives' would be more suitably classified as an influencer or source of information and not necessarily a component of a university's brand.

In Asia, Soutar and Turner (2002) reported that the four most important factors influencing Australian school-leavers in their order of importance were course suitability, academic reputation of the institution, job prospects after completing course and teaching quality. Ancheh, Krishnan and Nurtjahja's (2007) study of Malaysian private universities and colleges identified, in order of importance, 'Reputation and Quality of the Institution', 'Future Graduate Job Prospects', 'Lower Costs' and 'Institutions' campus environment and atmosphere' as the leading evaluative criteria used by students in choice of HEI. Similar HEI student choice factors were also unveiled by Songan *et al.*'s (2010) study of a Malaysian public university. These are 'Academic Programme Choice' (perceptions of ability to complete programme, previous graduates' satisfaction with programme and prospect of the programme), 'Quality of Teaching and Academics', 'Employment Prospect' and 'University Choice' (availability of course, campus location and accommodation). As in the case of South Africa, these research findings reaffirm the assertion that even within the same country potential students at differing levels of career

progression and from dissimilar backgrounds may consider and rate university choice criteria differently.

Other studies have used conjoint analysis to address multi-attribute alternatives inherent in university choice and came up with similar findings. In what appears to be the first study to apply this technique to HE, Hooley and Lynch (1981) identified course suitability, university location, academic reputation, distance from home, type of university (modern/old), and advice from parents and teachers as important factors in students' decision to enroll in an institution. Moogan, Baron and Bainbridge (2001) in their longitudinal study covering the decision process of UK A-level students over a 14 month period used conjoint analysis and found that the importance of the three attributes considered (location, course content and reputation) changed as the prospective students gained more information about the HEIs. Kusumawati's (2011) study of student choice of Indonesian public universities also used conjoint methods and revealed the following order of importance for all respondents: '1. Advice from family, friends, and/or teachers, 2. Reputation, 3. Job prospect, 4. Total expenses, 5. Campus atmosphere, and 6. Proximity'; even though 'advice from family, friends and/or teachers' would be more suitably classified as an influencer or source of information and not necessarily a component of a university's brand.

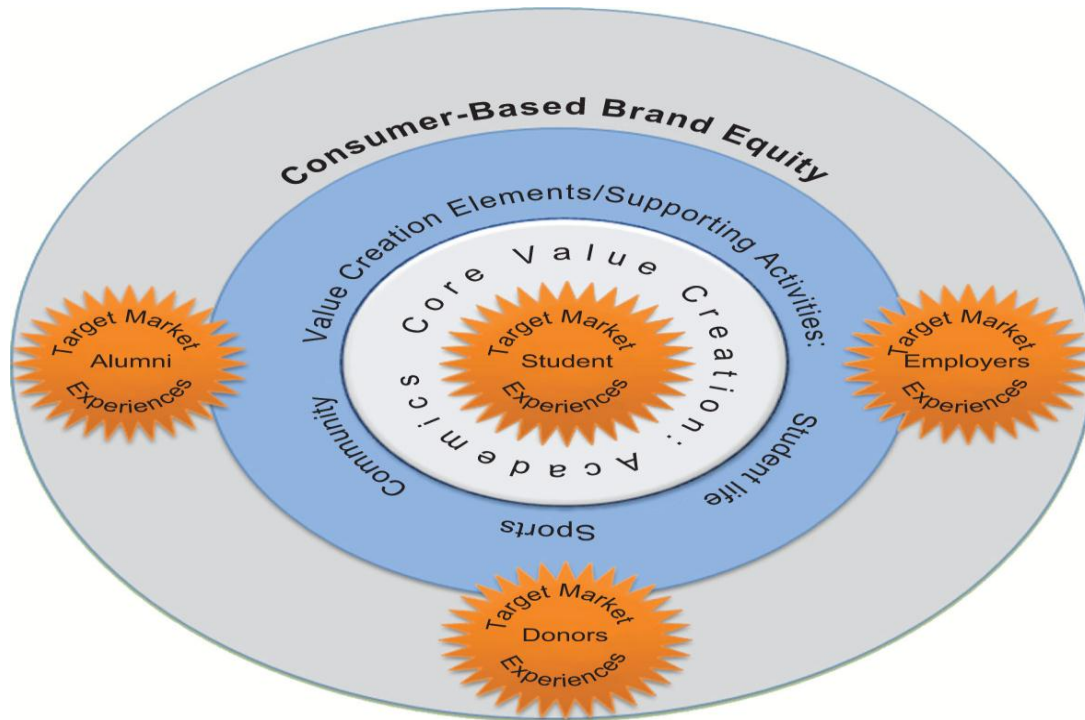
The studies described above seem to have taken an 'out-side in' (Whisman, 2009) or 'demand side' (Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007) approach in identifying the components of a university brand, focusing on the views of students mostly and other external stakeholders in some cases. This approach may be justifiable given that a brand embodies consumers' perceptions and feelings about a product or service (Keller, 1998, pp.4-5). However, some researchers have been critical of this outside-in approach and have consequently taken the opposite route and focused on internal branding (inside-out or supply side approach) to identify a university brand (e.g. Pinar *et al.*, 2011; Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani, 2009; Whisman, 2009; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana, 2007). But even with this approach, the elements of a university brand identified are similar. For example, Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009) interviewed university marketing/branding decision makers and identified university 'ambience' i.e. being friendly, inviting, innovative and down-to-earth 'location', 'degree

of diversity', 'visual imagery', 'employability', 'range of the courses offered by a particular university', 'reputation', 'community links', 'learning environment' and 'sports and social facilities' as elements of a university brand.

Similarly, Pinar *et al.*'s (2011) proposed university brand ecosystem as shown in Figure 2.5 below identified brand elements are comparable to those identified by scholars who adopted the outside-in approach. A brand ecosystem is defined by Pinar and Trapp, 2008, as 'a set of different activities [value networks] that contribute to building a strong brand that includes all the stages of value creation from initial design idea to the final consumer [target market] brand experience'. In this case specific brand elements identified as key for branding HE were academics (i.e. core value creation activities of teaching and research) and student life, sports, and community activities (i.e. supporting value creation activities).

Furthermore, studies of HE corporate branding processes such as Celly and Knepper's (2010) investigation of the re-branding of The California State University, the largest public university system in the USA, found that there was an emphasis on improving visual imagery (e.g. change of names, logos and use of colour). An additional brand element evident in research by Curtis, Abratt and Minor (2009) into the re-branding of the ERAU University in the USA was the need to improve university facilities such as websites and other interfaces between the university and external stakeholders. Both of these HE branding elements are consistent with the literature in the field, as discussed above.

Figure 2.5 University brand ecosystem.



Source: Pinar et al. (2011)

Table 2.3 below summarises HE brand elements identified in the literature from different parts of the world. These HE branding elements are comparable to Kusumawati's (2010) literature review findings arising from a study undertaken which focused on university choice criteria in developing countries. This review revealed that the most important choice criteria used were 'institutional factors' (location, campus safety, teaching quality, prestige, infrastructure, library, computer facilities, location, quality of the curricula, scientific research quality, administrative support, extra-curricular factors), 'proximity to home', 'reputation of institution', 'job prospects', 'cost of study' and 'financial aid' (scholarships and grants).

Table 2.3 Elements of a university brand

SL/ No.	Brand element	Author/researcher
1	Ambiance or campus environment – aura, climate, general feel of university e.g. welcoming, friendly, ingenuity.	Kusumawati (2011); Al-Fattal (2010); Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009); Carter and Yeo (2009); Ancheh, Krishnan and Nurtjahja (2007); Soutar and Turner (2002).
2	Location convenience – proximity from home; city or rural location, proximity to bus or train station.	Kusumawati (2011); Al-Fattal (2010); Beneke and Human (2010); Songan <i>et al.</i> (2010); Ali-Choudhury <i>et al.</i> (2009); Carter and Yeo (2009); Wiese <i>et al.</i> (2009); Moogan <i>et al.</i> (2001); Hooley and Lynch (1981).
3	Physical attractiveness	Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009); Nam (2008).
4	Safety and security – associated with diversity of student body.	Beneke and Human (2010); Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009); Carter and Yeo (2009); Wiese <i>et al.</i> (2009).
5	Employability/job prospects – career prospects, links with employers and vocational skills.	Kusumawati (2011); Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010); Songan <i>et al.</i> (2010); Ali-Choudhury <i>et al.</i> (2009); Carter and Yeo (2009); Wiese <i>et al.</i> (2009); Ancheh <i>et al.</i> (2007); Soutar and Turner (2002).
6	Course suitability - content, structure, method of assessment of the degree programme and availability.	Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010); Songan <i>et al.</i> (2010); Ali-Choudhury <i>et al.</i> (2009); Carter and Yeo (2009); Soutar and Turner (2002); Moogan <i>et al.</i> (2001); Hooley and Lynch (1981).
7	Diversity of student body – ethnicity, educational backgrounds, interest and personal development needs.	Al-Fattal (2010); Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009).
8	Easy of entry	Beneke and Human (2010); Ali-Choudhury <i>et al.</i> (2009)
9	Level of difficulty of courses – challenges presented by course.	Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009).
10	Community links – associations with national or ethnic groups, links with industry.	Gromark and Melin (2011); Pinar <i>et al.</i> (2011); Weisnewski (2011); Songan <i>et al.</i> (2010); Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009); Wiese <i>et al.</i> (2009); Urde (2003).
11	Visual imagery – use of colour, style and feel of photography, choice of font, tone of voice, energy level, architecture.	Weisnewski (2011); Celly and Knepper (2010); Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009); Curtis, Abratt and Minor (2009); Nam (2008).
12	Reputation – international status, recognition of qualification, name or department, league tables, local and foreign accreditations.	Kusumawati (2011); Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010); Al-Fattal (2010); Beneke and Human (2010); Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009); Carter and Yeo (2009); Wiese <i>et al.</i> (2009); Soutar and Turner (2002); Moogan, Baron and Bainbridge (2001); Hooley and Lynch (1981).
13	Teaching quality - staff qualification, medium of instruction, reputation, and image of tutors, up-to-date course-books and modern teaching methods and academic advising.	Pinar <i>et al.</i> (2011); Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010); Al-Fattal (2010); Songan <i>et al.</i> (2010); Whisman (2009); Wiese <i>et al.</i> (2009); Ancheh, Krishnan and Nurtjahja (2007); Soutar and Turner (2002).
14	Sports, social and other facilities - campus facilities, and student accommodation.	Pinar <i>et al.</i> (2011); Al-Fattal (2010); Songan <i>et al.</i> (2010); Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009); Curtis, Abratt and Minor (2009); Wiese <i>et al.</i> (2009).
15	Cost of course and living expenses – tuition fees, accommodation, food, discounts, scholarships, student loans.	Kusumawati (2011); Al-Fattal (2010); Beneke and Human (2010); Carter and Yeo (2009); Wiese <i>et al.</i> (2009).

It is evident from the literature reviewed that although some HE branding elements seem to be considered by students in most instances, such as employment prospects and quality of education, none is ranked as the most important all the time. This is in line with Kusumawati's (2010), Wiese *et al.*'s (2009) and Vrontis, Thrassou and Melanithiou's (2007) research findings to the effect that there are differences in student choice of HEIs (and the consequent marketing/branding implications) between developed and developing countries due to contextual differences. Indeed even amongst and within developed and developing countries differences exist in the branding elements considered and/or their importance in the decision making process regarding choice of university. For example, HE branding elements relevant in a Ghanaian university may not be relevant to a university in South Africa (compare Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei, 2010 against Ivy, 2008). Even within the same country there are differences between branding a public university and a private one (compare Songan *et al.*, 2010 against Ancheh, Krishnan and Nurtjahja, 2007 in the Malaysian context).

From the foregoing, it seems essential for marketing strategists to identify the specific brand elements considered in a particular recruitment market. Such knowledge could be used for effective marketing purposes, recruitment and retention of potential students and repositioning of the HEI (Carter and Yeo, 2009). In the case of Zambia, no research has been carried out so far to identify the HEI brand evaluative criteria used by students. This means that Zambian HE marketers are not aware of the specific empirically based brand perceptions potential students have about HE in the country. The current research, whose objectives include identification of the Zambian HE brand, could therefore not have come at a better time than now, given the rise in both local and global competition in the HE market and the consequent need for HEIs to be more market or brand oriented.

2.5.2 Sources of information about HEIs

Mazzarol (1998) observes that the international HE decision is one of the significant and expensive initiatives that students may ever undertake. Carter and Yeo (2009) and Maringe and Carter (2007) seem to agree as they contend that 'The international student HE decision is a high stakes process'; and the same could be said about home country HE choices, save for the likely lower expenses involved. Potential students are therefore likely

to engage in information search (such as the various courses offered, fees and entry requirements of the university) to aid the decision making process (Nicholls *et al.*, 1995).

The literature reviewed shows that the four most commonly used information sources by potential students are 'internet' and 'friends' (Al-Fattal, 2010; Songan *et al.*, 2010; Carter and Yeo, 2009), 'visit or open days at university' and print media (Johnston, 2010; Carter and Yeo, 2009; Ali and Miller, 2007; Gray *et al.*, 2003). Other information sources identified include 'Educational exhibition and fair', 'family' and 'prospectuses (Carter and Yeo, 2009).

However, none of the studies above have addressed the information needs of potential HE students in Zambia. As Carter and Yeo (2009) recommend, 'Image' and recruitment marketing efforts should be intensified and re-focused on providing sufficient and relevant information...' informed by choice criteria factors from empirical research. The current study addresses this situation by identifying the relevant information sources that constitute the Zambian HE brand model consulted by potential Zambian HE students. Appropriate recommendations (as required by this study's objectives) can then be made on how the ZCAS brand can be strengthened in terms of providing sufficient and relevant information using the most effective promotional media and communication channels to develop an effective brand positioning strategy and consistent brand image.

2.5.3 Influencers of student choice of HEI

Influencers of student choice of HEI can be considered to be persons or parties who play a role in the HEI choice decision making process by swaying or persuading the student to choose a particular HEI. Knowing who the influencers of student HE choice are can be crucial to brand or recruitment strategists as they can target brand and other marketing information at them, in the hope that the information is used to influence the potential student's choice.

There are at least ten studies that identified 'parents' as influencers of student choice. These include Morrisha and Leeb (2011), Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) and Hooley and

Lynch (1981). Other common influencers identified in various studies globally include ‘students’ themselves, ‘friends’, ‘college teachers’ and ‘university agents’.

The empirical studies cited above indicate that ‘self’ and ‘parents’ are the two most prolific influencers of student choice of HEI. However, there is variability in who the influencers are, as well as their influence in the studies carried out due to contextual differences (e.g. compare Ali and Miller, 2007 against Gray, Fam and Llanes, 2003). Identifying the appropriate influencers of HEI choice in a particular recruitment market can be a goldmine for university marketing managers.

In the Zambian context, no such study has yet been carried out, implying that marketing communications may not be targeted at the most relevant stakeholders in the recruitment market. This study seeks to take a step in redressing this situation by identifying the relevant influencers of HE student choice that constitute the Zambian HE brand model so that appropriate recommendations (as set out in the study’s objectives) can be made on how the ZCAS brand can be strengthened in terms of effective targeting of brand messages.

2.6 Branding international HEIs

A review of the branding literature regarding HEIs involved in the market for international students shows that most studies have identified two forces at play in this market: ‘push’ factors as unfavourable conditions in the students’ home country which drive students to seek HE abroad and ‘pull’ factors as favorable conditions in the international HEI and destination country that attract foreign students. However, most of the international HEI brand elements, particularly the ‘pull’ factors, are similar to those for local HEIs discussed above. Sub-section 2.6.1 discusses push factors while sub-section 2.6.2 discusses pull factors. A summary of these factors is presented in Table 2.4 below.

2.6.1 Push factors

The first stage in international HE choice is the student’s decision to seek HE abroad, normally prompted by unfavourable conditions (push factors) in the home country

(Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). This is then followed by choice of destination country and finally HEI (pull factors). Several studies have identified various push factors at play in different parts of the world. Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) study of Asian students in four different countries identified superior overseas qualifications, inability to get entry into local HEI, desire to understand the 'West' and intention to migrate after studies as push factors at play, while in their study of African students' choice of UK HE, Maringe and Carter (2007) concluded that 'the most significant push factors were economic, political and lack of local capacity within countries of origin' as shown in Figure 2.6 below (a model they developed to depict African students' overseas study decision making). These factors have also been identified by other researchers.

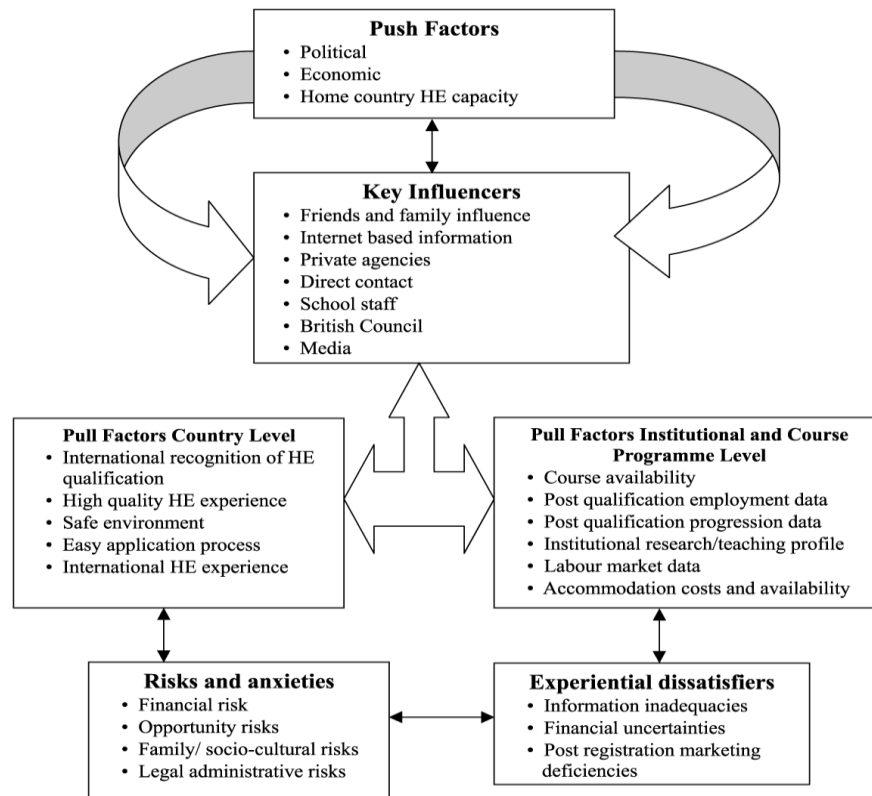
Using Maringe and Carter's (2007) categories of factors, the other studies identifying the factors include Wilkins, Shams and Huisman (2012) for economic factors and Mpinganjira (2009) for inadequate home country capacity. Another category that could be added would be social factors (e.g. to learn language, culture, travel experience, entertainment) as identified by Wilkins, Shams and Huisman (2012), Morrisha and Leeb (2011), Mpinganjira (2011a), Padlee, Kamaruddin and Baharun (2010) and Muntasira, Jiang and Thuy (2009).

2.6.2 Pull factors

These are favourable factors in the destination country and HEI which attract foreign students. Most of these factors are similar to the elements of a brand considered by students when choosing home country HEIs discussed in Sub-section 2.5.1 above. Maringe and Carter (2007) identified several of these factors as depicted in the African students' overseas study decision making model in Figure 2.6 below. The various researchers who identified international HE pull factors from the literature reviewed are shown in Table 2.4 below.

Additional pull factors are also at play in international HE. These include promotion and recruitment activities (Muntasira, Jiang and Thuy, 2009; Mazzarol, 1998), possession of international strategic alliances and offshore teaching programmes (Mazzarol, 1998) and the university's brand name (Priporas and Kamenidou, 2011).

Figure 2.6 A model for African students overseas study decision making



Source: Maringe and Carter (2007)

As is the case with choice factors in home country HEI choice decisions, some factors are considered more often than others by different students seeking international HE; but even then the preferences of the factors is variable too. Arambewela, Hall and Binney (2006) noted that factors influencing the choice of study destination vary in terms of importance between different groups of students.

The implication of this is that host governments and HEIs intending to attract students in the international recruitment markets should consider the importance of the ‘push-pull’ factors that influence students’ study destination choice and tailor their strategies and offerings to address specific perceptions of particular markets about their country and HEI (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).

Table 2.4 Pull factors attracting foreign HE students

SL/ No.	Brand element	Author/researcher
1	Ambiance or learning environment – aura, climate, general feel of university being friendly, inviting, innovative, down-to-earth or ‘for people like me’.	Wilkins, Shams and Huisman, (2012); Hemsley-Brown (2011); Priporas and Kamenidou (2011); Padlee, Kamaruddin and Baharun’s (2010); Gray, Fam and Llanes (2003).
2	Location convenience – proximity from home; city or rural location, proximity to bus or train station.	Hemsley-Brown (2011); Mpinganjira (2011b); Padlee, Kamaruddin and Baharun (2010); Muntasira, Jiang and Thuy (2009).
3	Sports, IT and social facilities - application process, payment of fees, campus facilities, and student accommodation.	Wilkins, Shams and Huisman, (2012); Mpinganjira (2011b); Padlee, Kamaruddin and Baharun’s (2010); Gatfield <i>et al.</i> (1999); Mazzarol (1998).
4	Safety and security – associated with diversity of student body.	Morrisha and Leeb (2011); Priporas and Kamenidou (2011); Maringe and Carter (2007); Gray, Fam and Llanes (2003).
5	Employability/job prospects – career prospects, links with employers and vocational skills.	Wilkins, Shams and Huisman, (2012); Morrisha and Leeb (2011); Hemsley-Brown (2011); Mpinganjira (2011a); Priporas and Kamenidou (2011); Mpinganjira (2009); Maringe and Carter (2007); Gray, Fam and Llanes (2003).
6	Courses offered - content, structure, method of assessment of the degree programme and availability.	Muntasira, Jiang and Thuy (2009); Maringe and Carter (2007); Gray, Fam and Llanes (2003); Mazzarol (1998).
7	Diversity of student body – ethnicity, educational backgrounds, interest and personal development needs.	Wilkins <i>et al.</i> (2012); Gray <i>et al.</i> (2003).
8	Easy of entry	Mpinganjira (2012); Morrisha and Leeb (2011); Maringe and Carter (2007).
9	Reputation – international status, recognition of qualification, name or department, league tables, ‘old’ red brick universities in comparison to ‘new’ universities, local and foreign accreditations.	Wilkins <i>et al.</i> (2012); Morrisha and Leeb (2011); Hemsley-Brown (2011); Mpinganjira (2011a); Mpinganjira (2011b); Priporas and Kamenidou (2011); Mpinganjira (2009); Muntasira, Jiang and Thuy (2009); Maringe and Carter (2007); Gray <i>et al.</i> (2003); Gatfield <i>et al.</i> (1999); Mazzarol (1998).
10	Cost of course and living expenses – tuition fees, accommodation, food, discounts, scholarships, student loans.	Mpinganjira (2012); Mpinganjira (2011b); Morrisha and Leeb (2011); Padlee, Kamaruddin and Baharun (2010); Muntasira, Jiang and Thuy (2009); Maringe and Carter (2007); Ancheh, Krishnan and Nurtjahja (2007); Gray, Fam and Llanes (2003).
11	Teaching quality - staff qualification, medium of instruction, reputation, and image of tutors, up-to-date course-books and modern teaching methods, classroom lectures and discussions, assignments, tests, student group projects, internships, student research projects supervised by faculty, after class chats between a professor and student(s) and academic advising.	Mpinganjira (2012); Wilkins <i>et al.</i> (2012); Hemsley-Brown (2011); Mpinganjira (2011a); Priporas and Kamenidou (2011); Mpinganjira (2009); Gatfield <i>et al.</i> (1999); Mazzarol (1998).

2.7 Gaps in the HE branding literature

The literature review has revealed that no published research to-date has been carried out on HE branding in Zambia. In particular no one has published any research that attempts to conceptualise or operationalise the following HE brand orientation dimensions in the country:

1. The elements of a Zambian HE brand considered by local students when choosing HEIs and their preference rating;
2. The influencers of student choice in Zambia and their relative degree of influence;
3. The sources of information consulted during the decision making process and their relative importance;
4. The sources of sustainable competitive advantage in the Zambian HE sector.

The current study takes a step in filling this gap in the literature by answering the following research question: *How can a higher education brand be identified, measured and used for competitive positioning?* In particular the first research phase (qualitative phase), involving focus group discussions with HE students and in-depth interviews with HE marketing professionals, is designed to facilitate synthesis of literature-based and field-based branding propositions (Hankinson, 2001; de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo-Riley, 1998) to assist in meeting research objective RO1 on identifying brand orientation dimensions (e.g. elements of the brand, influencers of student choice, information sources and HE competitive advantages) suitable for the HE sector in Zambia. The second research phase (quantitative study), which includes a comparative study of ZCAS against its local competitors to meet research objectives RO2 and RO3, is aimed at identifying preferable brand orientation dimensions in the Zambian HE market.

The literature review has also revealed that even though some studies have been carried out on HE branding in Africa (e.g. Mpinganjira, 2012; 2011a; 2011b; 2009; Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei, 2010; Beneke and Human, 2010; Wiese *et al.*, 2009; Ivy, 2008; Maringe and Carter, 2007), most of these have focused on international students’ choice of universities overseas or in South Africa. HE branding research relevant to African HEIs is therefore still at a rudimentary level on the continent. By addressing research objectives RO1, RO2

and RO3 as illustrated above it is hoped that this study contributes to the growing literature relevant to the African HEI.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on brand management in higher education (HE). The purpose of the review was to enable the researcher to establish the extant literature on brand management in HE in order to identify any existing gaps upon which to base this study. Accordingly, the literature is synthesized below.

The literature review has indicated that brands are beneficial to consumers and firms alike. For consumers brands help to lower search costs, clarify and simplify consumers' decision making and reduce risk in the purchase process. Other benefits for consumers include identification of source of products, assignment of responsibility to product maker, acting as a promise, bond, or pact with maker of product, acting as a symbolic device and signaling quality. For firms benefits of brands include increase in market share, revenue or profits, ability to charge premium prices, resilience in dealing with crisis situations, reduction in costs, and reduced vulnerability to competitive marketing activities. Other benefits to firms include enhancement of competitive advantage, raising competitive barriers, driving brand wealth and enhancing possibilities for line and brand extensions.

The importance of strengthening and leveraging brand equity (that is, being brand oriented) and how this results in enhanced organisational performance, including that of HEIs, has been discussed in section 2.3. The literature has revealed that the more brand oriented an organisation becomes the better its organisational performance (Gromark and Melin, 2011; Baumgarth, 2010; Weisnewski, 2008; Wong and Merrilees, 2008; Napoli, 2006; Ewing and Napoli, 2005; Hankinson, 2002). In the case of universities this can be achieved by focusing brand building efforts on internal systems, processes and people (taking an inside-out approach) as well as leveraging the corporate brand (Celly and Knepper, 2010; Curtis, Abratt and Minor, 2009; Lee *et al.*, 2008).

Section 2.4 is a review of the literature on competitive advantages of HEIs. The literature suggests that a brand's competitive advantage arises from two sources, namely cost

leadership and differentiation (De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace, 2011, pp.324-329; Dibb *et al.*, 2006, pp.49-50). To compete effectively, Kotler and Keller (2012, p.298) recommend a three stage approach i.e. determine target market and competitive environment; identify optimal points of difference and points of parity using perceptual maps and then create a brand mantra to communicate the essence of the brand. In the context of HE, several studies have attempted to identify specific competitive advantages (e.g. Huang, 2012; Morrisha and Leeb, 2011; Lynch and Baines, 2004; Mazzarol and Soutar, 1999) and have identified a range of sources including country of origin sources, internal culture, organisational resources/facilities and relationships with external stakeholders.

Literature on specific HE branding dimensions has been reviewed in Section 2.5. The more common elements of a HE brand which attracts students include reputation and location of institution, employability of graduates, course suitability, teaching quality and costs (tuition and living expenses). Common influencers identified in various studies globally include students themselves, parents, friends, college teachers, and university agents with students and parents as the two most prolific influencers of student choice of HEI. The four most commonly used information sources by potential students are internet, friends, visit or open days at university and print media. Other information sources identified include educational exhibition and fair, family and prospectuses. The literature indicates that even though some of these brand dimensions are commonly employed in HE choice decisions, none is ranked as the most important all the time. Marketing strategists should therefore identify specific branding dimensions considered in a particular recruitment market for effective marketing, recruitment and retention of potential students and repositioning of the HEI. The literature review has indicated that no research has been carried out so far to identify HE brand dimensions (elements of HE brand, influencers of student choice of HEI, sources of information and competitive advantages) relevant to HE in Zambia. This implies that Zambian HE marketers are not aware of the specific empirically based brand perceptions potential students have about HE in the country.

Review of the branding literature regarding HEIs involved in the market for international students is covered in Section 2.6. There are two forces at play in this market: 'push' factors as unfavourable conditions in the students' home country which drive students to

seek HE abroad and ‘pull’ factors as favorable conditions in the international HEI and destination country that attract foreign students. Most of the international HEI brand elements, particularly the ‘pull’ factors, are similar to those for local HEIs. The most significant push factors are related to economic, political, social and lack of local capacity within countries of origin. As is the case with choice factors in home country HEI choice decisions, some factors are considered more often than others by different students seeking international HE. The implication of this is that host governments and HEIs intending to attract students in the international recruitment markets should identify specific ‘push-pull’ factors that influence student study destination choice and tailor their strategies and offerings to address specific perceptions of particular markets about their country and HEIs.

The gaps in the literature which this study hopes to address have been identified in Section 2.7. There is currently no published research that conceptualises or operationalises the Zambian HE brand dimensions namely elements of a Zambian HE brand considered by students when choosing HEIs, influencers of student choice, sources of information and sources of sustainable competitive advantage.

The next chapter on research methodology discusses the research design and methodologies adopted to implement the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted to implement the study. The study was divided into two phases based on a multiple case study of the Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies (ZCAS) as the main case and twelve other HEIs in Zambia. The first research phase was a qualitative study, the objective of which was to identify the principal Zambian higher education (HE) brand orientation dimensions. Once the relevant branding dimensions were identified, this informed the quantitative second research phase in which the brand components were used to establish how brand oriented ZCAS was, compared to its competitors in the Zambian HE sector. The chapter is thus structured as follows. The research approach and strategy, including consideration of alternative paradigms and approaches, is discussed and justified in Section 3.2. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 outline the first and second research phase designs respectively, including sampling techniques, data collection instruments and data analysis techniques. Ethical challenges that arose during the research and how access to data was negotiated and achieved are explained in Section 3.5. The chapter contents are then summarised in Section 3.6.

3.2 Research approach and strategy justification

The research question guiding this study is: *How can a higher education brand be identified, measured and used for competitive positioning?* To answer this question the research project was divided into two parts. The qualitative study (first research phase), involving focus group discussions with ZCAS students and semi-structured interviews with ZCAS staff and HEI marketing professionals, was designed to facilitate synthesis of literature-based and field-based branding propositions to assist in meeting research objective RO1 on identifying brand orientation dimensions (e.g. elements of the brand, influencers of student choice, information sources and HE competitive advantages) suitable for the HE sector in Zambia. The quantitative study (second research phase), which included a comparative study of ZCAS against its local competitors to meet research objectives RO2 and RO3, was aimed at identifying preferable brand orientation

dimensions in the Zambian HE market. The overall research was therefore set in the context of HE corporate brands.

The ZCAS brand (on which this study is centred), like any other corporate brand, has both qualitative and quantitative features (Aaker, 2004; King, 1991). In order to identify, measure and use the brand to competitive advantage, the study needed to address both features of the brand.

3.2.1 Research paradigm

Bryman and Bell (2011, pp.15-20) and Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, pp.112-116) assert that positivism and phenomenology are the two main and opposing epistemological considerations for business and management research. Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, p.113) state that a positivist study involves using existing theory to develop hypotheses for testing. Such a study ‘will be concerned with facts rather than impressions’ and ‘such facts are consistent with the notion of “observable social reality” similar to that employed by the physical and natural scientists’ (p.114). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.7) add that the positivist researcher views knowledge as being hard, objective and tangible, and therefore avoids getting involvement with the research subjects.

In contrast, an interpretivist or phenomenological epistemology position is ‘anti-positivist’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.21); and requires the researcher ‘to enter the social world of our research subjects and understand their world from their point of view’ (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp. 115 – 116).

Accordingly, even though the positivism paradigm would be appropriate when addressing the quantitative research or ‘measurement’ aspect of the research question (encapsulated in research objectives RO2 and RO3 on measurement and comparative study of the ZCAS brand), it would be inadequate, on its own, in addressing the qualitative research or ‘identification’ and ‘competitive advantage’ aspect of the study (encapsulated in research objectives RO1 on identification of an HE brand model and RO4 on recommendations on how ZCAS can strengthen its brand position, respectively). The later aspects of the study require dealing with the ‘immense complexity of human nature and elusive and intangible

quality of social phenomena', which positivism is less successful at (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.11). The reverse position is true in respect of the interpretivist/phenomenological paradigm. Therefore neither a positivist position nor an interpretivist paradigm alone was appropriate for this study.

Instead, a 'critical realist' epistemological approach was adopted. This paradigm facilitated carrying out qualitative research in the first research phase to elicit brand attributes and then quantitative research in the second research phase to get a wider feel on the attribute values. This approach was necessary because the researcher was not sure in the beginning what the attributes were or how they were rated in the context of the Zambian HE market.

Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, p.114) assert that realism is a philosophical position that relates to scientific inquiry, similar to positivism, hence utilises some of the positivist's tools. The realist's scientific approach to the development of knowledge underpins the collection and understanding of research data. This aspect of critical realism paradigm makes it appropriate for this study when addressing research objectives RO2 and RO3 on measurement and comparative study of the ZCAS brand.

Additionally, realism, and in particular, critical realism, requires an understanding of the social phenomena being studied (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.115). This necessitates the researcher to get involved with the research subjects. They also argue that 'the critical realist's position that the social world is constantly changing is much more in line with the purpose of business and management research which is too often to understand the reason for phenomena as a precursor to recommending change'. These facets of critical realism paradigm make it appropriate for this study when addressing research objectives RO1 on identification of an HE brand model and RO4 on recommendations on how ZCAS can strengthen its brand position, respectively.

3.2.2 Inductive and deductive approaches

The study also made use of both deduction and induction, to benefit from the best of both approaches (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.127). The inductive approach involving collecting data and developing theory as a result of the data analysis (Saunders,

Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.125; Adams *et al.*, 2007, p.29) was suitable during the first research phase when addressing research objective RO1 on identification of the HE brand model. The deductive approach, involving development of a theory and hypotheses and designing a research strategy to test the hypotheses (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp.124 – 125; Adams *et al.*, 2007, pp.29 – 30) was suitable when addressing research objectives RO2 and RO3 on measurement and comparative study of the ZCAS brand.

3.2.3 Time horizon

The current study, of which the research question required the identification, measurement and use of an HE brand to competitive advantage, lends itself more to a cross-sectional design than a longitudinal study. Bryman and Bell (2011, pp.53-54) define a cross-sectional design as one which ‘entails the collection of data on more than one case and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables which are then examined to detect patterns of association’. The current research project did not require mapping changes in the brand dimensions over time and seemed to suit the cross-sectional design as it involved several cases and variables. A longitudinal design, usually carried out over a long time horizon to map or study change and development, is less suitable for this academic study due to time and cost constraints (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.57; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.155).

3.2.4 Research strategy

The first two objectives of this study were *RO1: Identify the relevant components that constitute a higher education brand model in the Zambian context and RO2: Based on the brand components identified in RO1 above, identify the current position of the ZCAS brand as a case study*. To establish these research objectives, a detailed exploratory study of ZCAS was carried out. It was also found necessary to carry out studies in a sample of other HEIs in order to establish the third research objective on ZCAS’ competitive position in the Zambian HE sector. Consequently the case study strategy was chosen.

Yin (1981) states that a case study is distinguishable from other research strategies because it examines ‘a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context’. Robson (2002, p.178) gives a more comprehensive definition of a case study as ‘a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence’. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.63) and Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, pp.146-147) state that the case study method can be applied to multiple cases; and in this research project the case study method was applied to ZCAS as the main case and also to the other HEIs in both the first and second research phases.

The case study strategy was chosen because it enabled the researcher to gain a detailed and comprehensive insight and understanding of an issue in its real context (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp.145 -146; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp.253 – 257). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.258) this includes offering the researcher ‘an insight into the real dynamics of situations and people.’

The case study strategy has been used in several branding research studies in education settings (e.g. Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei, 2010; Al-Fattal, 2010; Carter and Yeo, 2009; Whisman, 2009; Waeraas and Solbakk, 2008). In this research project, the case study method was used initially as an exploratory study, primarily using focus group discussions with students and individual semi-structured interviews with employees. According to Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, pp. 139 – 140) the purpose of an exploratory study is to ‘clarify your understanding of a problem, such as if you are unsure of the precise nature of the problem’; and in the context of this research the purpose of the exploratory study was to facilitate the identification and understanding of the principal brand orientation components that comprise the Zambian HE brand model.

3.3 First research phase methodology

3.3.1 Introduction and overview

As stated above, the first research phase was a qualitative study, the objective of which was to identify the principal Zambian higher education (HE) brand orientation dimensions.

In order to elicit brand attributes relevant to the Zambian HE sector, three focus group discussions were held with ZCAS students. Additionally, twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees and marketing executives in ZCAS and twelve universities.

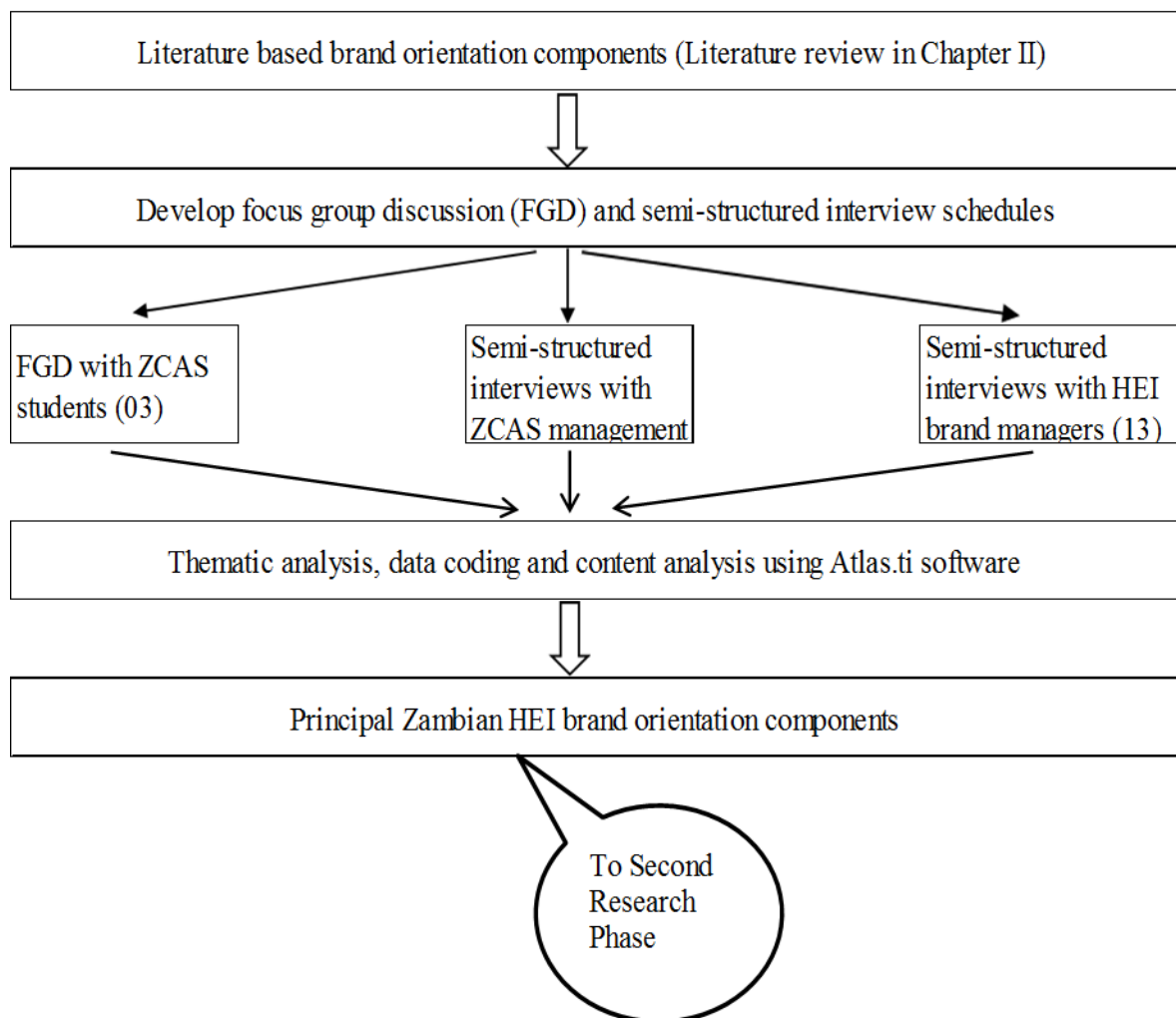
Although not every university participated in the study, the three focus group discussions and twenty interviews that were conducted in thirteen of the twenty fully operational HEIs in the country were considered adequate to reach data saturation, given the sample homogeneity. Data saturation is considered to be the stage beyond which additional data collected provides few, if any, new insights (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.235). According to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006), ‘The more similar participants in a sample are in their experiences with respect to the research domain, the sooner we would expect to reach saturation’; and their research found that data saturation was reached by the time twelve in-depth interviews had been carried out.

Of course Guest, Bunce and Johnson’s (2006) research did not relate to brand management in universities, but their conclusions on the number of interviews required to reach saturation seem to be sound given that they analysed sixty interviews with a relatively homogenous sample in two West African countries. The interview sample for the current research was undoubtedly homogenous as it was made up of marketing/brand management experts in universities in Zambia.

As more fully discussed in Section 2.5 of the literature review chapter, a number of branding dimensions perceived to be suitable for the HE sector were identified from the literature review. These branding components were used as a guide for the focus group discussions and individual interviews during this phase of the research. The intention was to narrow the field of focus, ‘identifying key foci for subsequent study and data collection’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.262). This research methodology was thus designed, during this phase of the study, to synthesise literature-based and field-based branding dimensions for further consideration, as was the case in Hankinson (2001) and de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo-Riley (1998).

The research procedure for this qualitative phase of the research project is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below. This phase utilised the outcome of the literature review and synthesis from Chapter 2 and integrated them with field-based research study outcomes to identify the essential components of what makes a HE brand in Zambia. The overall objective at this stage was not necessarily to identify the definitive Zambian HE brand, but to ensure that the study did not miss out any vital components of what makes a HE brand. The output from this phase of the project was the input into the second research phase.

Figure 3.1 First research phase procedures



3.3.2 Sampling frame and sample size

The sampling frame for this study comprised HE institutions in Zambia. For practical purposes, the relevant HE institutions considered were universities and colleges that offer a minimum of first degree courses and/or degree equivalent professional courses. Currently there are twenty (20) such institutions in Zambia, of which six are public institutions (five universities and one college) and fourteen private universities. A list of these HE institutions, showing programmes offered, ownership structure and geographical location is included in Appendix 1.

The HE sector in Zambia can be categorized into two broad groups namely government owned, controlled and funded universities and colleges as well as privately owned ones that are run as full commercial enterprises. As illustrated in Appendix 1 most of the HE institutions offer business related programmes up to master's degree level. ZCAS is a government owned but self-financing college which offers tuition for business related professional and academic programmes up to master's degree level (ZCAS, 2012). Consequently, although ZCAS has to comply with regulations relevant to government owned institutions, it does not receive any government funding and is therefore run as a full commercial enterprise. Given that the study concerns the HE sector in Zambia overall, it was envisaged that ZCAS had many of the features of this sector because of its ownership and financing structure, and could therefore be used as the main case study to aid in identifying the main components of a HE brand model in the country.

Even though ZCAS was used as the main case study, it is not the brand model for all other HE institutions in Zambia to be benchmarked against. Indeed the brand model developed from this phase of the research project was used to benchmark ZCAS against its competitors in the second research phase. ZCAS was chosen as the main case study organisation simply because of its 'middle' position in the HE sector (government owned, but run as a private commercial HEI) and for access reasons as the researcher is an employee of the organisation.

ZCAS was selected non-randomly as the main purposive sample because the researcher, as an employee of the organisation, had access and was able to carry-out an in-depth exploratory study (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.233; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp. 114 – 115; de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo-Riley, 1998) to aid the identification of the principal brand orientation elements relevant to the HE sector as required by research objective RO1 on identification of the Zambian HE brand model. Although non-probability sampling strategies generally preclude generalizing sample results to the population on statistical grounds (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.213; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 113), it is still possible to generalize the findings to theory (Yin, 2010, pp.99-100; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.233, 335). Yin (2010, pp. 98-102) refers to this kind of generalization as ‘analytic generalization’. The interviews with managers involved in brand management in the other twelve HEIs were meant to triangulate the main case study outcomes to enhance generalisability of the findings.

3.3.3 Data collection

Data were collected using focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews during this qualitative phase of the study. Bryman and Bell (2011, pp.502-503) define the focus group method as a form of group interview in which a clearly defined topic/issue is discussed by several participants who are encouraged to interact with each other during the interview. They assert that the technique enables participants to challenge each other and raise issues they deem important and that the method is ‘naturalistic’ as it reflects the way individuals collectively make sense of phenomena. Additionally, Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, p.156) state that ‘Because of the presence of several participants, this type of situation allows a breadth of points of view to emerge’, which helps the researcher to explain or explore concepts. Consequently, focus groups are suited to qualitative research and to this exploratory stage of the current research project. The use of focus groups in this study was backed by many similar HE Branding studies that also used this method for data collection (e.g. Mpinganjira, 2012; Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei, 2010; Kusumawati, 2010; Ali and Miller, 2007; Maringe and Carter, 2007).

Focus group discussions were held with students of ZCAS, the main case study organisation to obtain external stakeholders’ views on HE branding (see Appendix 2 for

the focus group discussion request letter and Appendix 3 for the discussion guide). The three student focus groups of five or six participants comprised first year students and those coming to ZCAS for the first time. First year students are considered suitable because they have just gone through the HE decision making process and are therefore likely to have fresh memories of the branding dimensions considered (e.g. information sources consulted, influencers involved and factors considered in the choice process). Many similar studies have focused on first year undergraduate students (e.g. Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei, 2010; Kusumawati, 2010; Carter and Yeo, 2009; Ali and Miller, 2007) to elicit HE branding dimensions.

The three student focus groups represent distinct student categories in the sector, namely, those undertaking professional courses, those pursuing academic degree programmes and part-time students. Grouping participants according to their status and experiences is likely to increase their participation in the discussions (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.344). The focus group discussions with students (see Appendix 3 for details) revolved around the following issues:

1. What factors students consider when choosing HEIs;
2. Who influences student choice of HEI; and
3. What sources of information students consult when making HE related decisions.

The number of participants in the focus groups (five or six) are adequate and manageable for the study (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp.344 – 345; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.377). With respect to the student focus groups, it was envisioned that the diversity of students in the groups removes familiarity amongst participants, thereby ensuring divergence of views (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.377).

In order to triangulate data collection technique and data source of the case study outcomes and increase validity and generalisability (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.133) of the study to the Zambian HE sector, twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected ZCAS (seven) and other HEI marketing executives (thirteen). Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, pp. 321-322) recommend the use of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research involving a case study because this technique can be ‘used not only to reveal and understand the “what” and “how” but also to place more emphasis on exploring the “why”’. Semi-structured interviews are also appropriate for this exploratory

stage of the study as this gives the researcher the opportunity to ask open-ended exploratory inquiries and closed specific questions (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp.322- 323). The other main interview types namely structured or standardized interviews and unstructured or in-depth interviews seem unsuitable for this qualitative phase of the research. Closed type questions which characterize structured interviews are more suitable for gathering quantitative data in survey research (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.204-205; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp.320-321), while unstructured interviews were considered to be too informal for this research. The use of semi-structured interviews in this research project was reinforced by similar university branding studies (e.g. Mpinganjira, 2012; Chapleo, 2011; Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani, 2009; Waeraas and Solbakk, 2008; Maringe and Carter, 2007).

Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted within ZCAS (with the Registrar, Assistant Registrar, the Estates Manager, the Business Development Manager and three lecturers representing professional courses and academic programmes). Thirteen other interviews were also conducted with university marketing or brand directors/managers who are involved in business development and/or branding in the other HEIs. University marketing executives rather than other administrators were selected for the interviews because they are critical decision makers who direct and control HEI's marketing communications, influence university management regarding branding matters and play a pivotal role in the recruitment of students. This approach of focusing interviews on university marketing experts was backed by similar studies (e.g. Chapleo, 2010; Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani, 2009). For this category of participants one-to-one interviews rather than focus groups were considered more suitable because as employees of competing universities, they might have declined to participate or might have withheld information about their institutions if requested to participate in a group interview (Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani, 2009).

A focus group discussion guide (see Appendix 3) and an interview guide (see Appendix 4) were used to steer the discussions; however, respondents were invited to expand upon ideas and concepts as they wished. The ZCAS focus group discussion guide was developed from the brand orientation dimensions identified during the literature review. The interview guide with ZCAS staff and HEI marketing practitioners was adapted from Ali-

Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009) who carried out a similar study with university marketing executives in the UK. The questions in the focus group discussion and interview guides were discussed with marketing experts within ZCAS (i.e. marketing practitioners such as the Business Development Manager as well as marketing academics) before fieldwork was undertaken to eliminate any ambiguity. The focus group discussions and interviews with personnel at ZCAS and the other HEIs revolved around the following issues:

1. What factors students consider when choosing HEIs;
2. Who influences student choice of HEI;
3. What sources of information students consult when making HE related decisions; and,
4. What the sources of competitive advantages in the HEIs are.

The focus group discussions as well as the semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed as recommended by Bryman and Bell (2011, pp.481- 489) and Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, pp.485-486) to facilitate further processing and analysis. Additionally, hand-written notes were taken as a back-up, or where interviewees objected to the interview being audio-recorded (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp.239 -341). Note taking during the interview was also used to capture features of the interview encounter, such as non-verbal cues that are beyond the audio-recorder's capability (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp.365 - 368).

3.3.4 Data processing and analysis

As stated above, the focus group discussions and interviews were recorded and transcribed to facilitate further processing and analysis. Staff and expert perceptions of HEI brand attributes were taken as the unit of measurement. Transcription was aided by the use of F4 transcription software. This software is compatible with Atlas.ti, the software used in the analysis (Dresing, Pehl and Schmieder, 2012, p.44). The output from the F4 transcription programme should therefore enhance data analysis using Atlas.ti. In order to speed up the transcription, simple transcription rules were selected (pp.20-25). Simple transcription rules have become standard for qualitative research in many contexts (pp.16-17). According to Dresing, Pehl and Schmieder this implies that 'Details concerning intonation

are omitted, which makes the transcript easier to read' (2012, p.18). This is suitable for this research because it is what was said during the interviews and focus groups that matter, not how it was said, thereby rendering intonation and vernacular that characterize detailed transcription less relevant. The transcribed interviews and focus group discussions were automatically 'time stamped' to enable simultaneous playback of the audio recording and reading of the transcript and then exported to Atlas.ti software for analysis.

Codes or themes used in data processing and analysis were developed from thematic analysis of the focus group discussions and individual interviews as well as brand orientation components identified from the literature review, thus utilizing both a deductive and inductive approach to the qualitative data analysis (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp.489 – 490; Ryan and Bernard, 2003). As one of the most common ways of approaching qualitative data analysis, thematic analysis involves identifying themes in the data to find an analytic path within the voluminous data generated by qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.571 - 572). Ryan and Bernard (2003) view themes as 'abstract (and often fuzzy) constructs that link not only expressions found in texts but also expressions found in images, sounds and objects'. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.297) state that 'when the process of coding is thematic a more interpretative approach needs to be taken'. This facilitates identification of latent content in addition to manifest content that characterize categorisation of specific words. Themes emerging from the literature include the branding dimensions identified in Sections 2.4 and 2.5 of the literature review chapter. These were used as a point of departure when reviewing the focus group and interview scripts and notes taken during the interviews to develop codes for the content analysis.

Atlas.ti v.7 software (the latest version at the time) was then used to code the data, create quotations, families and networks and retrieve the data to aid content analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions. The use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) such as Atlas.ti can 'aid continuity and increase both transparency and methodological rigour' (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.514) and avail the researcher more opportunities to manipulate data (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.595). In particular Atlas.ti software 'offers tools to manage, extract, compare, explore, and re-assemble meaningful pieces from large amounts of data in creative, flexible, yet systematic ways' (Muhre and Friese, 2004, p.2). Similar to NVivo, Atlas.ti offers great flexibility in

searching, retrieving, filtering and grouping of data (Lewins and Silver, 2009; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.516; Lewis, 2004). However, just like other CAQDAS (and indeed even quantitative data analysis software like SPSS), ‘once the analyses have been performed, it is still necessary to interpret them’ (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.595). This implies that interpretive bias cannot be eliminated entirely by choosing any CAQDAS, including Atlas.ti; even though bias was significantly minimized because the package has tools such as the query tool, super-codes function and the network tool that can be used to identify patterns in the data (Lewins and Silver, 2009).

Atlas.ti has similar features to those of other common CAQDAS such as NVivo, HyperRESEARCH and MAXqda. Alongside NVivo, Atlas.ti software is considered to be the most commonly used CAQDAS (Barry, 1998; Lewis, 2004). The software is also widely used in Zambian HEIs, hence its use in the current research.

After processing the data in Atlas.ti, data analysis was done using content analysis technique. Content analysis is defined by Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 291) as ‘An approach to the analysis of documents and texts that seek to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner’. This technique enables a researcher to discern the importance of values or concepts by measuring the frequency with which they occur. In the current research project, content analysis was used to determine important HE brand dimensions in Zambia such as factors considered by students in choice of HEI, sources of information consulted and who influences student choice by measuring their frequency in the focus group discussions and interviews. The foremost HE brand orientation dimensions identified by the content analysis were then used to construct the conjoint questionnaire in the second research phase. Additional advantages of content analysis in the context of this study include transparency which enables replication and follow-up studies and flexibility in its application (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.305). The use of content analysis in this study was backed by many similar studies in a HE context (e.g. Berends, 2011; Priporas and Kamenidou, 2011; Chapleo, 2010, 2007; Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani, 2009).

3.3.5 Reliability, validity and generalisability of research findings

Reliability

Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, p.156) consider reliability to be ‘the extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings’. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.41) have a similar view. Given that this phase of the research employed non-standardized data collection methods, the findings may not be entirely repeatable since they reflect the reality in the particular context (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.408; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.327). Nonetheless, it is envisaged that reliability during data collection was enhanced by employing various techniques. These included the use of focus group and interview guides to eliminate observer error (p.157); provision of participants with a list of the interview themes from the interview guides prior to the event (p.328); taking notes during the interview/discussion (p.334); and adapting existing questions from Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009) in the interviews with marketing practitioners (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 263; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.374).

Bryman and Bell (2011, pp.300 – 304) observe that coding must be consistent in order to enhance inter-coder reliability (consistent coding between coders) and intra-coder reliability (consistent coding by one coder over time). They advise that this can be achieved by setting rules that coders should follow. In the context of this research, the coding was done by the researcher alone, thereby eliminating inter-coder variability. To enhance intra-coder reliability, the researcher set up rules on how the coding was to be done (see the coding manual at Appendix 5).

Triangulation of data collection techniques such as focus group discussions and interviews, as well as the use of different data sources such as students and marketing executives was also used to enhance reliability of the code categories and coding. For example, as shown in sub-section 4.8.1 of Chapter 4, different focus group and interview participants alluded

to the same attribute category items that were coded under one code and captured by Atlas.ti's co-occurrence tree and co-occurrence table explorers.

Validity

Validity - an important criterion of the credibility of research findings - is concerned with the integrity of research findings, i.e. whether the findings really reflect the reality on the ground (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.42-43; Hair *et al.*, 2010, pp.7-8; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.157). Bryman and Bell (2011, p.397) and Yin (2010, p.81) posit that validity of qualitative research findings can be enhanced through triangulation. Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, p.146) define triangulation as 'the use of different data collection techniques within one study in order to ensure that the data are telling you what you think they are telling you' and recommend this technique when the researcher uses the case study strategy. Bryman and Bell (2011, p.397) have a similar view when they state that triangulation 'entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena'.

In the current study, the first research phase utilised several triangulation techniques. These included the use of different data collection instruments such as focus groups and semi-structured interviews as explained above. In addition, several information sources were consulted e.g. ZCAS management, employees and students as well as marketing practitioners from other HEIs in the country. It is therefore hoped that the validity of the research findings was enhanced through the various triangulation techniques used in this phase of the study.

The findings from the second research phase were also used to validate the qualitative research findings from the first research phase. Within the questionnaire used in the second research phase (see Appendix 9), respondents were required to rank the principal brand factors identified in the first research phase. These rankings reflect the perceptions of students regarding the principal branding elements in the HE sector in Zambia, thereby refuting or validating the first research phase findings.

Generalisability

Generalisability is the extent to which research findings from one study can be applied to other settings (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.158). Generalisability is generally accepted as a problem in qualitative research due to small unrepresentative samples that are usually selected for the study (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.408-409). However, it is still possible to generalize the sample research findings to theory, even if generalization cannot be made to the population (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.408-409; Yin, 2010, pp.99-100; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.213; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 113).

The first research phase of the current study is a qualitative investigation based on a multiple case study of thirteen HEIs all of which were selected using non-probability sampling approaches. Consequently, the study findings may not be wholly generalizable to the HE sector in Zambia. Instead, the first research phase outcomes were integrated with literature based (i.e. generalized to theory) to identify the principal components of what makes the Zambian HE brand model. The inability to entirely generalize the case study findings from the first research phase to the Zambian HE sector is accepted as a limitation of the current research project. However, this research limitation is moderated by the fact that thirteen (i.e. 65%) of the twenty HEIs in the country participated in the study. Therefore, even though Yin (2008) asserts that replication as used in case study method does not depend on the representativeness of samples since there is no need or intention to represent a population, this is not necessarily the case in this multiple case study research due to the large sample size.

3.3.6 Section summary

This section has described and justified the first research phase methodology. This multiple case study research was carried out in ZCAS as the main case and twelve universities. ZCAS was chosen as the main case study organisation because it generally characterizes the Zambian HE sector, being a self-financing government controlled institution. Given

that the study was exploratory at this stage, focus groups and semi-structured interviews were preferred as data collection techniques. Data processing and analysis was thereafter achieved through thematic and content analysis respectively. Thematic analysis was employed to identify emerging themes from the recorded and transcribed focus group and interview data while content analysis, using Atlas.ti software, was used to measure the frequency and significance of the themes to identify the principal branding dimensions that comprise the Zambian HE brand model. These branding dimensions were input into the second research phase for the comparative study.

3.4 Second research phase methodology

3.4.1 Introduction and overview

In the second research phase, a survey utilizing a conjoint questionnaire based on the HE branding components identified in the first research phase was used to measure the extent of ZCAS' brand orientation compared to its competitors in order to address research objectives RO2 and RO3 on measurement and comparative study of the ZCAS brand. A questionnaire survey was considered appropriate during this phase of the research because survey results are generally authoritative, easier to understand and the standardized data generated is suitable for comparison (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.144). The survey strategy has been used in many similar studies of HEI branding (e.g. see Kusumawati, 2011; Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei, 2010; Wiese *et al.*, 2009).

Hooley and Lynch (1981) define conjoint analysis as 'a de-compositional approach to modeling the relative importance of individual attribute components in creating overall preference for multi-attribute alternatives'. IBM (2011) states that 'Conjoint analysis enables you to measure the value consumers place on individual attributes or features that define products and services' by asking decision-makers to choose between hypothetical scenarios in an experiment designed to uncover the value they place on different decision criteria. Conjoint analysis seems to mimic the actual decision making process because of the assumptions inherent in the technique such as people evaluating 'only a few options in detail before making a decision', 'options are evaluated as bundles of attributes rather than as whole products' and 'a compensatory choice strategy where good performance on one attribute compensates for poor performance on others' (Kusumawati, 2011). This gives the

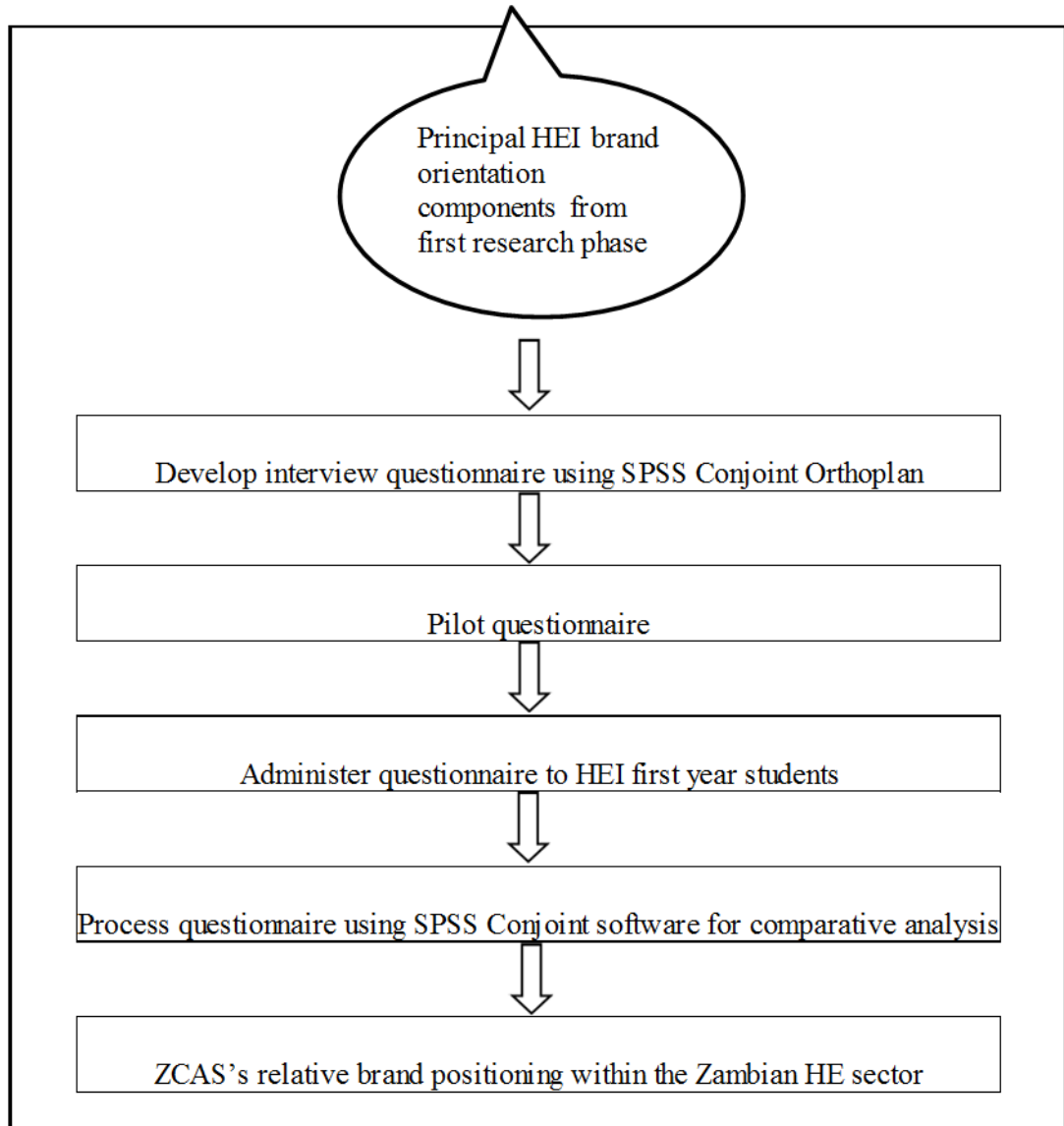
researcher insights into the relative significance of each attribute and the trade-offs consumers make between attributes.

The questionnaire designed for this phase of the study was pilot-tested to enhance its reliability, validity and practicability (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.394; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp.341 – 342). The research procedure for this phase of the study is illustrated in Figure 3.2 below.

In order to ensure credibility of the conjoint study, the experiment was based on the 7 stage process in Hair *et al.* (2010, pp.421 – 450). These stages are as outlined below. The first two stages are concerned with the conjoint study design and are incorporated in this chapter. The last five stages deal with analysis of findings and are therefore incorporated in Chapter 5.

1. Setting objectives and/or research questions for the conjoint analysis;
2. Design the conjoint analysis. This includes selecting a conjoint analysis methodology, designing factor profiles and specifying the basic model form;
3. Define assumptions used in the model estimation;
4. Estimate conjoint model and assess overall fit. This includes selection of estimation technique, estimating part-worths and evaluating model goodness-of-fit;
5. Interpret results by examining the estimated part-worths and assessing the relative importance of attributes;
6. Validate results; and
7. Apply the conjoint results.

Figure 3.2 Second research phase procedures



3.4.2 Sampling frame and sample size

The sampling frame for this phase of the study would comprise a list of first year students in all the twenty HE institutions that were considered for the study. Such a list was impracticable to obtain as some of the universities were reluctant to provide detailed

information about their students. Consequently, probability sampling was not used due to the absence of a sampling frame (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p.214).

Instead, non-probability sampling, and in particular, quota sampling techniques were employed in selection of the sample, with quotas being determined by the geographical location of universities. Even though quota sampling is non-random, it is assumed that the sample represents characteristics of the population because of the quotas selected (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.193; Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p.235). In order to facilitate statistical analysis using conjoint analysis software, each quota (i.e. from each of the eight HEIs) had a minimum of thirty respondents (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p.218).

Samples selected other than by probability sampling (except quota sampling as argued by some researchers) are generally considered to be unrepresentative of the population, hence results might not be generalizable to the population. However, Bryman and Bell (2011, pp.187-188) and Saunders *et al.* (2009, pp.217-218) assert that the error of generalising to the population reduces as the absolute sample size increases because the distribution of a large sample is closer to the normal distribution. It is therefore envisaged that the large sample of 390 respondents in this phase of the study, albeit selected non-randomly, facilitates statistical inferences to be made about the population.

In the case of ZCAS where there are several tuition delivery methods (e.g. full time and evening/part time classes), sample representativeness was enhanced because the quota system ensured that most aspects of the population were considered; for example, part time students, full time students, students undertaking degree programmes and those on professional courses were included in the sample (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.193; Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p.235). It is envisaged that this procedure also assisted in minimising systematic error that could result from quota sampling.

3.4.3 Objectives of the conjoint study

The objectives of this conjoint study are twofold; firstly, to identify the current position of the ZCAS brand as a case study (RO2) and secondly, to establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia (RO3). In order to establish RO2 on ZCAS' current brand position in the Zambian HE market, a sample of

110 first year students (i.e. students that had recently chosen to study at ZCAS) completed a conjoint questionnaire that required them to rate factor profiles based on the principal branding elements that attracted them to the institution. Their ratings for choosing ZCAS were then compared to the principal branding elements in Zambia as ascertained in the first research phase in Chapter 4 in order to identify the current position of the ZCAS brand in the Zambian HE sector.

A sample of 280 first year students in seven other HEIs in Zambia also completed the conjoint questionnaire. Their factor profile ratings for choosing their HEIs were compared with those for ZCAS students as well as the principal branding elements that comprise the Zambian HE brand model in order to establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia (RO3).

3.4.4 Conjoint questionnaire design

The second research phase was a survey utilizing a conjoint questionnaire based on the HE branding components identified in the first research phase. The traditional conjoint analysis methodology was selected in preference to two other methodologies (i.e. adaptive conjoint and choice-based conjoint) because this methodology ‘has been the mainstay of conjoint studies for many years’ (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p. 425) and is suitable for this study because of the emphasis in obtaining a detailed understanding of the HE preference structure. The choice-based method was rejected because of the need to reduce the complexity of the conjoint task for respondents while the small number of attributes rendered the adaptive approach unsuitable (Hair *et al.*, 2010, pp.460-461).

Attributes and attribute levels

According to Hair *et al.* (2010, p. 425), the design of profiles to be assessed by research participants is a fundamental issue in conjoint analysis. As more fully discussed in Section 4.8 of Chapter 4, the 19 branding factors identified in the qualitative research were aggregated using Atlas.ti’s co-occurrence principles to facilitate the conjoint study. The five factors that emerged from the aggregation process are the variables or attributes that underpin the conjoint analysis in the second research phase. Attribute levels for each

attribute were then adapted from similar conjoint studies. This process is similar to exploratory factor analysis in terms of data summarization (Hair *et al.*, 2010, pp.94-99) and is meant to make the factor combinations more manageable to evaluate by respondents. Grouping variables that are inter-correlated into composite measures is a common feature in multivariate analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.94), including conjoint studies (e.g. see Kusumawati, 2011; Soutar and Turner, 2002; Hooley and Lynch, 1981).

Given that there were five attributes with three levels each, a full factorial design would have resulted in 243 (3^5) possible combinations of profiles to be ranked, ordered, or scored by survey respondents. However, conjoint surveys are usually performed as full profile fractional factorial designs and not as full designs (IBM, 2011, p.2; Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.434). This means that research participants are presented with only a small manageable fraction of the possible attribute profiles. In this study, the profile combinations were reduced to an orthogonal array of 18 experimental factor profiles only. Such an orthogonal array is designed to capture the main effects for each factor level, with an insignificant interface between the various factor levels. An additive composition rule whereby no interaction or inter-correlation among factors and attribute levels is assumed was therefore selected as the basic model form.

In order to facilitate data entry and analysis in IBM SPSS Statistics, the software used in the second research phase, a codebook for the questionnaire was developed. The codebook is shown as Appendix 6.

The full orthogonal array

The conjoint procedure in IBM SPSS Statistics 20 was used to generate an orthogonal array of 22 attribute combinations (i.e. 18 experimental attribute bundles and four holdout cases). The use of about 18 part-worth estimation cards and four holdout cases (with a total of around 22 stimulus cards) in conjoint studies involving about six attributes seems to be the accepted standard practice (e.g. see Kusumawati, 2011; Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.462; Hagel and Shaw, 2008; Hooley and Lynch, 1981). Using more stimulus cards is generally discouraged because respondents find it difficult to understand and complete the questionnaire (IBM, 2011, p.2). Moogan *et al.* (2001), for example, used 27 profile cards

only because their small sample of 32 respondents enabled them to establish a rapport with each research participant on an individual basis. They were therefore able to explain the nature of the profiles as represented by the various combinations of attributes and levels in greater detail to each respondent. Given that the current research had a much larger sample, using 22 profile cards was envisaged to be more feasible.

IBM (2011, p.2) and Hair *et al.* (2010, p. 445) strongly recommend that in order to ascertain the validity or prediction power of the conjoint model, holdout cases should be included in the conjoint profile list. Holdout cases are factor-level combinations similar to the orthogonal array generated for the study. They are rated by survey participants but are not used in building the preference model. In line with similar conjoint studies (e.g. see Kusumawati, 2011; Hagel and Shaw, 2008 and Hooley and Lynch, 1981), four holdout cases were included among the 22 stimulus cards.

Pilot study

The questionnaire designed for this phase of the study was pre-coded and pilot tested to enhance its reliability, validity and practicability (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.262 – 263; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.394; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp.341 – 342). To increase the response rate, the questionnaires (prepared using SPSS Conjoint Orthoplan to produce an orthogonal array) had fewer questions (IBM, 2011; SPSS Inc., 2005) to facilitate completion (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.234 - 236). The questionnaire was also accompanied by a covering letter and distributed through the management of the participating HE institutions (see Appendix 7 and 8 for respective request letters).

Twenty pilot ‘cards’ or questionnaires were printed to elicit a sample of ZCAS first year students’ views on the practicability of this data collection instrument. Following the pilot study, adjustments were made, including a change in administration of the questionnaire and its design. Questionnaire respondents found it challenging to rate bundles of factors and preferred, instead, to rate individual attributes. It was therefore decided to include a section where rating of individual factors would be done before the conjoint bundles section of the questionnaire was introduced. The questionnaire would also be interviewer-

administered instead of being self-administered – which increases the reliability of data collected and the response rate (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, pp. 363-365).

Additionally, a more familiar and shorter rating scale of 1 to 5 (i.e. on a continuum ranging from ‘Strongly agree’ to ‘Strongly disagree’) was introduced. Questionnaire respondents were instructed to rate a bundle or bundles with the most favourable combination of factors that attracted them to their university as ‘Strongly agree’ and those with less favourable factor combinations as ‘Agree’. A bundle or bundles with factor combinations that did not or could not have attracted them to their university would be rated either as ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Disagree’. A bundle or bundles that neither attracted students nor discouraged them from coming to their university would be rated as ‘Neither agree nor disagree’. An example of the resultant full profile card is shown in Table 3.1 below while the final conjoint questionnaire is shown as Appendix 9.

Table 3.1 An example of a Full Profile Card and rating criteria

Bundle Number 3										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
3	Poor	High	Good	Average	Just what I wanted					

3.4.5 Data collection

A questionnaire survey was conducted in ZCAS, the main case study institution as well as seven other HEIs. The sample size of 390 students from 8 out of 20 HEIs was considered large enough to enable statistical inferences to be made about the population. Many similar studies involving first year students have been conducted in a much smaller number of universities. For example, Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010), Johnston (2010), Hagel and Shaw (2008) and Ali (2007) all studied one university only. Others such as Al-Fattal (2010) – 3 universities and Wiese (2009) – 6 HEIs carried out their research in less than 8 HEIs.

First year students were considered suitable because they had just gone through the HE decision making process and were therefore more likely to have fresher memories of the branding dimensions considered than final year students, for example. Many similar studies have focused on first year undergraduate students (e.g. Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei, 2010; Kusumawati, 2010; Carter and Yeo, 2009; Ali and Miller, 2007) to elicit HE branding dimensions. In the case of ZCAS, first year students were drawn from full time, part time, academic programmes and professional qualifications in order to reduce systematic error.

390 questionnaires were administered to students during classes, thereby assuring a high response rate. Given that the response rate was 100%, this sample was quite large for a conjoint study and helped in controlling measurement error. According to Akaah and Korgaonkar (1988) cited in Kusumawati (2011), sample sizes below 100 are typical for conjoint analysis. This is also borne out by actual conjoint studies with actual samples and responses as follows: Kusumawati (2011) – 625; Hagel and Shaw (2008) – 552; Soutar and Turner (2002) – 259; Moogan, Baron and Bainbridge (2001) – 32; and Hooley and Lynch (1981) – 29.

The use of a conjoint questionnaire survey in this research project was reinforced by other branding studies in a university context (e.g. Kusumawati, 2011; Hagel and Shaw, 2008; Soutar and Turner, 2002; Moogan, Baron and Bainbridge, 2001; Hooley and Lynch, 1981).

3.4.6 Data processing and analysis

All questionnaires were cross-checked for errors and incomplete sections. Erroneously completed and incomplete questionnaires were discarded before further processing (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, pp.422 – 425; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp.347 – 348). IBM SPSS 20 was used to process and analyse the questionnaire data. SPSS software was chosen because it is ‘widely known and widely used’ (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.594).

Data analysis was achieved by using the conjoint module in IBM SPSS 20, with student perceptions of their HEI brand attributes being the unit of measurement. The last four steps suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010, p.442) as outlined below were performed.

4. Estimate conjoint model and assess overall fit. This includes selection of estimation technique, estimating part-worths and evaluating model goodness-of-fit;
5. Interpret results by examining the estimated part-worths and assessing the relative importance of attributes;
6. Validate results; and
7. Apply the conjoint results.

The conjoint software analyses respondents' individual as well as aggregate preferences (a trade-off between the various attributes and attribute levels) for alternative market offerings (Kotler and Keller, 2012, p.603; IBM, 2011; Binni, Berni and Rivello, 2009, pp.120 - 121). Although it is customary to analyse conjoint results at the individual respondent and aggregate levels (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.446), the nature of the research objectives being addressed in the second research phase (i.e. RO2: to identify the current position of the ZCAS brand as a case study and RO3: to establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia) favoured consideration of aggregate results only. This is because, for this comparative phase of the study, what matters is arguably the aggregate preference structure of respondents and not their individual preferences. Therefore, only aggregate results were discussed in this research phase.

In order to establish RO2 on ZCAS' current brand position in the Zambian HE market, ZCAS students' brand preference ratings for choosing ZCAS were compared to the principal branding elements in Zambia as ascertained in the first research phase in Chapter 4. Brand preference ratings for students in other HEIs were also compared with those for ZCAS students as well as the principal branding elements that comprise the Zambian HE brand model to establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia as required by RO3.

3.4.7 Reliability, validity and generalisability of research findings

Reliability

Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2009, pp.371-372) assert that reliability in survey research employing a questionnaire largely depends on questionnaire design, structure and rigour of pilot testing. They accordingly recommend the use of software in designing the questionnaire and pilot testing, *inter alia*, to achieve reliability. Bryman and Bell (2011, pp.262-263) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, pp.341-342) also strongly recommend carrying out a pilot study before administering a questionnaire.

In the context of this study, the conjoint questionnaire was generated using SPSS Conjoint Orthoplan and Plancards software. According to IBM (2011), Orthoplan 'produces an orthogonal array of product attribute combinations, which dramatically reduces the number of questions you must ask while ensuring that you have enough information to perform a full analysis'. The Plancards facility produces printed cards (questionnaires) for the conjoint experiment. It was envisioned that the use of this software in designing the questionnaire enhanced reliability. SPSS Conjoint also generates goodness-of-fit measures such as Pearson's r and Kendall's tau that measure reliability.

The questionnaire designed for this phase of the study was pilot-tested within ZCAS, thereby further enhancing its reliability, validity and practicability (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.262 – 263; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.394; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp.341 – 342). Reliability of the actual questionnaire results was measured using Cronbach's alpha, α , which is a very common measure of internal reliability (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.159; Field, 2009, p.674). Having processed the conjoint questionnaire results in SPSS, the reliability statistics generated indicated Cronbach's alpha of .779 and Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items of .795. Both values were above 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire measured what it intended to measure; hence the results could be taken as reliable.

Validity

Validity of the second research phase findings was established in two ways. Firstly, by using triangulation (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.631-633; Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009, p.146), the findings from the second research phase (i.e. students' perceptions of their HEI brands) were compared to the research findings from the first research phase (i.e. HEI staff and marketing executives' perceptions of their HEI brands). As more fully discussed in sub-sections 5.2.1 and 5.3.1 in Chapter 5, course availability and teaching quality were identified as the premier branding elements in the Zambian HE market in the second research phase. These findings were validated by the content analysis in the first research phase which also identified these branding attributes as being among the top three branding elements as well as sources of competitive advantage in Zambia.

Secondly, goodness-of-fit measures (i.e. Pearson's R and Kendall's tau) were calculated for the estimation and hold-out samples in the conjoint experiment to verify validity of the conjoint analysis (IBM, 2011, p.27; Hair *et al.*, 2010, pp.445-450). A hold-out or validation sample is a set of profiles that is rated by conjoint respondents to establish validity of the conjoint model (IBM, 2011, p.2; Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.413). As more fully discussed in Sub-sections 5.2.2 and 5.3.2 of Chapter 5, both the estimation and validation samples had high Pearson's R and Kendall's tau values, strongly suggesting that the conjoint analysis was valid.

Generalisability

As stated above 18 of the 20 HEIs in the country were given the opportunity to participate in the study. 8 of these institutions responded favourably and 390 questionnaires were administered. Hair *et al.* (2010, p.446) state that conjoint analysis can be performed on each individual respondent and a preference model developed from such analysis. It is therefore plausible to posit that the findings of this study involving 390 respondents in eight different institutions reflect the preferable principal brand dimensions relevant to the HE sector in Zambia.

3.4.8 Section summary

This section has described and justified the methodology for the second research phase. Due to the small population size of only twenty HEIs, all but two of the twenty HEIs were given the opportunity to participate in the study. However, within each participating HEI purposive sampling was used to target the most relevant participants – first year undergraduate students. A survey utilizing a pre-coded and pilot-tested conjoint questionnaire constructed using the branding dimensions identified in the first research phase was used to collect data on student HE choice trade-offs and preferences. A questionnaire survey was considered suitable for this quantitative phase of the research because the standardized data gathered were suitable for comparison. The questionnaire data were then processed and analysed with the aid of IBM's SPSS conjoint module to reveal preferable HE branding dimensions and, by implication, HEIs in Zambia.

3.5 Ethical and access issues

3.5.1 Accessibility

As stated above, the current research was based on a case study of ZCAS as well as a sample of several HEIs in Zambia and involved focus groups, interviews with senior managers and questionnaires as data gathering tools. The candidate recognises that conducting a study of this nature requires more time from respondents and access to a wider range of information. Case studies, interviews and focus groups also require co-operation and trust; and the risk of withdrawal part way through the study is a possibility.

The candidate's response to these challenges was to approach the relevant HEI management very carefully in order to gain their interest in, and commitment to the study. The candidate emphasized the direct relevance and enormous significance of the study to the HE sector in Zambia. The need for particular colleges and universities to become more brand oriented in the face of increasing competition in the sector was stressed. Emphasis was also placed on how any brand orientation model developed from the study could be used by HE managers in Zambia to gain competitive advantage by strengthening their brand position in the market.

The candidate used a letter to accompany requests for HE institutions to participate in the study. The letter indicated clearly the purpose and significance of the research, stressed the confidentiality that would be observed with regard to the information provided, and also expressed the grateful thanks of the researcher for the respondents' participation. Respondents were also promised a copy of the results of the survey and analysis. A copy of the letter is included as Appendix 8.

A major advantage in access terms in this research is that the main case study organisation, ZCAS, is the candidate's employer. ZCAS is also financing this research, albeit on a cost sharing basis with the candidate. ZCAS therefore facilitated access to senior management, students and other stakeholders for the purpose of the research.

3.5.2 Research Ethics

As stated above, the main case study organisation for this research is the Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies (ZCAS). This organisation employs the candidate, partially funds the research and also provides support to the candidate in various ways, including facilitating access to staff and students. It is therefore conceivable that the candidate could have felt unduly indebted to ZCAS, resulting in a tendency for the research outcomes to be biased in ways that avoid criticising the organisation. Conversely, the candidate could be unduly critical of the organisation's brand management practices, in order to be perceived to have made robust recommendations thereto.

Another ethical challenge that arose in this research was that of maintaining confidentiality of data gathered during the research, and the anonymity of respondents, especially management and employees of ZCAS and the other HEIs that participated in the study. In particular, any unfavourable or negative views expressed by management and employees regarding their organisations' brand management practices could be prejudicial to their employment prospects, if deliberately or inadvertently divulged to their superiors.

In response to the ethical issues raised above, the candidate undertook to act honestly and professionally, to maintain the anonymity of individual managers and other employees, to

use the research data fairly and responsibly, and to maintain the security of all data and results.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined and discussed the research design and research methodologies for both research phases. The objectives of this research project necessitated two research phases - an exploratory, qualitative first phase as well as a quantitative, comparative second stage. The study was based upon the critical realist paradigm. . Both inductive and deductive approaches were also adopted to suit the different research stages. In terms of time horizon, the research was not longitudinal but cross-sectional in nature due not only to time and cost constraints, but also the fact that the objective was not to measure changes in the preferable brand dimensions but to identify and use those dimensions immediately. With respect to research strategy, the case study method was selected to enable the researcher obtain a detailed and comprehensive insight and understanding of Zambian HE branding issue in real context.

Section 3.3 has described and justified the first research phase methodology in which ZCAS was chosen as the main case study organisation because it generally characterizes the Zambian HE sector, being a self-financing government controlled institution. Given that the study was exploratory at this stage, focus groups and semi-structured interviews were preferred as data collection techniques. Data processing and analysis was thereafter achieved through thematic and content analysis respectively.

In Section 3.4 the methodology for the second research phase was described and justified. Due to lack of a sampling frame and for practical reasons, probability sampling was not used. Instead, quota sampling was used to try and select a representative sample for the purposes of statistical analysis. A large sample of 390 students was used in this phase of the study and it was hoped that this large sample size would facilitate statistical inferences to be made about the population. A survey utilizing a pre-coded and pilot-tested conjoint questionnaire constructed using the principal branding dimensions identified in the first research phase was then used to collect data on student HE choice trade-offs and

preferences. A questionnaire survey was considered suitable for this quantitative phase of the research because the standardized data gathered is appropriate for comparison. The questionnaire data were then processed and analysed with the aid of IBM's SPSS Conjoint analysis module to reveal preferable HE branding dimensions and, by implication, HEIs in Zambia.

Chapter 4 which follows outlines and analyses the findings from the first research phase. The exploratory research findings from the first research phase are the basis for the quantitative comparative second research phase discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4: FIRST RESEARCH PHASE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is an outline and analysis of the findings from the first research phase, the objective of which was to identify the principal Zambian higher education (HE) brand orientation dimensions (factors students consider when choosing HEIs, sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian higher education sector, the influencers of student choice of HEI and sources of information students consult when making higher education related decisions). In particular, the first research phase was a case study of the Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies (ZCAS), supplemented by semi-structured interviews with marketing practitioners in other Zambian higher education institutions (HEIs). The relevant branding dimensions identified in this research phase were employed to inform the second research phase where the branding dimensions were used to establish how brand oriented ZCAS is compared to its competitors in the Zambian HE sector.

The chapter is therefore structured as follows: Section 4.2 gives an overview of the coding framework while Sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 respectively discuss the branding dimensions namely, the factors students consider when choosing HEIs, sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian higher education sector, sources of information students consult when making HE related decisions in Zambia and the influencers of student choice of HEI. Concluding remarks on the main findings are given in Section 4.7 while implications for these findings for the second research phase are discussed in Section 4.8. Finally the chapter contents are summarised in Section 4.9.

4.2 Development of a coding framework

As explained in Section 3.3.4 of the methodology chapter, codes or themes used in data processing and analysis were identified from a synthesis of the thematic analysis of the first research phase data and the brand orientation components identified in the literature

review chapter. The thematic analysis involved reviewing the focus group discussions and interviews for repetitive themes that indicate factors students consider when making higher education choices, sources of competitive advantage for HEIs, information sources students consult and influencers of student choice. The emerging themes or codes were then compared and integrated with those identified in the literature review chapter. Subsequently, these codes or branding elements, outlined in Appendix 5, were used to categorise the data collected for content analysis purposes.

Bryman and Bell (2011, pp.300 – 304) observe that coding must be consistent in order to enhance inter-coder reliability (consistent coding between coders) and intra-coder reliability (consistent coding by one coder over time). They advise that this can be achieved by setting rules that coders should follow. In the context of this research, the coding was done by the researcher alone, thereby eliminating inter-coder variability. To enhance intra-coder reliability, the researcher set up rules on how the coding was to be done and these are tabulated in Appendix 5. This coding manual defines each code and explains, where necessary, what each code category includes.

4.3 Elements of a Zambian HEI brand

A synthesis of the literature review and thematic analysis of the first research phase data identified 19 factors that potential students take into account when making higher education choices in Zambia. These factors are shown in Table 4.1 below in descending order starting with the one that was referred to most in the interview and focus group transcripts.

A comparison of the HE brand attributes with prior research findings is given in subsection 4.7.1 below. Each of the HE branding elements is discussed further below and the researcher's expectations in relation to the research findings are given as each element is presented.

4.3.1 Teaching quality

Teaching quality was defined in terms of the qualifications, competence, experience and reputation of teaching/lecturing staff (see the coding manual at Appendix 5). It also refers to the attitude of teaching staff towards students, including friendliness and willingness to help. Teaching quality can be enhanced by good management of the HEI, so references to the quality of HEI leadership in the interview and focus group transcripts were included in this category during the coding process.

Table 4.1 Frequency of occurrence of HEI factors in PDs

		Private HEI	Public HEI	ZCAS Staff SSI	ZCAS Students FGD	Total quotations	% of total
1	Teaching quality	49	22	48	40	159	16%
2	Fees	35	17	33	12	97	10%
3	Course availability	42	24	15	14	95	9%
4	Facilities	19	14	33	26	92	9%
5	Employability	22	9	18	23	72	7%
6	Infrastructure	29	9	23	7	68	7%
7	Recognition	36	2	12	11	61	6%
8	Credibility	28	4	10	7	49	5%
9	Culture	23	10	9	7	49	5%
10	Environment	7	6	15	17	45	4%
11	Reputation	9	7	15	10	41	4%
12	Pass rates	4	0	21	14	39	4%
13	Location	11	8	12	6	37	4%
14	Timely completion/co	5	16	2	8	31	3%
15	Collaborations	15	7	6	2	30	3%
16	Learning materials	10	0	9	8	27	3%
17	Safety and security	0	0	6	11	17	2%
18	Ease of entry	3	5	1	0	9	1%
19	Graduation ceremony	0	0	2	1	3	0%
	Total quotations	347	160	290	224	1021	100%
	% of total	34%	16%	28%	22%	100%	

Teaching quality was by far the most referred to factor overall that potential students in Zambia consider when choosing courses and HEIs, accounting for 16% of all quotations in

the interview and focus group transcripts, almost double those of the next branding element (see Figure 4.1 below). An analysis of Table 4.1 above also shows that teaching quality is the only factor that was referred to most by respondents in all the family categories into which the participating HEIs were grouped (i.e. private HEIs, public HEIs, ZCAS staff and ZCAS student focus groups).

The universal importance of the quality of teaching is illustrated in various ways. For example, student participants at ZCAS were not only attracted to the institution because of this factor, but could also leave if there was a decline in the teaching quality e.g. due to less experienced lecturers being recruited or standing in for absent colleagues. When asked what would make them leave ZCAS, each of the three focus groups mentioned this factor:

FGD 1: ‘Yea, just in addition to what he is saying I think if the expectation goes low, if the quality of lecturers I think if there is change of lecturers you know, I think you get the confidence of being in class because of the lecturers who have been there like for some time. But if there is change or staff turnover I think you tend to have a little bit of confidence, you don't know the experience of the other lecturers who have just come in.’

FGD3: ‘Lecturer reputation for the college you plan on going to. If say lecturers there are professors one might consider going where people are highly qualified, will be able to give views from different angles as well.’

HEIs were also unanimous in how highly they rate teaching quality. This was shown by reference to high qualifications required to teach in both public and private HEIs as well as the drastic measures taken when lecturers compromise the quality of teaching:

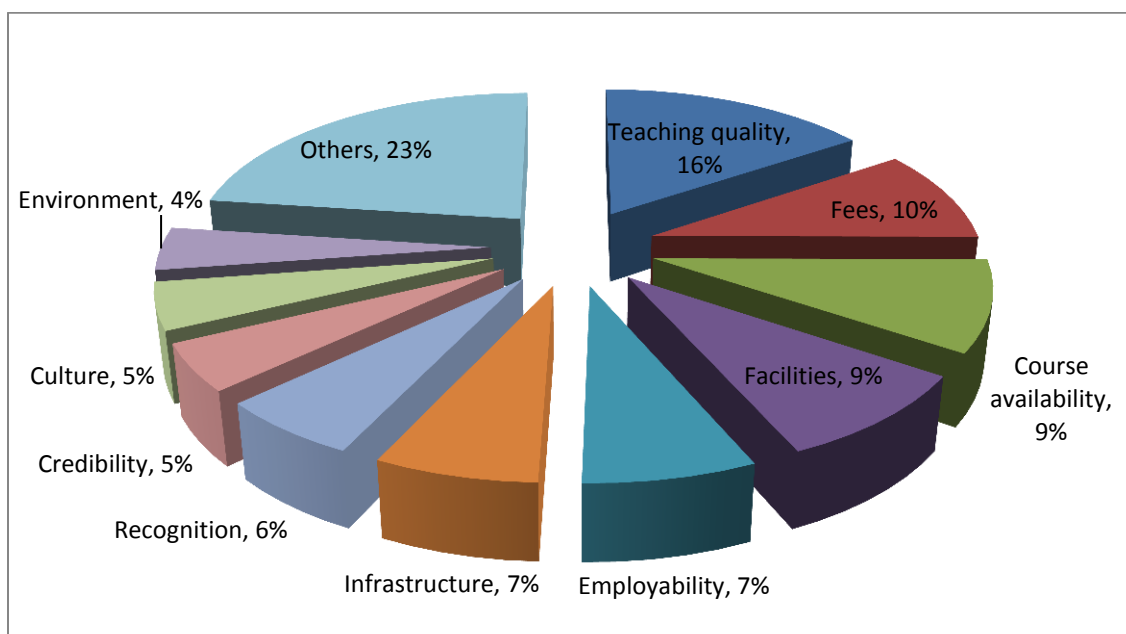
ZCAS interviewee: ‘And the moment you start doing things that way, you start compromising on who should teach without looking at your own standards that you have set. If you say for us it's going to be master's it must be master's. This is the trend that we have in IT. In IT now its master's, we are not going to employ anybody without a master's’.

Public HEI: ‘... the quality starts from the recruitment of the staff. We ensure that only higher calibre staff, properly qualified people are recruited. Here we don't accept if somebody did economics then they go and do a master's degree in business administration, no, we'll tell them to keep that and join industry, it's not for teaching. If you are a master, you must have done public administration first degree, public administration second degree or PhD. This is when you become a master ...’

Furthermore, teaching quality was one of the few HE branding factors that all participants identified before being mentioned by the interviewer. This demonstrates that it is closer to

their hearts than for example location of HEI or safety that most interviewees only commented on after being prompted by the interviewer. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that, based on these research findings, teaching quality is the most important HE branding element in Zambia. This is not surprising because the very essence of going to a HEI is to learn and acquire knowledge and skills required for a job or self-employment; and un-doubtedly teaching quality has a direct impact on that.

Figure 4.1 Frequency of top ten referred to HEI factors in Zambia



In the Zambian context, and perhaps even in other developing countries as well, low incomes earned by teaching staff force them to engage in other revenue generating activities such as consultancy work. This results in absenteeism from work and general lack of commitment, thereby compromising teaching quality. A private HEI interviewee highlighted this when he said:

‘And the beauty with the private university here is we are very strict with time, if you don't teach three times and you have absolutely given no reason for not, you are out because we cannot afford, whereas in the private, in the public university, sometimes people teach one time in a month, sometimes they are out of the university the dean of that faculty doesn't know, they have gone to America, Britain and so on. But here it cannot happen and we don't, it's unthinkable that it can happen. If one goes they have to make arrangements with another who will handle their class, if they don't they will find themselves out, we will get another one.’

4.3.2 Fees

This code encompasses tuition and lodging fees as well as flexibility in payment terms. It also includes references to discounts on fees, availability of scholarships and government bursaries.

Even though this factor was the second most referred to in the interview and focus group transcripts, accounting for 10% of all quotations (see Figure 4.1 above), participants were not unanimous in their responses. Compared to teaching quality where all participants concurred on its importance, some respondents thought that fees were not a major factor in attracting potential students. In fact some respondents in both public and private HEIs thought that a reduction in fees could even be counter-productive in this respect. The following quotations illustrate this view:

ZCAS student: ‘Yes they can to some extent in that if you have sort of to say a well to do family and them they are looking for the best of the best, automatically they’ll be going for higher fees for prestige purposes and also somehow to maintain their status in life.’

ZCAS interviewee: ‘The very moment they hear that the prices are higher and you are giving these benefits then they think the quality is better. So I have never very much thought the reduction of price would do us good; for me, I believe if we reduce prices then we will be communicating a message that we are no longer a premium brand and that may affect our market leadership’.

Private university interviewee: ‘... and fees they don't mind being a private university, they don't alarm so much on fees, they don't alarm so much on the fees.’

Despite the lack of unanimity on the role of high fees or low fees in the HE decision, fees generally play a role not only in attracting students but also their retention. Like teaching quality, the fee issue was one of the few HE branding factors that was mentioned in all the interview and focus group transcripts (see Appendix 10) and that all participants identified before it was mentioned by the interviewer. Additionally, when asked what could make them leave ZCAS for other HEIs, all the focus groups cited the high fees the college charges as the main reason. All the interview participants in all the HEIs, both public and private, also said financial constraints (and not any organisational factors) were responsible for most student drop-outs, even though such drop-outs were few:

ZCAS interviewee: ‘One this is just the issue that I just mentioned, I think they are leaving ZCAS, one is they can't afford the tuition fees.’

Private HEI: ‘Yea we have experienced some students not actually proceeding to either third or fourth semester, sometimes just dropping out; reason is financial reason, usually financial reasons, yes please. In terms of other factors not as yet. We haven't yet known any apart from the financial reasons...’

Public HEI: ‘One of them is lack of sponsorship. Ehm even like yesterday we were doing the number, we were asking for a refund because they could not get a scholarship.’

It therefore seems fair to conclude that fees are a major consideration in the HE decision in Zambia, perhaps second only to teaching quality overall. Given that Zambia is a developing country, fees would naturally be expected to be on many people's minds as household incomes are generally low. One interviewee brought this point out when he said ‘... in a third world country like Zambia, may be you would also consider the cost aspect’. Fee setting should also be taken seriously by Zambian HEIs because whilst very high fees may exclude many potential students, very low fees may signal poor quality and discourage a certain portion of the HE market from enrolling in the institution.

4.3.3 Course availability

The coding manual defined course availability in terms of the range and content of courses or programmes offered by a HEI. For professional courses such as ACCA, CIMA, CIM, CIPS etc. this includes whether all levels of the qualification are offered by the HEI. This branding element also refers to whether the courses are available on full time, part time, distance learning, e-learning or block release.

Course availability as a branding factor that attracts potential students to a HEI was mentioned in all but three of the interview and focus group transcripts (see Appendix 10). References to course availability accounted for 9% of all quotations in the FGDs and interviews, putting it third behind teaching quality (16%) and fees (10%) in the coded quotations frequency count (see Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 above). The importance of this branding element can also be seen in how it is exploited by most HEIs as a source of competitive advantage. When asked what their institutions' competitive advantages were,

interviewee responses put this factor at number one in the frequency count (see Figure 4.6 below). The quotations below illustrate this point:

Private university: ‘So for us I think the major competitive advantage comes from the uniqueness of those products I talked about ...’

Public university: ‘As I said the unique characteristics or factors are the nature of the programmes that we are offering, they are unique. We are not repeating what other universities have done ... So what is unique about our programmes is that they are market driven. All the programmes that we have developed they have been developed with contributions from the industry.’

ZCAS interviewee: ‘And we run what I’ll call niche courses, like if you look at the courses that we are running in IT. We are the only ones that run that course ... and at the moment we have the monopoly which makes it really difficult for other institutions to copy.’

Course availability is a major branding issue for several reasons. Firstly, the broader the range of courses an institution offers, the more students it should be able to attract because of the increased choices available, as observed by many research participants. When asked what attracts students to particular HEIs, one private university illustrated this by saying ‘Primarily that is the major factor because if one wants to become a doctor, definitely they’ll perhaps choose to go to the University of Zambia instead of going to Copperbelt University because ehm, that type of training doesn’t exist there...’.

The opposite view was illustrated by a focus group discussion. When asked what would make them leave ZCAS for other institutions for example, one focus group said ‘And may be other, wider portfolio of courses... there’s always institutions that have a larger portfolio and give you things that you did not expect you can do, say an example would be innovation and creativity’.

Secondly, course availability in terms of the delivery mode such as part time, weekend classes and block release is also desirable to students. When asked what attracted them to ZCAS, another focus group said ‘... flexibility of the learning at ZCAS. Flexibility in that you can come in say the part time classes are very flexible and the time table also is flexible, even the course itself is flexible ...’ A private university marketing executive had a similar point of view when he said:

‘The most thing that students have come to like about our university is the flexibility towards learning, session are very flexible. We offer four different types of learning sessions; we have uh the day learning, so those who can fit in the day what we call day session, it's 08:00 to 15:30. We have the evening session specifically for those who are working; they come at 17:30 and they finish at 19:00 hours. We do have also the weekend session for those that cannot fit during the day and during the evening. They come specifically Saturday from 08:30 to 15:30. And we also have distance learning, as if that is not enough we have also what we call directed learning.’

Thirdly, course availability in terms of course content can also enhance employability of an institution’s graduates or indeed self-employment. One public university for example, stated:

‘So what is unique about our programmes is that they are market driven. All the programmes that we have developed they have been developed with contributions from the industry... And we also do attachments; when we break between June and August that's the long vacation, all third, fourth year students are attached to industry and this is facilitated by the university’.

4.3.4 Facilities

These are resources that aid/facilitate the learning process and stay at HEIs. Facilities include the library, computer labs, recreation facilities, car parks, canteen and teaching aids such as projectors and white boards.

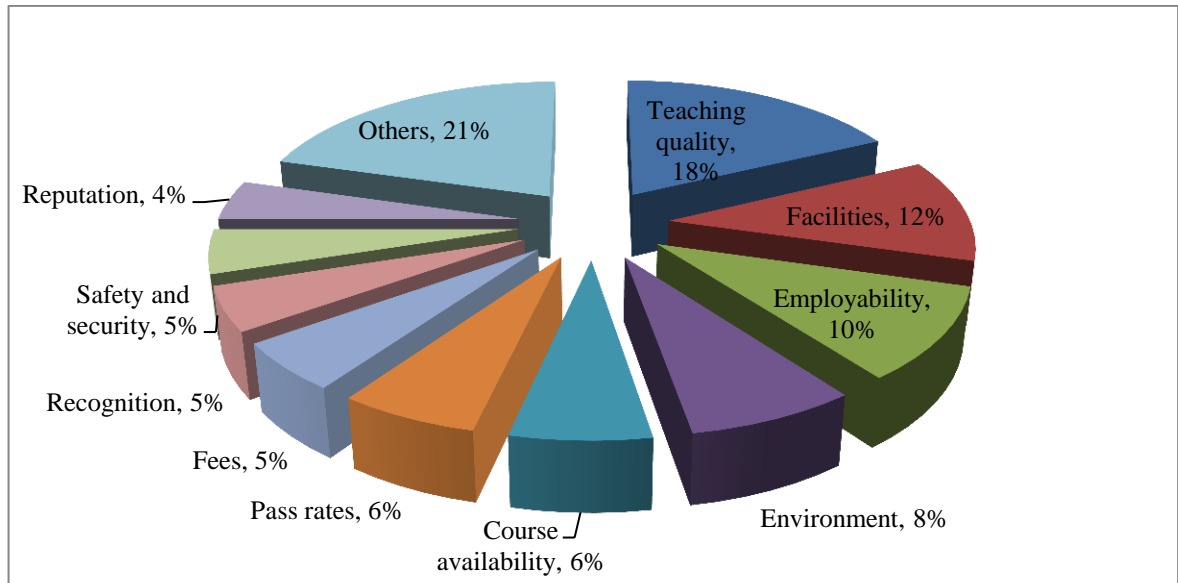
Like course availability, facilities accounted for 9% of all references to HEI factors in the first research phase data (see Figure 4.1 above). All but one of the respondents identified this element as one of those considered by potential students in the HE decision process (see Appendix 10). Perhaps the more significant finding regarding this branding element is shown in Figure 4.2 below where students made more references to facilities than any other factor save for teaching quality. This implies that consideration of an HEI’s facilities permeate the HE decision making process, at least from the potential student’s point of view.

The importance of facilities as a university or college’s calling card to potential students is arguably because facilities enhance the acquisition of knowledge and skills especially in courses such as IT, medicine and engineering that are practical in nature. The importance

of facilities was highlighted by a private university interviewee who, in response to a question on what enhances the quality of tuition delivery, said:

‘The facilities, especially for a university we’re talking the library facilities, we’re talking ehm IT facilities and naturally the classroom environment those are physical issues that affect quality, yes’

Figure 4.2 Frequency of top ten referred to HEI factors by ZCAS students



A review of the coded quotations on facilities shows that all participants agreed on the positive impact of good facilities in attracting potential students. The quotations below illustrate this:

FGD1 on factors that attract students to HEIs: ‘For example where you are in class, you are having a lecture, you have insufficient seats to sit on it would hinder some people to go to a certain college because of that. But whereby you have an institution where they’ve got all the facilities like desks, they’ve got projectors people will be attracted to it.’

ZCAS interviewee on sources of competitive advantage: ‘On the IT side I think we have computer laboratories and equipment which others will really struggle to attain. Of course if you look at public universities like the University of Zambia whose hugely funded it’s a different story but even then we may find that in some cases we have better equipment than them.’

Some HEIs even posited that facilities could be used as a source of competitive advantage in the HE sector, given the substantial financial resources required to acquire or develop good educational facilities. As shown in Figure 4.6 below, the number of references to facilities puts this factor at number three, only behind course availability and teaching quality as a source of competitive advantage. This implies that a HEI's facilities are also very important to marketing executives.

4.3.5 Employability

This includes job prospects after completing course/programme as well as opportunities for self-employment. It also includes how graduates perform in the workplace.

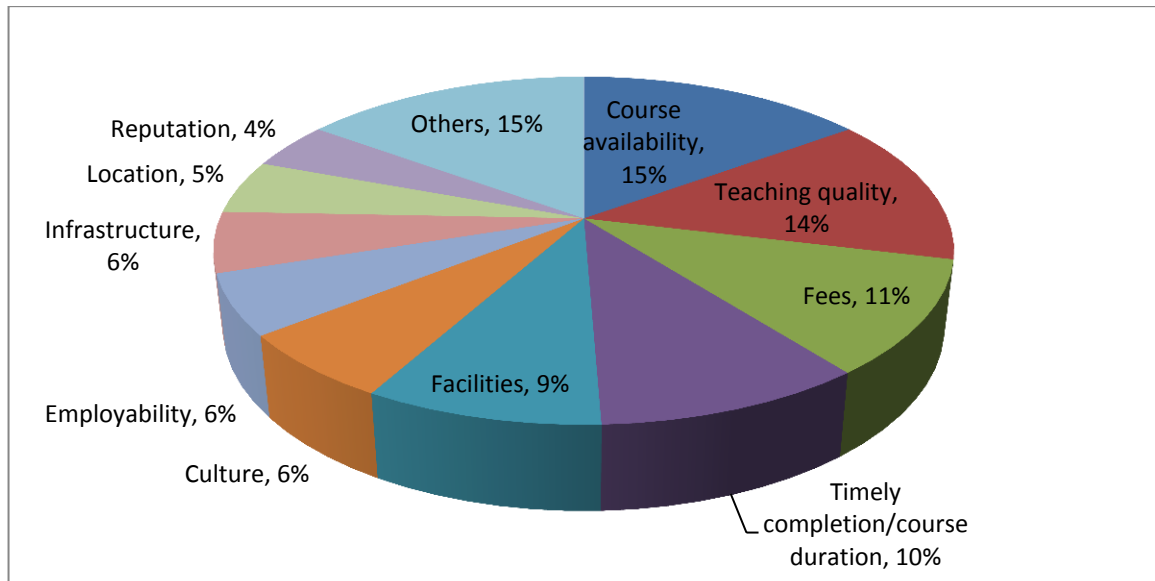
According to Appendix 10, employability is one of the four branding elements (the others being teaching quality, fees and infrastructure) that was mentioned in all the FGDs and interviews, signifying its pervasive nature in the HE decision. References to this factor made up 7% of all coded quotations (see Figure 4.1 above).

An analysis of the research data indicates that at number three and with 10% of the quotes on the quotations frequency count (see Figure 4.2 above), employability was raised more often by students than any of the other categories of participants (compare with Figures 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 below). This implies that students are very concerned about getting qualifications or attending HEIs that enhance their employment opportunities, with only teaching quality and facilities being of greater concern. This is not surprising, given the high unemployment rate in Zambia as alluded to by several focus group discussants who said:

FGD2: 'Yea, it can't be everyone but most of the lecturers here are from ZCAS. Look at ..., those people in accounts they are all students, just a few people are not ZCAS students. I think it even encourages because they actually get the best so it actually encourages students to work harder. You know the levels of unemployment are very high, if I go to ZCAS I work hard I'll get employment right there.'

FGD1: 'I think it's the end of the person, what you are going to become at the end of the day. Are you going to be able to find a job when you finish after training with the institution? (Giggles) ... That should be number 1 I think (laughter, all).'

Figure 4.3 Frequency of top ten referred to HEI factors by public universities in Zambia

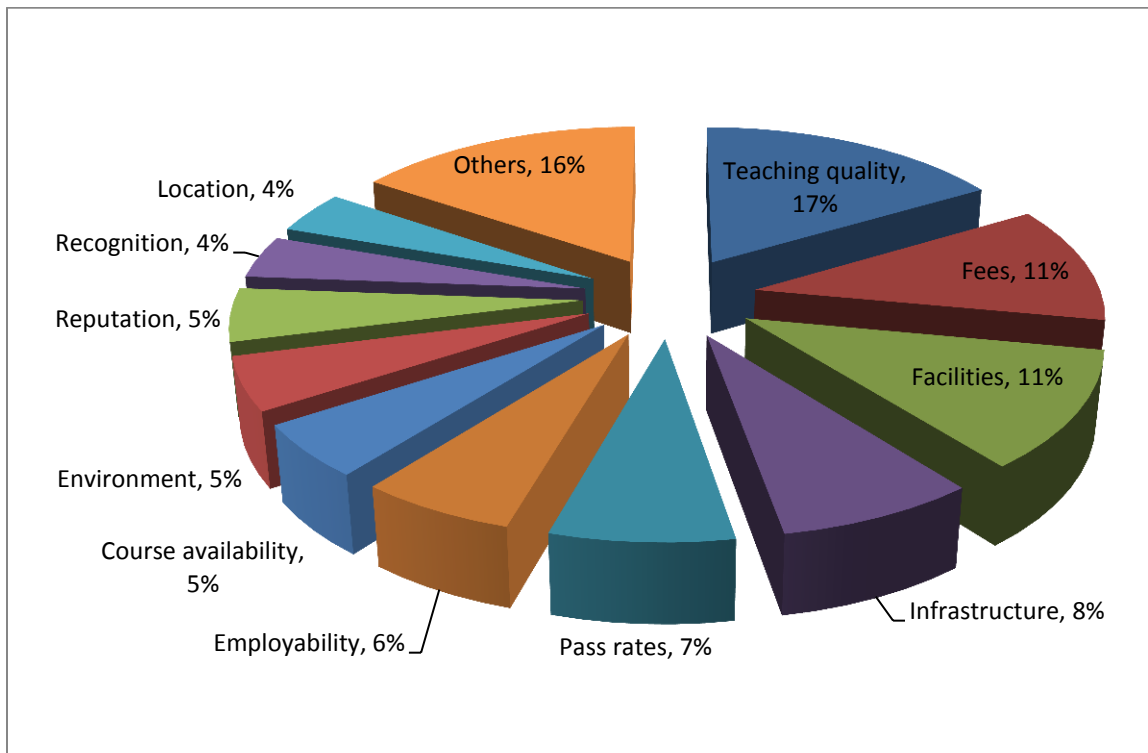


4.3.6 Infrastructure

This refers to the adequacy and appearance of buildings (e.g. offices, classrooms and student hostels) as well as the general infrastructure in the HEI. It also incorporates maintenance of the infrastructure to keep it in good condition.

According to Appendix 10, infrastructure is one of the four branding elements (the others being teaching quality, fees and employability) that was mentioned in all the FGDs and interviews. References to this factor made up 7% of all coded quotations (see Figure 4.1 above). An analysis of the research data indicates that private HEIs and ZCAS (a public HEI run on full commercial basis) rated this branding element in the top five on the quotations frequency count (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5 below).

Figure 4.4 Frequency of top ten referred to HEI factors by ZCAS staff



Compared to students who did not identify infrastructure as even a top ten issue (see Figure 4.2 above) private HEIs in Zambia are much more concerned about this factor. As discussed in Sub-section 4.3.4 above, students are more interested in the facilities within the institution because these arguably impact more on the learning process than the general infrastructure. Private HEIs in Zambia are however, understandably more concerned with infrastructure because most of them are newly established and lack proper infrastructure. This is illustrated by the following sentiments:

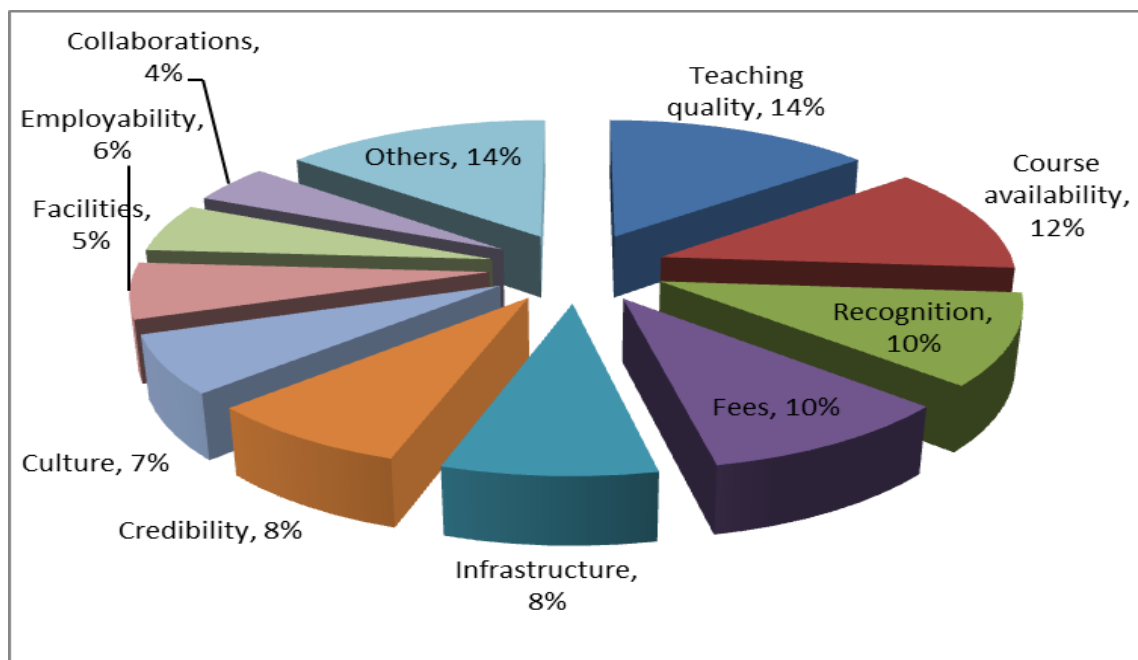
Private HEI on what potential students inquire about: ‘And the other query is, obviously they want to know is whether you have boarding facilities especially school leavers. ‘Where am I going to live when I come to Lusaka?’

Private HEI on what attracts students to HEI: ‘I think for most of them when they were applying, as they were getting on campus or maybe even before they came, they were expecting to see tall, tall buildings. But can you imagine by that time that was in 2006, 2007, this building not even the foundation was there. We were only that side and there were probably only two, three blocks. And you can just imagine the bush that was there because there were no activities in all these areas. So for them (laughter, both) it was just like jumping from the frying pan into the fire, they just said no,

the same day they went back, yea. They didn't even get into the hostels or do whatever, the same day they went back. So really infrastructure has a lot to do, has a role to play when it comes to attracting students, yea.'

Private HEI on challenges to growth: 'The major challenge I would say is infrastructure. Like I did allude to earlier on we actually have the ability to handle even 2,000 students at once.'

Figure 4.5 Frequency of top ten referred to HEI factors by private HEIs in Zambia



4.3.7 Recognition

Quotations included in this code are those which related to whether the HEI is registered and regulated by the government, and whether the HEI and/or its qualifications are acknowledged by the government (e.g. in terms of sponsoring students or recruiting from the institution), other tertiary institutions (e.g. in terms of granting exemptions to graduates pursuing further studies) and industry in general (e.g. by sponsoring employees or recruiting from the HEI) as being of reasonable standards. Recognition also includes international mobility of the institution's qualifications.

Recognition is a top ten issue in Zambia, with 6% of all quotations being attributed to this branding element. Private HEIs are particularly much more concerned about recognition than public universities. Figure 4.5 above shows that other than teaching quality and course availability, nothing is more concerning to private HEIs than whether they are recognised or not. An analysis of Appendix 10 also shows that the only four respondents who did not identify recognition as a branding issue were all from public HEIs.

It is not surprising that private universities are grappling with recognition because all of them are relatively newly established organisations. All private universities were established after the year 2000, following enactment of the Universities Act of 1999 which provided for their existence. Most are in fact less than ten years old and some have not even churned out their first graduates yet. For example, lamenting on lack of recognition, one respondent said:

‘Because they say if I go to UNZA people will say yes I’m from UNZA; but perhaps if I go to Victoria Falls University, it is not even known, even the first graduates have not yet come out. So they begin to become a bit skeptical about going to such a university’.

Another interviewee said:

‘In our case we have to make a case, we have to market ourselves, we have to compete with those who have been in the market for a long time and we are just two years and three months old.’

The issue of recognition of the HEI or its qualifications did not come out very prominently in the focus groups even though it was a top ten issue (see Figure 4.2 above). This could be because these discussions were held with students in a public institution. Potential students, especially those considering enrolling in private universities, are however very concerned with recognition of the institution as well as its qualifications. When asked what students query about their institutions, most interviewees in private universities identified issues to do with recognition as a frequently asked question. The following sentiments illustrate this worry:

Private HEI: ‘Mature students will go beyond the name ... But for undergraduate students the first thing is the name of the institution and the next question is it recognised and if you give them those answers then they will be satisfied.’

Private HEI: 'Prospective students their most commonly asked questions is 'Is this university recognized?' (Laughter) That's the first question, it's very close to everybody.'

Private HEI: '... they want to know about the (legitimability?) of the university, whether it is registered by University of Zambia, I mean, by Ministry of Education, whether it is registered by Health Professions Council or General Medicine Council and whether it has got teachers, ehm, they want to know whether there is any structure of hierarchy, 'Do you have a vice chancellor', 'Do you have deans?', 'Do you have this?'

Private HEI: '... for example one of the questions that students would want to find out is ehm, is your institution recognised.'

4.3.8 Credibility

Credibility of a HEI was defined in terms of how long the institution has existed and also whether the institution is developing or growing in size, programmes, staff and technology. These characteristics indicate trustworthiness and reliability of the institution in terms of delivering its promise.

Even though credibility is a top ten issue in Zambia overall, accounting for 5% of all coded references, it seems to be an issue that does not affect public HEIs. As can be seen from Figures 4.3 and 4.4 above, the quotations frequency count shows that public HEIs did not rank this branding factor as a top ten issue. This is probably because all the public HEIs have been in existence for many decades; and given that they are government institutions, their long term survival is more or less guaranteed.

On the other hand, credibility of the institution seems to be of some concern to private universities. This is arguably because as stated above these institutions are relatively new. Potential students may therefore have less trust or belief in the institution's survival or indeed in the reliability, integrity or professional standing of its teaching staff. This fear was expressed by both students and private university respondents in the comments below:

Focus group discussant on what attracts students: 'I think also the, the whole issue is also on existence. When the institution has been there for a long time, you are also assured it will be there in the future. You would not want to get a qualification and tomorrow you hear that college is closed,

without anyone to make a reference for your qualification, because you know it closed but you have the qualification, so the existence, how long it has existed I think also helps us.’

Private HEI on queries from prospective students: ‘And also when it was established and how credible it is because a university can be registered by the Ministry of Education but if it is not credible then definitely students may not attempt to study with it. So usually they ask ‘Is this university registered by the Ministry of Education?’ Yes. ‘When was it registered?’

Private HEI: ‘So people ask ‘Where is he from?’ ‘From the University of Zambia’ because the name has been there for a very long time. But other universities that are still starting now, for example, this university, the first graduation is going to be on the 9th of December, on the 9th of November. People are not yet very sure of the products.’

4.3.9 Culture

This includes the overall culture of the HEI e.g. relations with students, relations amongst staff, attitudes to work, openness, customer-centric stance and prompt response to dealing with issues.

The culture within a HEI is generally viewed as an important branding issue in Zambia, being ranked as a top ten issue overall (see Figure 4.1 above) and also as a top ten issue by private HEIs (see Figure 4.5 above). This could be because the culture within a HEI, as defined above, has an impact on the learning process. The following responses from research participants illustrate this point:

Private HEI: ‘The culture of the university will either attract or send off some students ... They would like to see the lecturer not behaving as a headmaster, yea, that pupil teacher relationship, yea. They would like to see actually a culture of the student being seen more of a customer than just as students so the culture, corporate culture is very important.’

Focus group discussant: ‘The social culture of the institution; just starting from the administration you kind of build up a relationship with time with everybody so you are able to, as a student you are able to be comfortable as well.’

ZCAS interviewee: ‘... the factor of people in the service delivery plays a very critical role and one of it is that ehm, the culture that we have developed over the years is number one, it’s a culture of customer centric and we believe that a student is not only a student to us, he is a customer, because

that is how we get the money. Number two, I have seen that most of our culture in the organization is that of open door. You know, you don't really find a lot of students queuing, knocking, most of us our doors are open, students will always come in.'

4.3.10 Environment

The environment refers to the aura, climate, general feel of the university and how friendly and inviting members of staff are. It also includes physical aspects of the environment such as cleanliness, hygiene, the greens and general architecture.

The HEI environment is generally viewed as an important branding issue in Zambia, being ranked as a top ten issue overall (see Figure 4.1 above) and also as a top ten and top five issue by ZCAS staff and ZCAS students respectively (see Figures 4.2 and 4.4 respectively). ZCAS students who participated in the focus groups particularly cherish a good learning environment. For example, when asked what they valued most about the college, one focus group discussant said:

'Environment; it's different, yes, when you come to ZCAS ...' while another discussant said '...yea and the quality of the environment, yea sanitation.'

4.3.11 Reputation

The coding manual for this research defined the reputation of a HEI in terms of how famous the institution is as well as the esteem in which it is held by potential students and other stakeholders. Many factors affect the reputation of a HEI, including the status of its qualifications, the calibre and conduct of its staff, its international status, its contributions to society, the fame of its schools, its league table position and local and foreign accreditations.

Table 4.1 above shows that based on the coded quotations count, the importance of the reputation of a HEI as a factor that attracts potential students came in at number 11. Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 further indicate that ZCAS student focus group discussants, ZCAS staff interviewees and public university interview participants all ranked reputation in the top ten category based on the number of coded quotations or references to this factor. The

issue of reputation was also brought up by all but three of the research participants (see Appendix 10). A review of the references to reputation shows that all participants concurred on the positive impact of reputation in attracting potential students to a HEI as illustrated in the following quotations from the different groups of research participants:

Focus group discussant: 'I think the most important factor, one of the most important factors is the reputation of the university on its own. As in ehm you know if it is reputed you know that maybe after a particular, after the course ends you know that there'll be companies that will come pick you up if you want a job ...'

ZCAS interviewee: 'I mean using my own experience, uh, I think what I think attracts students is to start with the reputation of the institution, ehm, that one is a key.'

Private HEI on what attracts students: 'Also the name of the university and in terms of its existence how long it has been on the ground and its reputation.'

Public HEI on reputation: 'Yes, it is a major factor that some of these you know nearly all the students take into consideration because you know a student would not want to enroll in a particular institution ehm two, three down the line before that before that student can graduate, that institution goes under. There've been a few private colleges which have gone under, so that is very, very important; and like I said earlier on ehm the human resource, those who are in teaching they actually contribute to the reputation of the university.'

The reputation of an institution is a significant branding issue in Zambia because a good reputation has a signaling effect and can be used as a beacon for attracting potential students. Several research participants alluded to why the reputation of a college or university is important. These include:

1. Employment prospects: '...if it is reputed you know that maybe after a particular, after the course ends you know that there'll be companies that will come pick you up if you want a job ...'
2. Quality service: '... when you coming to a place like ZCAS it's well known to provide quality education and then good, good services as well as books and stuff to use ...'
3. High pass rates: '... has a great reputation. It's known for producing, you know, excellent, you know, results...'

4. Long term success in industry: ‘...and you see UNZA is an institution whereby those who would want to come here would be able to say this minister was at UNZA, this director passed through UNZA, this person passed through, this priest passed through UNZA, this reverend passed through UNZA so it has that reputation’
5. Good management of the institution: ‘... please I want my child to come because there are few closures here ...’
6. Long term viability of HEI: ‘because you know a student would not want to enroll in a particular institution ehm two, three down the line before that, before that student can graduate, that institution goes under.’

4.3.12 Pass rates

Pass rates refer to the percentage of candidates who manage to pass their exams at each exam session. It is more relevant to professional courses such as CFA, ACCA, CIMA, CIM and CIPS that generally have lower pass rates than degree programmes. It may reflect the quality of teaching in a HEI.

Figure 4.4 above indicates that ZCAS interview participants regard pass rates as a significant branding factor, ranking it as a top five issue. Equally, ZCAS students suggested, from the frequency of references to this factor, that they take pass rates seriously when choosing colleges or universities to go to (see Figure 4.2 where they placed it as number 6 in the coded quotations frequency count). However, the overall view seems to be that pass rates are not a significant issue that marketing executives take into account. Other than ZCAS, there were only two other institutions in which this issue was raised and even then there were only four references to pass rates from those two interview participants out of the total 39 coded quotations in the interview and focus group transcripts (see Appendix 10).

As suggested in the coding manual (see Appendix 5) pass rates are of more concern to students taking professional exams than degree programmes because the progression rate is generally much lower for the former than for students studying for degree programmes. ZCAS traditionally offers more professional courses than degree programmes and this

could explain the importance of pass rates to ZCAS staff and students. However, even though pass rates are important to ZCAS and could damage its reputation if there was a significant decline, they are not a pervasive branding issue in Zambia. It could also be argued that pass rates are more of an indicator of the quality of teaching than a stand-alone branding issue.

4.3.13 Location

Location refers to where the HEI is located e.g. in the city centre or outskirts of town. It also refers to the HEI's proximity to transport systems such as bus and train stations as well as the prospective student's home.

Based on the number of references in the interview and focus group transcripts, location is a top 15 branding issue in Zambia (see Table 4.1 above). There were also references to this factor in all but one of the interview and focus group transcripts (see Appendix 10), even though many of these were not brought up by the respondents initially, but arose when the interviewees were prompted to comment on its importance.

Further analysis of the actual coded quotations reveals that there was no consensus on the specific HEI location perceived to be more desirable to potential students. Some interviewees whose institutions are located in remote locations saw this as an ideal learning environment while those in the heart of town thought their location was more favourable on the basis of easy transportation. A comparison of the following sentiments illustrates this lack of consensus:

HEI in city centre close to bus stop: 'Our location is also good and in terms of transport connections. See we are very close to Kulima tower here. So all the students want to drop here and just walk in and then go back, you see. Even in the evening those who are not mobile they have no challenge with that issue... So that is also an advantage.'

HEI in remote location: 'And also our setting its natural serene environment; we are isolated almost 26 kilometers from the main town. It's quiet in the woodlands, anyone who is seriously considering studies they have no excuse to make. The disturbance is minimal, yea.'

HEI near city centre: 'It matters, for us it matters we are what we are today because largely also due to where we are, the location, we are in the central business district; we are within reach of most of these facilities transport, ok. I think the location is great for ZCAS, yea'.

HEI in remote location: 'Ehm geographical location to me really I don't think it does matter, yea. I think from my own analysis I think it doesn't. Mainly what students are looking forward to is an institution that offer them quality education. And like we've just been talking about at times some will also want to look at the development of that particular institution infrastructure-wise, but in terms of geographical location I don't think it really matters a lot because for instance in this university we actually have students from, from Zambia we have got students from all parts of the country.'

HEI near city centre: 'You convince the potential client that we have got the benefits that you need; definitely people will take that effort to travel and see you. We see people coming all the way from Solwezi, we see people coming all the way from Copperbelt, specifically to see us whether we are credible as we portray outside Lusaka. So from that we have realised that of course that cannot be the main factor. I can give you one example; there are other universities right now in Lusaka West. The distance from, people are going to Lusaka West because of the infrastructure that they have put up, they have distinguished themselves to be credible university and people are able to follow them so really the physical infrastructure, the geographical infrastructure can play a part but not significantly that can deter students or potential students'.

The lack of consensus on the most suitable location of a HEI implies that even though potential students consider this factor when choosing a university or college, it is not a very important consideration in the Zambian context. As suggested by the last two respondents above, it is possible that potential students trade or sacrifice location for other more essential branding elements.

4.3.14 Timely completion or course duration

This branding element refers to whether students can complete their studies as scheduled. This is an issue in government funded HEIs where courses may take longer than scheduled to complete due to unplanned closures, student riots, staff boycotts, and political interference. These events disrupt studies, resulting in extension or even cancellation of an academic year.

With only 31 references out of the total 1, 021 (3%) coded quotations, course duration/timely completion came in at number 14 in the quotations frequency count table (see Table 4.1 above). An analysis of the quotations frequency count, including student focus groups, shows that only public universities consider this factor to be a top ten branding issue (see Figures 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 above). This is understandable because most of the HEIs in Zambia are run as full commercial entities and are therefore unlikely to be affected by politically motivated disruptions to their academic calendars. Disruption of the academic calendar seems to be of more concern to government funded public universities (of which there are currently only two) than the rest mainly due to political interference. It therefore seems fair to conclude that this factor does not currently preoccupy most of the marketing executives or potential students in the HE decision process in Zambia.

However, the significance of this factor may increase because the government is currently constructing several public universities across the country. These universities will be publicly funded; hence the political interference that characterizes the current public universities may also afflict these new institutions, resulting in courses taking longer than scheduled.

4.3.15 Collaborations

These include partnerships and MOUs an HEI enters into with local and foreign organisations. These academic agreements are mostly with other HEIs and educational professional bodies.

With only 30 references out of the total 1, 021 (2.9%) coded quotations, collaborations came in at number 15 in the quotations frequency count table (see Table 4.1 above). On this basis it is unlikely to be considered as an essential branding issue in Zambia. However, private universities ranked it in the top ten branding factors in Zambia, going by the number of references to this factor (see Figure 4.5). This could be because they consider collaborations as a sign of recognition by other institutions. This can be inferred from one private university interviewee who said:

‘... and especially we see that because of the way universities, the outside universities the way they are courting us, you know, the way they are inviting us and so on. So far we have made a lot of exchanges we have had a lot of visiting professors young as we are, you know to us that’s a lot of potential, you know because once universities especially renowned universities from abroad and so on when they begin to court you and they want to show interest in you ... and that we have even signed a memorandum of understanding to us it shows that you see we have, we have potential, yes’.

4.3.16 Learning materials

These include text books, revision materials and hand-outs. Consideration is also given to how soon these materials are made available to students upon enrolment into the university programme.

Learning materials are not a top ten issue in Zambia overall (see Figure 4.1 above). None of the family categories put this factor in the top ten branding factors either (see Figures 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 above). In fact learning materials were not mentioned by more than half of the respondents, implying that both students and HEI marketing executives are not pre-occupied with this factor.

4.3.17 Safety and security

This branding element denotes safety and security of students as well as their property whilst on campus.

Safety and security does not seem to be a significant issue that students consider when making HE choices. There were only 17 references to this factor in all the interview and focus group transcripts. Except for one focus group discussion in which this issue was raised by the research participants, all references to safety and security were in response to a specific interview question that required respondents to specifically comment on this issue. This implies that safety and security neither pre-occupies potential students during the HE decision nor HEI marketing executives during their strategy formulation and implementation. This view is supported by three ZCAS respondents who made the

following observations when queried on the importance of this issue in the HE decision process:

‘In the, ok my experience in the Zambian context it is subconsciously considered but it doesn't come out very strongly, as a factor to consider when selecting a university or college’.

‘The challenge is ok these are minor issues, ehm safety and security can only come into a place of infrastructure, if the institution has got infrastructure then they can come in, but it is not, it is not a strong point for many applicants ...’

‘Yea, it does especially for students that will come from may be other towns to come and study at ZCAS, boarders, especially for boarders yes (...) but it is not a very significant factor.’

Safety and security is not a significant element in the HE choice decision in Zambia probably because the country is generally peaceful, with a low crime rate. This was alluded to by one focus group participant who said:

‘I think personal security generally around Zambia it's quite safe.’

4.3.18 Ease of entry

Ease of entry into the university in terms of being enrolled into a course was the second least referred to code category with only nine quotations from five interview respondents in five tertiary institutions. None of the focus group discussants raised this issue arguably because at ZCAS - just like the other HEIs that charge commercial fees with no government bursary available to students - entry restrictions are either non-existent or at the barest minimum.

Currently there are only two public universities where students can obtain a government bursary towards the cost of their education. These universities receive numerous applications from prospective students and therefore have entry restrictions to their programmes. Students intending to study at these universities undoubtedly consider ease of entry. On the basis that many other potential students intending to enroll into the other HEIs do not consider ease of entry since entry restrictions hardly exist, this factor does not seem to be a significant branding issue in Zambia.

4.3.19 Graduation ceremony

This refers to whether the HEI holds graduation ceremonies. This issue seems to apply only to ZCAS which provides tuition but does not offer its own programmes. It was the least referred to of all branding factors with only three quotations from ZCAS respondents (see Appendix 10). It is therefore not considered as a significant branding issue in Zambia.

4.4 Sources of competitive advantage

Questions 1.15 to 1.19 of the HE marketing/brand management experts' interview guide were used, as appropriate, to find out what HE marketing executives and other research participants thought their institutions' competitive advantages were (see Appendix 4). As can be seen in the research results tabulated in Table 4.2 below, competitive advantages were perceived in terms of the factors that attract students to universities and colleges.

Based on the number of references in the interview and focus group transcripts, the top four factors identified as sources of competitive advantage were course availability, teaching quality, facilities and infrastructure. Apart from infrastructure, the other three sources of competitive advantage also came out as top five issues for students (see Figure 4.2 above). This implies that there is a reasonable match between potential students' expectations and what HEIs in Zambia are focusing on as sources of competitive advantage. The top four sources of competitive advantage are further discussed below.

Table 4.2 Perceived Sources of competitive advantage for HEI in Zambia														
SI no.	Branding element	Total quotations	% of total	Primary Documents										
1	Course availability	11	21%	7	11	17	19	23	27	31	35	37	43	45
2	Teaching quality	8	15%	11	13	17	21	25	29	31	33			
3	Facilities	6	11%	9	17	21	23	27	33					
4	Infrastructure	5	9%	13	17	21	25	27						
5	Fees	3	5%	31	37	43								
6	Employability	3	5%	9	23	31								
7	Credibility	3	5%	15	29	35								
8	Learning materials	2	4%	9	19									
9	Collaborations	2	4%	13	27									
10	Recognition	2	4%	15	43									
11	Location	2	4%	23	27									
12	Culture	1	2%	15										
13	Reputation	1	2%	17										
14	Pass rates	1	2%	25										
15	Course duration	1	2%	31										
16	Ease of entry	1	2%	43										

4.4.1 Course availability

As shown in Figure 4.6 below course availability was rated as the most common source of competitive advantage in the HE sector in Zambia with 21% of the total quotations from eleven of the twenty interview participants (see Table 4.2 above). Most of those who identified this factor thought that either their wide range of courses or their unique course content gave them a competitive edge in the HE market in Zambia. The following direct quotes from the interviews illustrate this:

Public university: ‘... what is unique about our programmes is that they are market driven’

Private university: ‘... and in the tourism and hospitality school it's more or less like we have no competition, yea, so that is giving us a lot of competitive advantage, new products in an old market, yea...’.

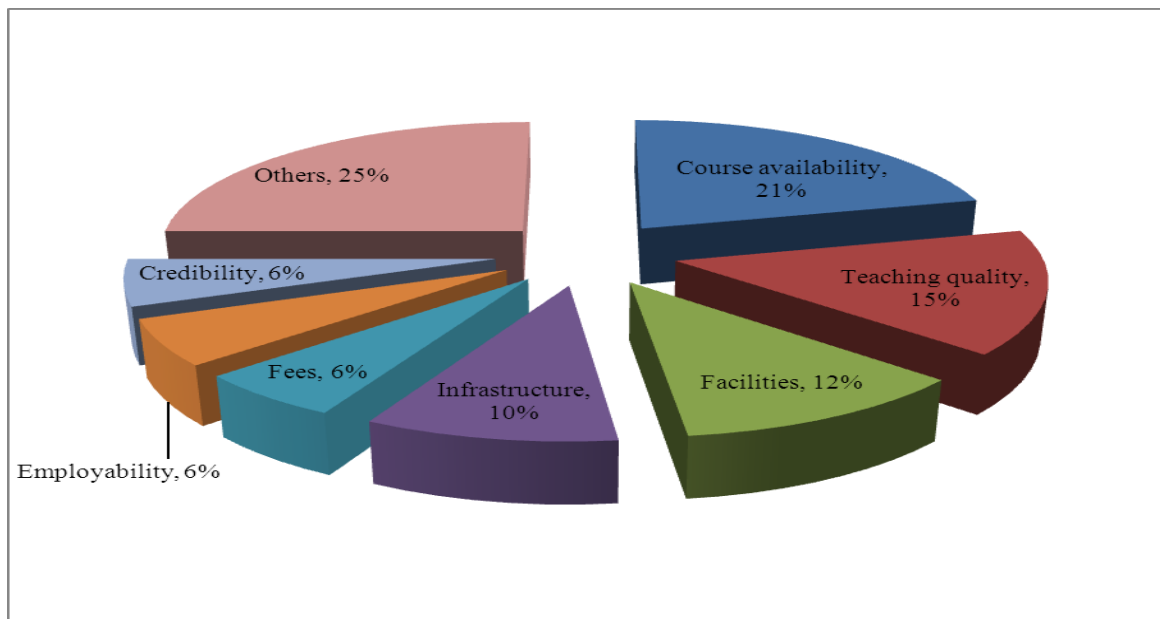
Another private university interview participant said:

‘We've had a bit more of emphasis there on the aspect of Christian education because that is one area that also makes us a bit unique, ok, that makes us a bit unique; like in the, for instance, in the public if you go there to study your programmes, say you are going to study biology you'll just be

restricted to biology, but here you can come for mathematics or any other, I mean humanities or social programme, but you'll still be exposed to do some theological courses.'

Figure 4.2 in Section 4.3 above shows that student focus group participants consider course availability to be a top five issue. This implies that there is a match in respect of course availability between potential students' expectations and what HEIs in Zambia are focusing on as a source of competitive advantage, making this factor a very significant branding issue in the Zambian HE sector.

Figure 4.6 Sources of competitive advantage in the HE sector in Zambia



4.4.2 Teaching quality

Teaching quality was considered to be the second most important source of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE sector, going by the number of references (see Figure 4.6 above). The competitive advantage in this respect arises due to not only scarcity of teaching staff with very high qualifications and experience but also the motivation and commitment of such personnel. One interviewee summed this up when he said:

‘So innovation and the calibre of your teaching staff, the qualifications of your teaching staff, the research areas your teaching staff are getting involved in is also quite key...’

As discussed in Sub-section 4.3.1 above, teaching quality was identified as the most important branding issue in the Zambian higher education sector based on the numerous references to this factor during the interviews and focus group discussions. This finding is reinforced by the extent to which this factor is exploited to competitive advantage by HEIs as discussed above.

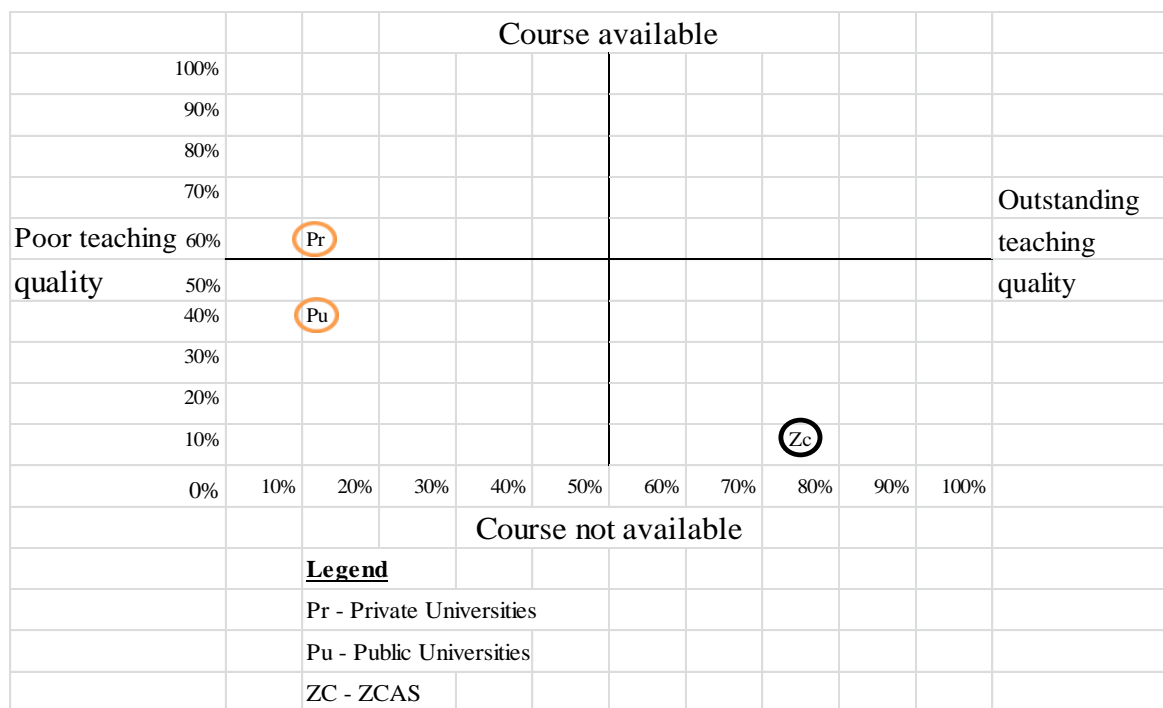
Teaching quality is likely to remain a significant competitive advantage and perhaps even a sustainable one in the short to medium term due to increasing demand for high calibre teaching staff in Zambia. This is not only because of the exponential increase in the number of private universities following enactment of the Universities Act of 1999, but also the on-going construction of new public universities by the government, both of which require teaching staff. The loss of teaching staff or ‘brain drain’ as explained in Sub-section 1.2.1 of Chapter 1 may also continue to contribute to the increasing demand for high calibre teaching staff.

Figure 4.7 below is a perceptual map of the interview respondents’ views on course availability and teaching quality as sources of competitive advantage grouped by type of institution (i.e. private universities, public universities and ZCAS). As for the perceptual map in Figure 4.8 below, the diagram is a simple manual graphic display. The percentages represent the proportion of respondents who identified the attribute as their source of competitive advantage.

The map suggests that marketing executives in private and public universities do not consider teaching quality as a major source of competitive advantage despite having more qualified teaching staff than ZCAS (at least in terms of doctorate qualifications). The reason could be that having qualifications and/or experience is not enough; the attitude of teaching staff, the culture within the university and the level of customer-centrism may play a bigger role in how this factor is exploited as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. ZCAS seems to be doing quite well on this factor because, as can also be seen

from Table 4.1 above, both students and staff made more references to teaching quality than any other factor.

Figure 4.7 Perceptual map for marketing executives' sources of competitive advantage (course availability vs. teaching quality)



With respect to course availability, it is evident that both public universities (36% of quotations) and private universities (56% of quotations) consider their broad range of degree programmes as a major source of their competitive edge. The reverse is true for ZCAS staff, with only 9% of the quotations. This is understandable because even though ZCAS offers high profile courses, the number of courses is limited as the college has no mandate to offer its own degree programmes.

4.4.3 Facilities and infrastructure

Facilities and infrastructure are discussed together because HEIs face similar challenges in dealing with these factors. As shown in Figure 4.6 above references to facilities as a source of competitive advantage accounted for 12% (10% for infrastructure) of all quotations on

sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE sector. Acquiring infrastructure and learning facilities is a challenge that many Zambian HEIs face, especially newly established private universities, due to the substantial financial resources involved. This challenge was raised by several research participants:

ZCAS interviewee: ‘They are not easy; most of them are very costly. You need to have reached a certain, for example, to put up a free access internet facilities ehm for many students, state of the art, it's very expensive ... look at how much it has costed us there, about \$15 million. These are, you know, 21st century lecture theaters which we are calling excellent teaching facilities. Ehm very few institutions in Zambia can put up such, just that cost and of course to put up a video conferencing facility you know about ehm the whole, the total cost was about five hundred thousand dollars, just one facility ...’

Private HEI: ‘...we don't have our own place at the moment but as I have already alluded to we are having, we'll soon be having our own. So at the moment I can imagine if we had our own boarding facilities, our own ehm never ending classrooms or something (laughter) I think definitely that would be a big success and it would add big, big value ...’

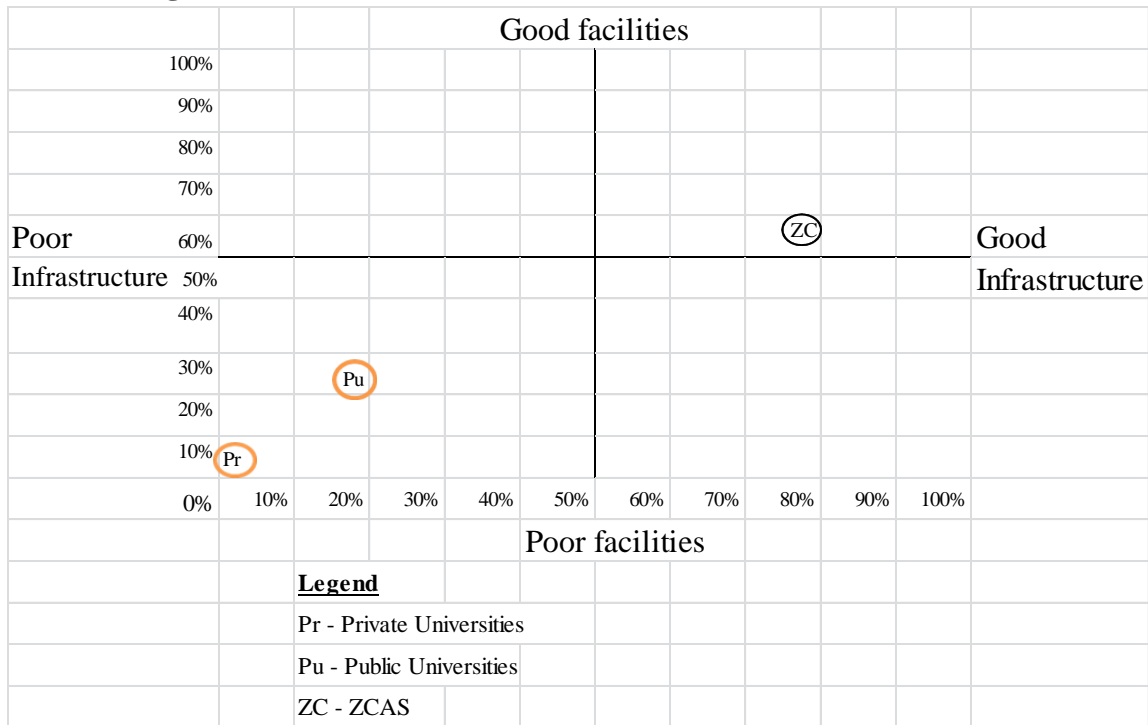
Private HEI: ‘So looking on that factor it means universities have got similar and global problems when it comes to financing. They want to expand, look at ourselves here; these are not our permanent structures; we need to have our own structures, so we are limited by factors of not having adequate funds. So that is a major factor of expansion, of expanding ...’

The financial challenges that HEIs face as raised above, coupled with the fact that potential students are very concerned with facilities (rating it as their number two main concern as shown in Figure 4.2 in Section 4.3 above) imply that Zambian HEIs that exploit their facilities and infrastructure are likely to gain real competitive advantage at least in the short to medium term. In the long term however, competitive advantages arising from these factors may decline because the researcher noticed, from visits to the participating HEIs, that several of them had either recently set up new infrastructure and/or facilities or were in the process of doing so.

With respect to facilities and infrastructure, ZCAS has just completed a major infrastructure project that has doubled capacity and seen modern facilities such as video conference, e-library and computer labs being installed. It is no wonder, therefore, that ZCAS interview participants perceived infrastructure (80% of quotations) and facilities (67% of quotations) as major sources of competitive advantage for the college. Figure 4.8

below is a perceptual map of marketing executives' perceptions of facilities and infrastructure as sources of competitive advantage illustrates this point.

Figure 4.8 Perceptual map for marketing executives' sources of competitive advantage (facilities versus infrastructure)



4.5 Information sources

A synthesis of the literature review and thematic analysis of the first research phase data identified 10 sources of information that potential students consult when making higher education choices in Zambia. These sources are shown in Table 4.3 below in descending order starting with the one that was referred to most in the interview and focus group transcripts. Each of these HE information sources is discussed further below.

4.5.1 Print media

In the Zambian context the research revealed that print media refers almost exclusively to adverts in local newspapers as none of the research participants mentioned any other form of print media.

Table 4.3 Frequency of information sources in PDs

		Private HEI	Public HEI	ZCAS Staff SSI	ZCAS Students FGD	Total quotations	% of total
1	Print media	9	2	15	10	36	15%
2	Friends and alumni	7	1	10	16	34	15%
3	Education expos	5	11	12	5	33	14%
4	Electronic media	11	3	14	5	33	14%
5	School visitations	3	6	19	4	32	14%
6	Internet	8	4	11	7	30	13%
7	Admissions office/HEI	2	2	3	6	13	6%
8	Word of mouth	4	1	6	1	12	5%
9	Relatives information	2	0	1	5	8	3%
10	Billboards	0	0	1	1	2	1%
	Total quotations	51	30	92	60	233	100%
	% of total	22%	13%	39%	26%	100%	

As shown in Table 4.3 above, there were more references to the print media as the most commonly used information source than any other, accounting for just over 15% of all quotations (see Figure 4.9 below). Additionally, three of the four family categories namely students, private HEIs and ZCAS staff ‘rated’ print media as a top three information source, based on the number of quotations in the interview and focus group transcripts (see Figures 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 below).

Newspapers seem to be the preferred medium probably because of their perceived wider reach. For example, one private HEI interviewee claimed to have carried out research on information sources which identified a local newspaper as being the most effective:

‘We have done our research, the most effective and the most popular with high coverage is *The Post*, despite they are very expensive.’;

Another focus group participant said:

‘For me I think ZCAS can use television, radio and newspapers to reach a wider audience compared to the audience they would reach if they move place to place advertising, I think it would even be more expensive.’

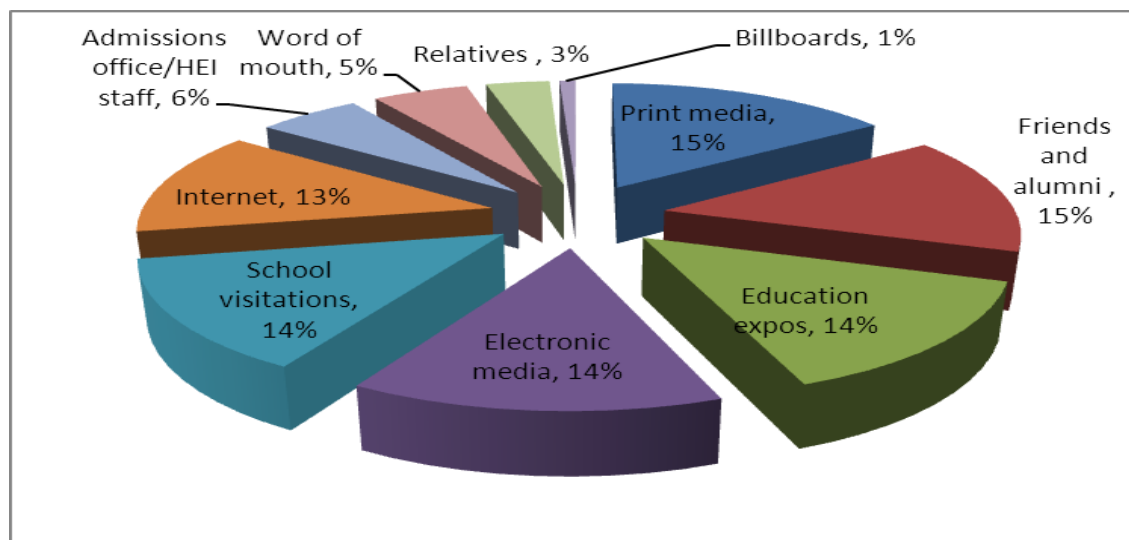
The significance HEIs attach to print media was demonstrated in various ways during the research. For instance, a public HEI interviewee said they allocate more financial resources to newspaper adverts than other media:

‘Yea, my budget ehm actually unfortunately has a lot of, about 60% is print media, ehm no actually about, about 40% is print media about 20% is broad cast, and the rest is school visitations and seminars, yea’.

Another private HEI made the following observation when asked what they thought the most consulted information source was:

‘Information sources, I feel very much the press ehm, newspapers and I have seen a lot of more institutions private are going to the newspapers.’

Figure 4.9 Frequency of information sources in interview and focus group transcripts



4.5.2 Friends and alumni

References to existing and former students of a HEI as sources of information were quoted under this code. With 15% of the quotations, friends and alumni had nearly as many quotations as the print media as a source of information in Zambia (see Figure 4.9 above). More interestingly is perhaps the suggestion in Figure 4.10 below (based on the number of quotations) that potential students mostly obtain information from current and former students of a college or university. When asked to rate the information sources they consulted, the focus groups unanimously mentioned current and existing students as their number one source of information about colleges and universities.

The popularity of existing and former students as a source of information for potential students seems to stem from the perception that they are trustworthy and have first-hand information:

FGD1: ‘...but usually it's from people that are within the system and have experienced the service. They are the ones that give most of the information.’

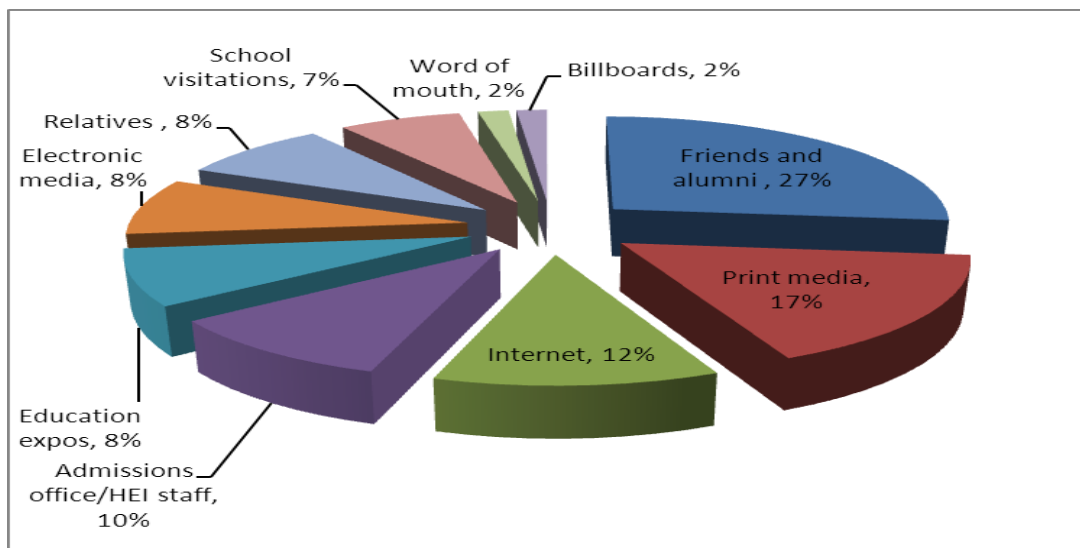
FGD2: ‘That's the only way we learn about an institution, you can advertise and do all sorts of publicity but as long as the people who have been there don't say good things about an institution it's very difficult for others to come.’

FGD1: ‘Ehm they are the ones that are in the best position to tell you the negatives and the positive side of ZCAS. The student admin will always, will paint (laughter, all) ZCAS as in pink and everything you, an attractive way of doing it but the friends will tell you who is who and what ZCAS is all about.’

4.5.3 Education expos

These were defined as face to face exhibitions carried out by HEIs at various public fora. They include career fairs, trade shows, public shows and open days conducted on campus. Education expos are a popular medium for providing information to potential students and their influencers in Zambia, with 14% of all quotations attributed to this information source. Both students’ and HE marketers’ responses indicate that they consider education expos as an effective means of communication. As shown in Figures 4.10, 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13 all parties ‘ranked’ education expos as a top five information source in Zambia.

Figure 4.10 Frequency of information sources by ZCAS students



The popularity of education expos can be attributed to their interactive nature and ability to engage potential students and their influencers simultaneously. The face to face interaction enhances communication and enables feedback to be obtained instantly. The following quotes illustrate these advantages:

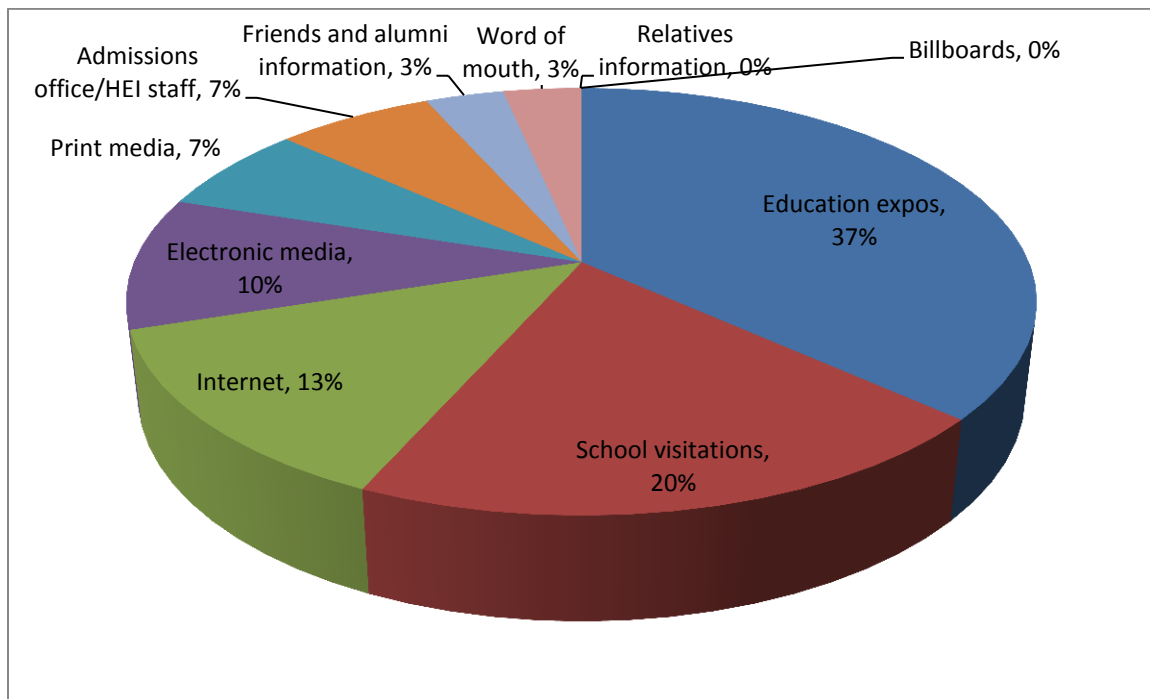
Private university: ‘Ehm, what we do is we try to engage them as much as we can especially during the ehm these activities where we can interact with them. For instance I’ll take the issue of the show, the trade fair, we try as much as we can to engage those who are able to influence others’

Public university: ‘...we met some people at the trade fair and they were saying they still want their children to come to this university. So for us it was good feedback that then we are doing well.’

ZCAS interviewee: ‘...and all those that want to get information, recruitments and everything then we do a representation there. Now those usually we are inviting both the school leavers and those that want to come with their parents’

ZCAS interviewee: ‘...open days, yea, because you invite parents to come along as well, so if the parents come along they will be able to help their children with the decision because these days some students don't seem to have a decision to make...’

Figure 4.11 Frequency of information sources by public universities in Zambia



4.5.4 Electronic media

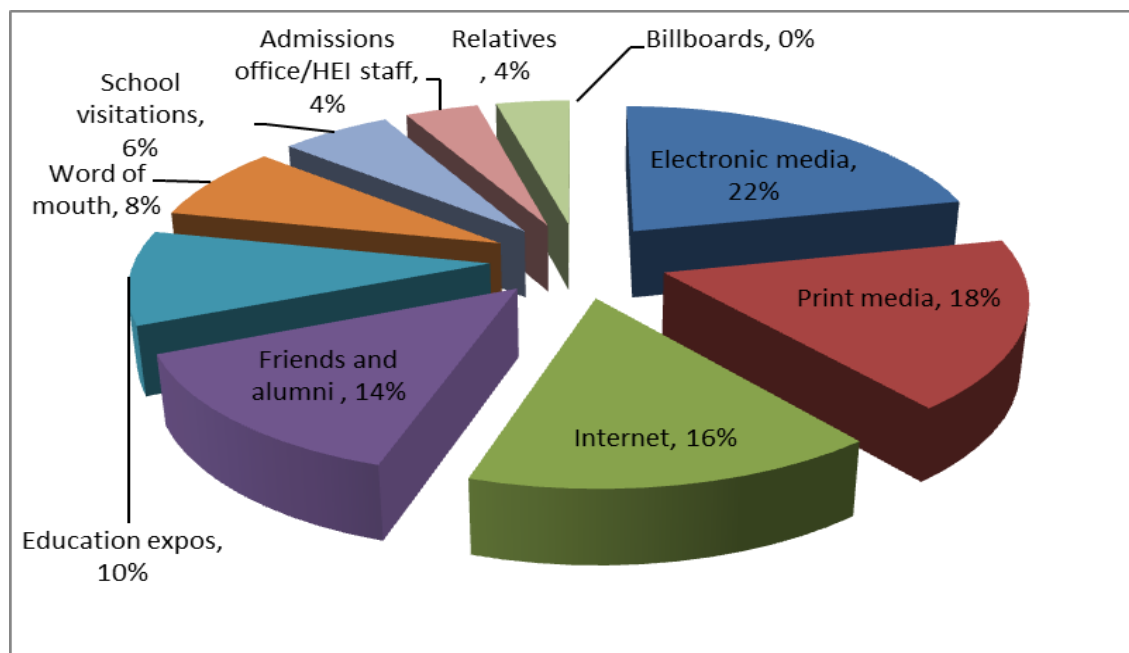
Thematic analysis of the data revealed that the most common electronic media used in Zambia was television and radio. Like education expos, this medium came in third place with 14% of the references on information sources. However, this medium was mentioned by more participants (20 of the 23 as shown in Appendix 11) than any other medium, suggesting that it is more widely used in the country. In particular, private universities made numerous references to TV and radio as means of reaching their potential students, thereby ranking it in first place on the quotations count (see Figure 4.12 below). However, as shown in Figure 4.10 above where electronic media is in sixth place, students do not seem to agree with private universities on the role of electronic media as a source of information used by the former in the HE choice decisions.

The difference in perception about the importance of TV and radio between students and private universities could be explained by examining the objectives of the communication. As stated above most of the private universities in Zambia are relatively new; hence they could be using short adverts on TV and radio to raise awareness of their institutions and offerings. On the other hand, potential students need much more detailed information for decision making than that provided in the electronic media. Students are therefore unlikely

to view the electronic media as an important information source to them. For example, despite seeing a TV advert, one focus group discussant said:

‘I first got the advert I think that was on TV about ZCAS ... I didn't know so much about ZCAS until I saw that advert and then a friend of mine had been here so I asked him, then he gave me all the details’

Figure 4.12 Frequency of information sources by private universities in Zambia



4.5.5 School visitations

Based on the number of quotations in the interview and focus group transcripts, school visitations are a top five information source in Zambia (see Table 4.3 and Figure 4.9 above). However, while public universities and ZCAS staff rate school visitations highly based on the number of quotations in the interview and focus group transcripts (see Figures 4.11 and 4.13), ZCAS students and private universities think otherwise (see Figures 4.10 and 4.12).

The lack of agreement on the role of school visitations as a communication medium could be due to historical reasons. ZCAS and the public universities have been in existence for more than twenty years and school visitations are a routine part of their annual calendar,

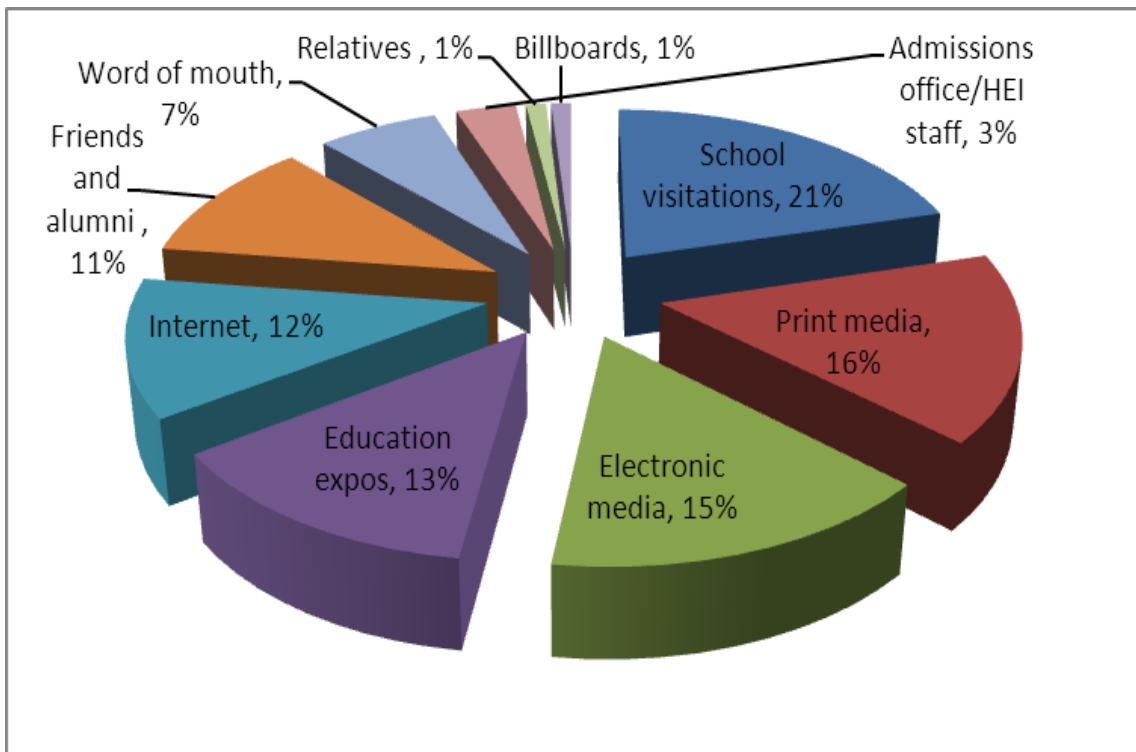
with most of the interviewees getting involved in this activity. On the other hand, private universities and ZCAS students are relatively new to the Zambian HE sector; hence their views on school visitations may reflect current thinking and not traditional practice. Within ZCAS for example, there were conflicting views on the most effective communication medium. The marketer’s point of view reflects traditional practice:

‘I feel the most effective so far for me have been what I would group as direct marketing either school visitations or open seminars.’;

While the admissions officer’s views reflect the reality on the ground:

‘For ZCAS the most effective one has been the, the most effective one has been the friends. Yea, that one has been more effective than, because even when you ask the students ‘How did you come to know about ZCAS?’ most of them they will say ‘friends’, most of them.’

Figure 4.13 Frequency of information sources by ZCAS staff



4.5.6 Internet

For the purposes of this research ‘internet’ was used to code references to a HEI’s website and social media such as Facebook (see Appendix 5).

As shown in Figures 4.10, 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13, all the four family categories (i.e. ZCAS students, public universities, private universities and ZCAS staff) ‘ranked’ the internet as a top five information source. Overall this communication medium came in sixth place in the quotations frequency count (see Table 4.3 above).

The internet has great potential as a means of providing information to existing and prospective students. Many research participants alluded to this view when they observed the growing use of the internet and social networking websites, especially amongst the youth. Their views are illustrated in the quotes below:

‘Use Facebook (concurring, murmuring, all) because you find everyone, every youth has a Facebook page...’

‘Even the internet nowadays because many people are on the net and may be social //networking cites.//’.

‘If you look at the internet well yes the kind of students that we have now are known as, are referred to generally as the y-generation they are keen to things like you know technology so they want something that can quickly, just probably also land on their phones’.

However, many tertiary institutions in Zambia are struggling to use this medium effectively. For instance, one ZCAS interviewee lamented that the institution had not yet provided sufficient information on the website and that the website was not interactive. Many other interviewees had similar lamentations.

4.5.7 Admissions office/HEI staff

With only 6% of the quotations on information sources (see Figure 4.9 above), using admissions office and other staff in the institution to disseminate information does not seem to be a very effective marketing communications strategy. Based on the number of times admissions office/HEI staff were mentioned as sources of information, both public

and private HEIs do not seem to use these resources (see Figures 4.11 and 4.12 respectively). However, students seem to use this source quite extensively, rating it as a top four information source, based on the number of references to it (see Figure 4.10 above). This mismatch may suggest that college/university staff do not appreciate the role they play in marketing their institutions.

4.5.8 Word of mouth

During the coding, ‘word of mouth’ was used to code quotations in which information was verbally passed from one person to another, but the sender’s status or relationship to the potential student or influencer (such as parent, friend, relative, staff etc.) was not specifically mentioned. This may explain why there are relatively fewer quotations on this communication medium. Practically speaking, information verbally communicated by current students, former students and relatives could be considered to be word of mouth communication. The distinction was deliberately made to identify specific parties that communicate by word of mouth in order to establish their effectiveness for marketing purposes.

4.5.9 Relatives

Relatives comprised parents, siblings, uncles, aunties and the wider extended family as defined in the coding manual (see Appendix 5). As shown in Table 4.3 above relying on relatives is the second least popular means of disseminating information to potential students. This should be understandable for two reasons. Firstly relatives are not agents of the institution and the institution can hardly do anything to encourage them to disseminate information (e.g. as compared to admissions office or other HEI staff). Secondly, unless the relative to the potential student is a former/current student of the institution or unless they are close, it is unlikely that they will deliberately disseminate information about the institution.

4.5.10 Billboards

As shown in Appendix 11 billboards were the least popular information source with only one focus group and one HE marketer referring to them. This could be because of the high expense involved and their limited ability to reach a wider audience. The only HE marketer who mentioned billboards lamented as follows:

‘... again the problem with billboards is very expensive. One billboard to run it, again billboards you know it's the impact is based on the longer it stays on the street, you can't put a billboard and remove it in three months, the impact would be nothing, you would have just wasted money ...’

4.6 Influencers of student choice of HEI

A synthesis of the literature review and thematic analysis of the first research phase data identified eight influencers of student choice of higher education institutions and courses in Zambia. These influencers are shown in Table 4.4 below in descending order starting with the influencer who was referred to most in the interview and focus group transcripts. The information in this table suggests that the three most prolific influencers of student HE choice in Zambia are the HEI's current or former friends of the potential student, parents of the prospective student and the potential students themselves. Each of the influencers of student choice is discussed further below.

4.6.1 Friends and alumni

This category was used to code quotations referring to existing and/or former students of a HEI as influencers of potential students.

		Private HEI	Public HEI	ZCAS Staff SSI	ZCAS Students FGD	Total quotations	% of total
1	Friends and alumni influence	13	3	14	7	37	27%
2	Parents	9	4	14	4	31	22%
3	Students/self	7	2	8	8	25	18%
4	Career masters	3	2	5	1	11	8%
5	Sponsors	2	2	5	2	11	8%
6	Relatives influence	2	1	1	6	10	7%
7	Employment market	0	0	2	6	8	6%
8	University agents	0	0	4	1	5	4%
	Total quotations	36	14	53	35	138	100%
	% of total	26%	10%	38%	25%	100%	

As shown in Figure 4.14 below former and current students of a college or university exert the greatest influence overall on potential students with 27% of the quotes mentioning them. Based on the frequency with which they were mentioned, private university marketing executives and ZCAS staff also think that former and current students are the most assertive influencers of student HE choices in Zambia (see Figures 4.16 and 4.17 respectively). The pervasive influence of former and existing students of a college or university on potential students is also reflected in the fact that all first research phase participants, except one interviewee, identified them as influencers (see Appendix 12).

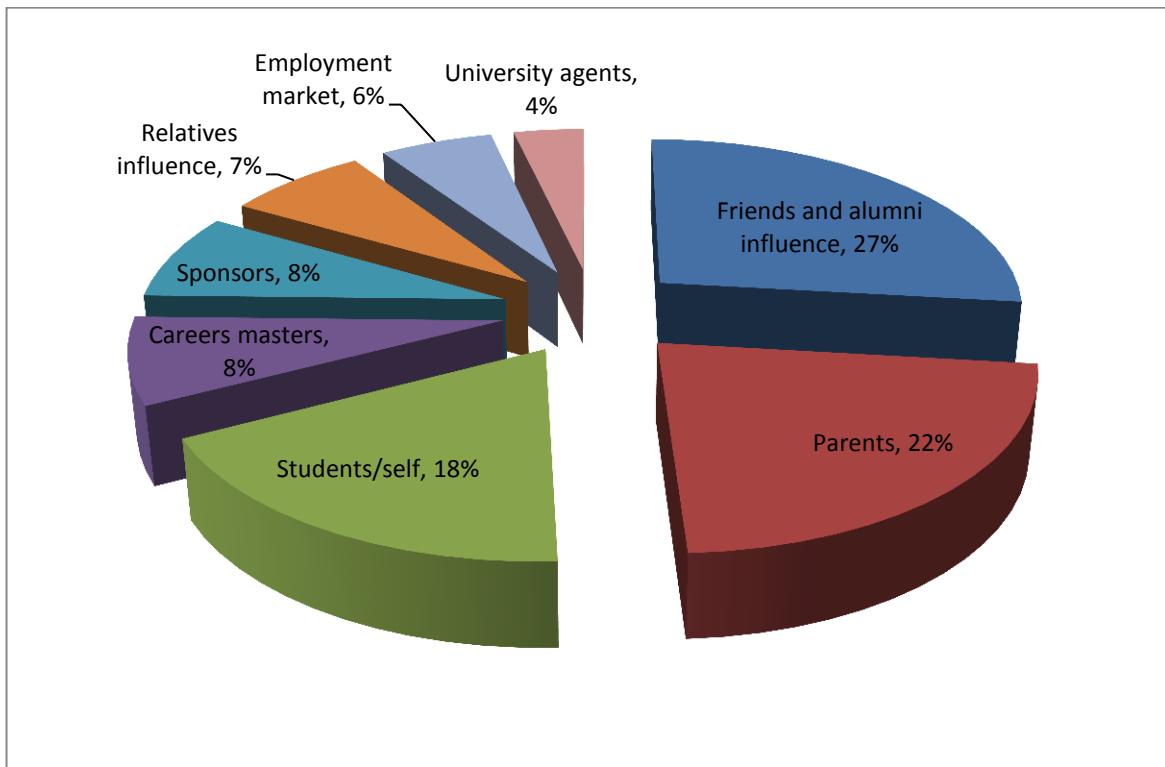
This is not surprising because of the two most commonly used information sources (i.e. print media and friends/alumni as shown in Table 4.3 of Section 4.5 above) friends and alumni are the more interactive. Additionally as suggested in Subsection 4.5.2 above, potential students seem to trust and believe that former and current students of a HEI are information rich. It is therefore plausible to suppose that potential students have significant interactions with the HEI's former and existing students and consequently get influenced to join that institution. Several research participants alluded to this:

‘On that you just get more morale from friends who have been there. They tell about the school, they tell you how popular the school is, so you just want to be there’.

'I think it is the friends'

'Ehm I think ehm the major influencer of many students in ... ehm, colleagues, yea. As I said when you register a student he sees what he is studying, he appreciates what he is doing he starts now influencing other students ...'

Figure 4.14 Frequency of influencers in interview and focus group transcripts

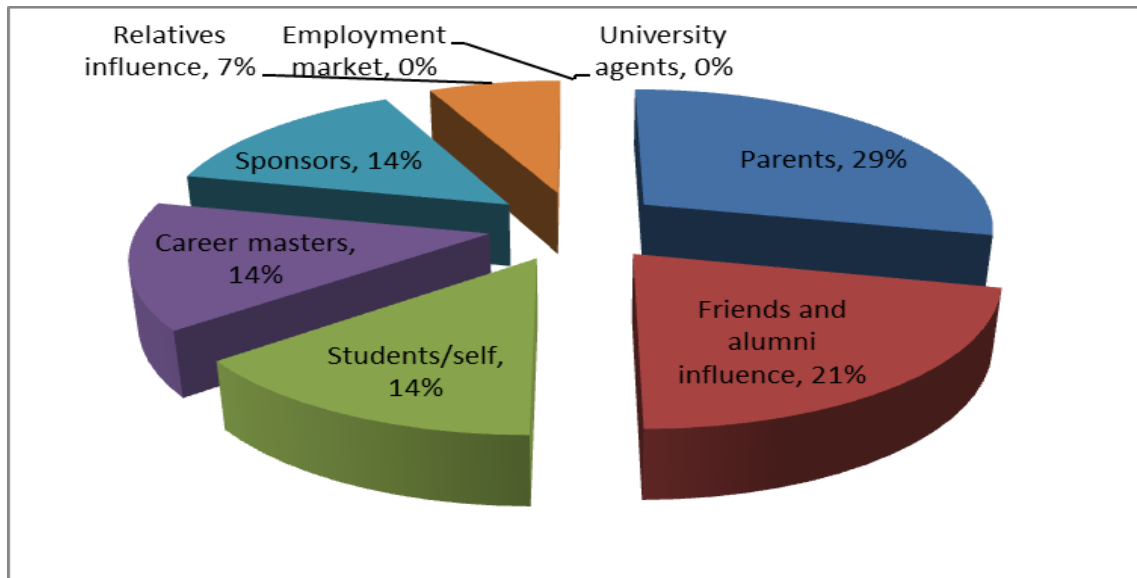


4.6.2 Parents

The data presented in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.14 above suggests that parents are the second most assertive influencers of student choice in Zambia. Additionally, other than ZCAS student focus group participants who 'ranked' them in fifth place (see Figure 4.18 below), Figures 4.15, 4.16 and 4.17 respectively indicate that ZCAS staff, private university and public university marketing executives 'ranked' parents in either first or second position as influencers of student choice. The pervasive influence of parents is also reflected in the fact

that all first research phase participants, except one interviewee, identified them as influencers of potential students (see Appendix 12).

Figure 4.15 Frequency of influencers by public HEIs



Some research participants thought that parents are no longer very influential in their children’s HE decisions. Consider the views from the two marketing executives below, for example:

ZCAS interviewee: ‘Ehm, from you know, uh, long, before ten, eleven years ago when I went into tertiary education marketing, you found a lot of parents having a say on where the students should study. It was almost 80% or 70% the parents and 30% the students; unfortunately now it’s different, it’s 70% the student and only 30% the parents.’

Private university interviewee: ‘Now there is a new set of parents again I have seen which ehm, I don’t know it’s either they are so busy because they come... Ehm, they do put some influence but I think also the students now have taken over a lot of that part because this one says they want to be this, they want to do this course.’

Overall however, parents are still considered to be to be very influential in the potential student’s HE decisions in Zambia, especially with respect to school leavers. This is mainly because parents finance their young children’s higher education. This was alluded to by many research participants going by what they said in the quotes below:

FGD on the most prolific influencer: ‘Parents, I mean they are the ones who pay your school fees and everything so I think they are.’

FGD on influencers: 'But before I actually came my dad said whether you like it or not you are going to ZCAS, you are not going to any government institution. Either you are going to ZCAS or you are going to England, so choose. And it so happened that when I came it was actually nice. Sometimes students don't really have a say, it's actually the parents because they are the ones who are going to release their money at the end of the day.'

Public university: 'Ehm, those that are privately sponsored parents also as sponsors they have a say because I have seen some people want to change programmes they'll say my parents are suggesting.'

Private university on the most influential: 'The parents are most influential especially for the school leavers, mostly the parents are more influential... the parents mostly are influential because parents look at them as to know what they want for the child, so they decide on their children.'

4.6.3 Students/self

According to the information presented in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.14 above, potential students as decision makers themselves came in at number three in the references count. Students were also 'rated' as a top three influencer by all the four family categories (see Figures 4.15, 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18). It is therefore conceivable to conclude that potential students play some role in deciding which university or college to attend.

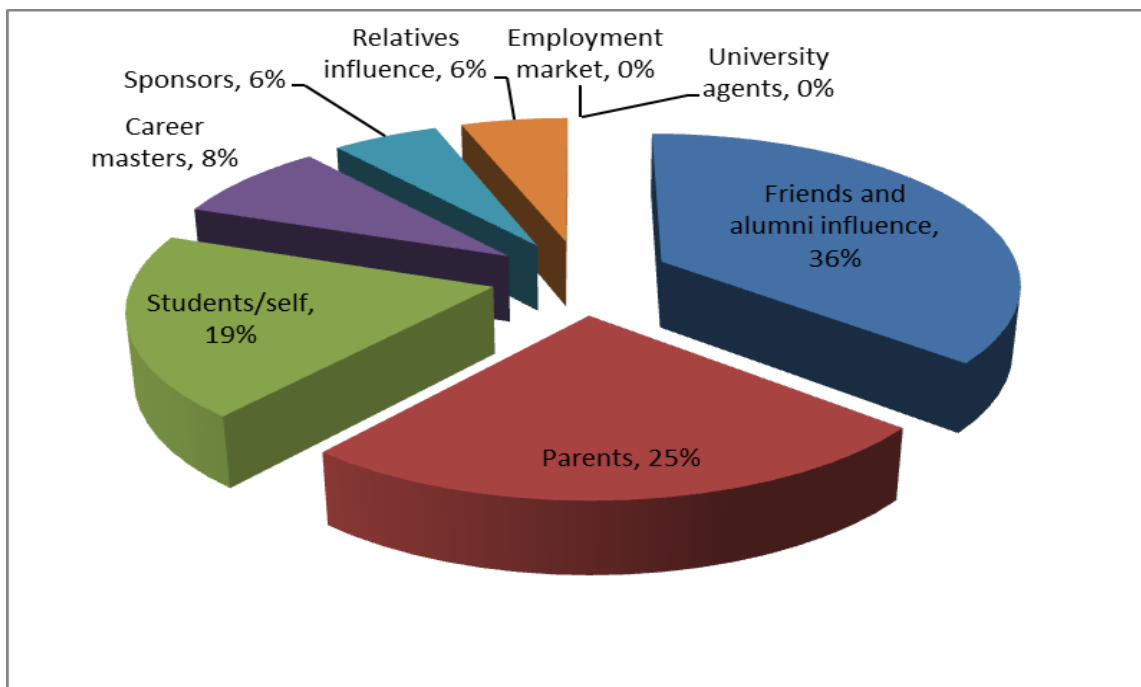
Further analysis of the quotations suggests that mature students or those that sponsor themselves are the ones who influence the HE decision more than school leavers. School leavers, many of whom may not know much about the HE sector, are more likely to be influenced by their parents or whoever sponsors them. For instance one research participant observed that parents and guardians had a major influence on school leavers, while mature students made their own decisions but could also be influenced by their families or sponsors.

4.6.4 Career masters

As influencers of student choice, career masters came in fourth place in terms of the number of times they were mentioned. However, many of the references to career masters were solicited responses, implying that their influence is minimal. Additionally, many participants did not think that career masters have much influence on student choice. For example, one ZCAS interviewee said:

‘I have asked a lot of students like how they got to know about this place and who influenced them, but you find that very few would actually talk about their career masters ...’

Figure 4.16 Frequency of influencers by private HEIs



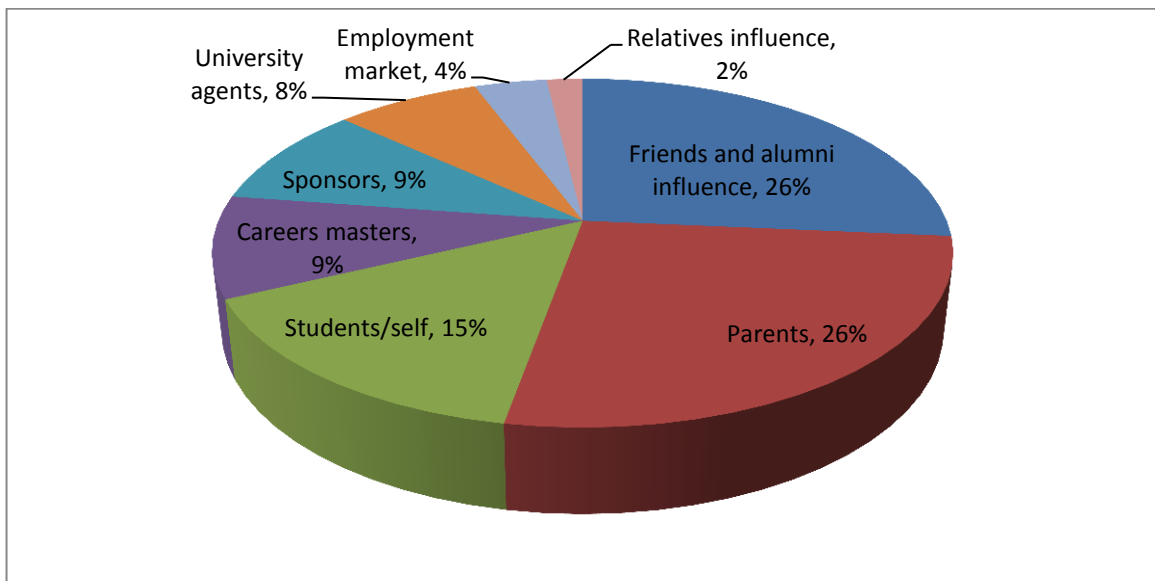
Career masters cannot be relied on to influence student choice because many secondary schools do not have them as observed by one ZCAS interviewee ‘And in some schools they don't even have the career masters’. In addition, career masters are not normally trained in that role even where they are available:

ZCAS interviewee: ‘...and even career masters I don't think they have a lot of information except for a few schools, for a few schools I don't think they have a lot of information about the different colleges, and what they offer...’

4.6.5 Sponsors

Even though the number of quotations was the same as for career masters (see Table 4.4 above), sponsors appear to be more assertive than the former because all the research participants who mentioned this influencer stated that they were influential. One focus group even suggested that sponsors were the most prolific influencers of student choice in Zambia.

Figure 4.17 Frequency of influencers by ZCAS staff HEIs



Sponsors, mainly employers, are influential because they would obviously only spend money on training and development that enhances employee knowledge and skills relevant to the job. All the participants agreed on this:

‘... So those that are sponsored come through the influence of the organization’

‘Then those who are being sponsored by the employers again the employers will have a good, I mean, a big stake in that ...’

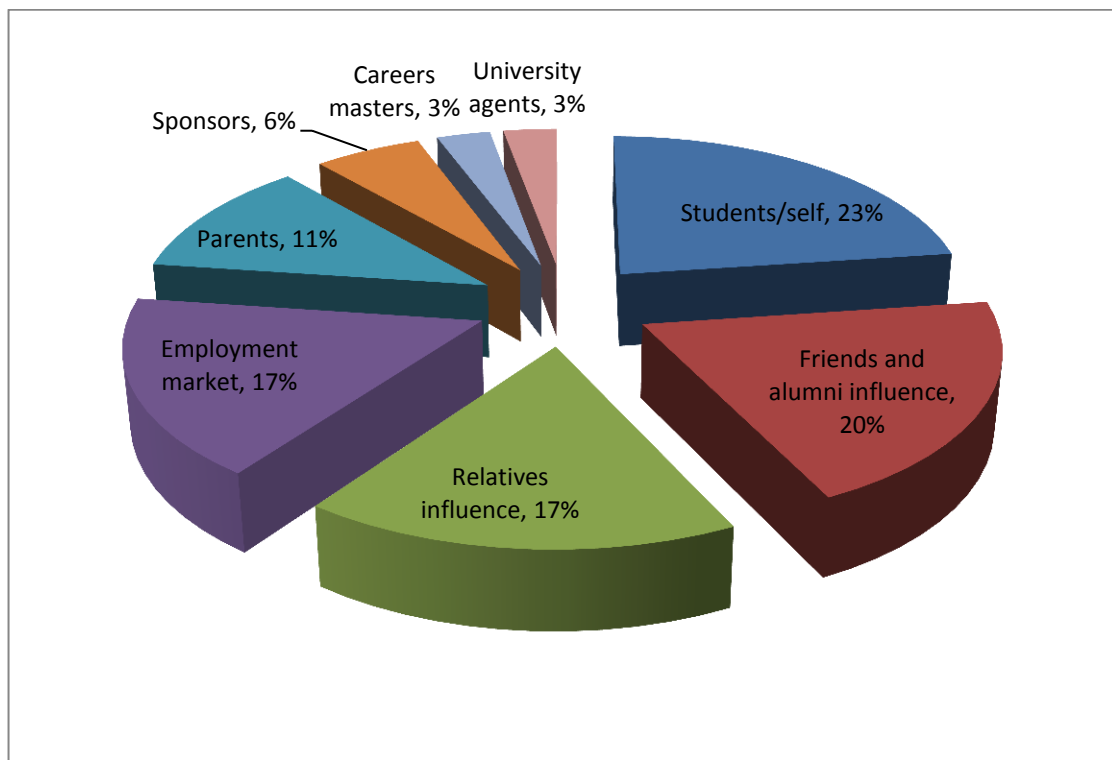
‘And for those who are already in employment, it's their employers ... employers will not want their employee to do something else or something which is outside what that person is doing.’

4.6.6 Relatives

With only 7% of the references being attributed to them (see Figure 4.14 above), relatives are not very assertive influencers. Of the family categories presented in Figures 4.15 to 4.18, only ZCAS students who participated in the focus group discussions thought relatives were a top five influencer.

The discussions on influencers above have suggested that to exert influence, influencers must have some leverage over the potential student. This could either be through sponsoring the student or by having first-hand information about the HEI. Consequently, unless a relative has either or both of these characteristics, it is unlikely that they will exert any significant influence on the potential student.

Figure 4.18 Frequency of influencers by ZCAS students



4.6.7 Employment market

Other than two ZCAS interviewees and one focus group that identified the employment market as having an influence on student choice (see Appendix 12), private and public university marketing executives did not mention this potential influencer at all (see Table 4.4 above). The employment market is therefore unlikely to be considered as an active influencer in Zambia.

However, the findings generally reflect the views that the family categories had on employability as a factor that attracts students to HEIs in Zambia. As discussed in Sub-section 4.3.5 above, the unemployment rate is very high in Zambia and employability of an institution's graduates was considered to be a more significant issue by students than the other family categories. It is therefore not surprising that students are influenced by demands of potential employers, hence 'ranking' this influencer higher than the other categories. One focus group discussant expressed this clearly when she shared her experience with a potential employer:

'Then she suggested to me why don't you do a degree in business administration then get back to us otherwise I don't think a diploma would really work for me right now; may be look at these institutions and get yourself a higher paper than a diploma. And I think she kind of pushed me like to start looking for a paper to do in a way. I had to look at certain institutions like ZCAS, like UNZA, so for me I think what really made me move from thinking ok fine I need to start upgrading myself it's the market.'

4.6.8 University agents

University agents were the least cited influencers of student HE choice in Zambia, with only 4% of the quotations. The few participants who mentioned university agents did so after being prompted to comment; and even then none of them attached any importance to their role in the HE decision. Interviewees in public and private university family categories did not even identify them as potential influencers.

These potential influencers are not popular in Zambia because most HEIs do not have them as observed by some interviewees, two of whom said:

'I have asked a lot of students like how they got to know about this place and who influenced them, but you find that very few would actually talk about ... or theses agents.'

‘ZCAS has employed some agents yes we have some agents, we have some agents ehm, but many of them are for international, for international universities.’

Even ZCAS, the only HEI to mention them, only recruited some agents recently; hence their impact is still unknown.

4.7 Conclusions and summary

This section outlines the main findings and concludes the first research phase. The main research outcomes from the current study are compared to the literature review findings of Chapter 2 and significant differences are highlighted and discussed. Finally, the implications of these research findings for the second research phase are outlined.

4.7.1 Elements of a HEI brand

The elements of a Zambian HEI brand that students consider when choosing colleges or universities were discussed in Section 4.3 above. Using content analysis, the ten most considered HE branding factors in Zambia in order of importance were teaching quality, fees, course availability, facilities, employability, infrastructure, recognition, credibility, culture and environment. Other factors identified that may have some impact on the HE decision in Zambia are reputation, location, timely completion/course duration, collaborations, learning materials and safety and security.

Most of the Zambian HE branding elements unveiled in the current study are comparable to other empirical research findings world-wide as summarised in Table 2.3 of the literature review chapter. Of particular interest is perhaps the similarity with Kusumawati’s (2010) literature review findings from a study undertaken on university choice criteria in developing countries. This review revealed that the most important choice criteria used (with comparable current study findings in brackets) were ‘institutional factors’ such as location (location), campus safety (safety and security), teaching quality (teaching quality), prestige (reputation), infrastructure (infrastructure), library (facilities), computer facilities (facilities), quality of the curricula (course availability), scientific research quality (teaching quality), administrative support (culture or environment), extra-curricular factors (facilities) and exchange programmes with foreign universities (collaborations). Others are

‘proximity to home’ (location); ‘reputation of institution’ (reputation); ‘job prospects’ (employability); ‘cost of study’ (fees); and ‘financial aid’ (fees).

Of the top ten Zambian HE branding elements, recognition and credibility do not seem to feature very prominently in other developing countries, if Kusumawati’s (2010) literature review of developing country HE branding cited above is to go by. The importance of these elements may be more prominent in Zambia than elsewhere because most of the Zambian HE sector is still in its infancy. As more fully discussed in Sub-sections 4.3.7 and 4.3.8 above, recognition and credibility are issues which concern private universities in the country because most of these institutions are newly established, which may not be the case elsewhere. The continued setting up of new universities by the government and private sector implies that recognition and credibility are likely to remain as significant branding factors in the short to medium term in Zambia.

Another factor identified in the current research that was not evident in Kusumawati’s (2010) developing country HE literature review findings is timely completion/course duration. As more fully discussed in Sub-section 4.3.14 above, publicly funded universities in Zambia are subject to political interference which occasionally disrupts the academic calendar. This situation may be peculiar to Zambia and is likely to persist as more government funded universities are being set up.

The findings from the current study have strengthened the conclusions made in the literature review chapter to the effect that there are differences in the significance of student choice criteria of HEIs (and the consequent marketing/branding implications) between developed and developing countries and even amongst and within developed and developing countries due to contextual differences (see Sub-section 2.5.1). For example, whilst in Zambia teaching quality, fees and course availability are the three most important choice criteria (see Figure 4.1 above), reputation, geographic location and campus safety are considered to be the three most important factors in South African HE choice (Beneke and Human, 2010). In Ghana, another sub-Saharan African country, Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010) identified availability of desired programme, academic reputation and quality of teaching as the main reasons students enroll at a particular university.

4.7.2 Sources of competitive advantage in Zambia

As discussed in Section 4.4 above, the top four factors identified as sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE environment, in order of importance, were course availability, teaching quality, facilities and infrastructure. Fees, employability and credibility were tied in fifth place. It is worth mentioning here that, as observed by Kotler and Keller (2012, p.311), most competitive advantages are not sustainable in the long term. Instead, competitive advantages should be leveraged to create new advantages and used to benefit customers i.e. converted into customer advantages. This was echoed by one private university interviewee who said ‘You know the thing that is happening right now is that every day, every day people are creating competitive advantages every day, and everyday people are copying what other people are doing.’

Apart from employability, the other sources of competitive advantage are similar to those found in the other few empirical studies carried out in other countries, even though the order of importance is different for contextual reasons. For example, Lynch and Baines’ (2004) UK study identified ‘bundles of resources’ which give HEIs competitive advantage. Some of these could be linked to similar findings from the current research as shown below:

1. Innovation (teaching, research and third-core funding e.g. new courses and research patents) – this could be interpreted to include ‘course availability’ in the current research.
2. Reputation (creation of an image of quality, the generation of a strong market profile and the development of offshore teaching operations in coalition with overseas partners) – this definition includes ‘reputation’ and ‘credibility’ as defined in the current research.
3. Knowledge base (research and teaching technologies, particularly distance and e-learning) – this could be interpreted to include ‘teaching quality’ and ‘course availability’ as defined in the current research.
4. Particular core competence (e.g. processes underpinning teaching, learning and assessment, vocation and alumni relations) – this has elements of ‘teaching quality’ as defined in the current research.

Similarly, some of Huang's (2012, p.167) five types of internal resources (i.e. 'human resources', 'marketing capabilities', 'curriculum', 'financial resources' and 'R&D capabilities') that drive the strategy and the competitive advantage of higher technical and vocational education institutions in Taiwan were also identified in the current research. These are 'human resources' ('teaching quality' in current research); 'curriculum' ('course availability' in current research); 'financial resources' (this could be used to acquire 'infrastructure' and 'facilities' or offer scholarships to reduce 'fees' in the current research).

The disparities in the HE sources of competitive advantage and their importance can be attributed to the different HE environments in which the studies referred to above were carried out. For example, being a developing country, Zambia is likely to have a much higher unemployment rate than the UK and Taiwan. This implies that whilst facilitating employment opportunities for graduates can be used as a competitive advantage in Zambia, this may not be the case in other jurisdictions.

According to De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace (2011, pp.324-329), Dibb *et al.* (2006, pp.49-50) and Porter (1985, p.3), a brand's competitive advantage arises from two sources, namely cost leadership and differentiation. Cost leadership creates value for consumers because it costs them less to buy the brand than competing brands offering similar benefits, while differentiation creates unique benefits for consumers. An application of these definitions to the top four sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE sector (i.e. course availability, teaching quality, facilities and infrastructure) suggests that Zambian universities use more differentiation strategies than cost leadership approaches. This means that there is still scope, at least in the short to medium term, for Zambian HEIs to find more sustainable competitive advantages in terms of managing their costs better than competitors.

4.7.3 Information sources

As discussed in more detail in Section 4.5, the current research identified, in order of importance, print media (mostly newspapers), friends and alumni (i.e. current and former students of the HEI), education expos, electronic media (mostly radio and TV), school visitations and internet – each with between 13% and 15% of the references – as the most frequently consulted information sources by potential Zambian students seeking information about the HE sector. These information sources are similar to those identified by researchers in other parts of the world.

Four of the information sources mentioned above – i.e. internet, friends and alumni (‘friends’ in literature review), education expos (‘visit or open days at university’ in literature review) and print media – are also the four most commonly used information sources by potential students elsewhere in the world as discussed in Sub-section 2.5.2 in the literature review chapter. Of these four information sources, only the ‘internet’ is not a top four source in Zambia. This could be because, being a developing country, Zambia’s ICT infrastructure is not very developed to enable universal internet access. In addition, as discussed in more detail in Sub-section 4.5.6 above, many universities are struggling to update and maintain their websites in a serviceable state.

The other two important information sources in Zambia, i.e. electronic media and school visitations, seem to be less relevant in HE markets outside Zambia as they were hardly mentioned in the literature review. The reason for this could be that in more advanced economies, universities are using better technologies such as the internet to reach potential students instead of these traditional marketing communications media.

4.7.4 Influencers of student choice

Influencers of student choice in Zambia were outlined and discussed in Section 4.6 above. Using content analysis, the most prolific influencers in order of importance were (each with between 18% and 27% of the total quotations) were friends, parents and self. Other influencers with relatively much less influence were sponsors, career masters, relatives, employment market and agents.

The three most assertive influencers of student HE choice in Zambia identified in the current research (i.e. friends, parents and self) are also the top three identified by other researchers in other jurisdictions. As more fully discussed in Sub-section 2.5.3 of the literature review chapter, the common influencers identified in various studies globally include ‘students’ themselves, ‘parents’ ‘friends’, ‘college teachers’ and ‘university agents’, with the first three being the most prolific influencers of student choice of HEI.

The most peculiar influencer in Zambia as unveiled by the current research is employers. There is no mention of employers being influencers of student choice in the literature reviewed. This is probably because most of the published research on influencers of student choice has been carried out in developed countries where the rate of unemployment is generally low; in such circumstances, the wishes or demands of prospective employers may not have a significant impact on student choice. In Zambia however, the unemployment rate is high, hence many employers may not only be interested in the prospective employee’s qualifications, but also the HEI where those qualifications were obtained from. Prospective students may therefore be influenced to choose HEIs that are considered credible by potential employers.

4.8 Implications for the second research phase

As more fully discussed in Section 3.4 of the methodology chapter, the second research phase was a survey utilizing a conjoint questionnaire based on the HE branding components identified in the first research phase. As discussed in Section 4.3 above, 19 university attributes were identified during the first research phase; however, for the conjoint study, it was found necessary to reduce the HE choice factors through aggregation in order to make the conjoint questionnaire combinations more manageable for both the researcher and respondents. This is in line with other HE researchers who used between six attributes and three attribute levels (e.g. Kusumawati, 2011; Hooley and Lynch, 1981) and ten attributes and two to three attribute levels (e.g. Soutar and Turner, 2002) in their conjoint studies.

According to Friese (2012, p.328) a code (HE branding factors in the context of this study) co-occurs with another ‘if it has been used to code quotations that are in close proximity:

embedded, overlapping, or if two or more codes are applied to the same quotation'. This means that two or more co-occurring codes may be positively correlated and therefore similar e.g. if they have been used to code the same quotation. It is also possible for co-occurring codes to be completely different e.g. if the quotations linking them are just overlapping or embedded into each other. Unfortunately, Atlas.ti cannot make this distinction; hence the researcher must review the co-occurring quotations using the co-occurrence tree explorer to establish whether the codes are similar and can therefore be classified under a super code or otherwise.

In order to reduce the number of branding factors to a manageable level, the two co-occurrence tools in Atlas.ti (i.e. the co-occurrence tree and co-occurrence table explorers) were employed. According to Friese (2012, pp.284 – 287) the co-occurrence table shows the frequency of co-occurrence of selected codes (see Appendix 13) while the co-occurrence tree explorer can be used to further scrutinize and verify whether the co-occurring quotations are just embedded or overlapping (indicating that codes may or may not be related) or whether the codes have in fact been used to code the same quotations (indicating existence of a relationship between them). Codes that genuinely co-occur have similarities and may be grouped under a super code. A super code is a query that combines several codes but is not directly linked to quotations (Friese, 2012, p. 20). Using super codes reduces the number of variables and facilitates conjoint analysis. The following subsections discuss and justify the merging of some of the branding factors into super codes to facilitate conjoint analysis in the second research phase.

4.8.1 'Academic reputation' super code (Collaborations, recognition, credibility, teaching quality and reputation codes)

A review of the codes co-occurrence table in Appendix 13 shows that the 'collaborations' code occurred more frequently with the 'recognition' code than with any other code. Further analysis of the actual quotations revealed that these two codes were used to code those same quotations. Two of these quotations shown below suggest a link between having collaborations and gaining recognition (italicized codes are researcher's illustrations):

‘At the moment we actually have students from other countries already but in that regard we have successfully been accepted, applied and been accepted as members of the Commonwealth Universities Association [*collaborations*]; so we are now members of the Commonwealth Universities Association and we also are a member of the African Universities Association [*collaborations*] and we are also a member of the African Distance Education Association [*collaborations*]. Yea, so in that case we have, we are recognised in various international organisations’ [*recognition*].

‘... and then secondly, whether it's got any links internationally [*collaborations*] because obviously my destination lies globally. So I want to know that wherever I go it's going to be recognised, yes’ [*recognition*].

Further review of Appendix 13 shows that recognition itself as a code had 8 and 9 co-occurrences with reputation and credibility respectively, twice as many as with any other code. Reputation meanwhile had 7 co-occurrences with credibility, which was more than with any other code except for recognition. A more detailed scrutiny of the actual co-occurring quotations using the co-occurrence tree explorer indicates that many of the quotations were coded using these different codes (i.e. collaborations, recognition, credibility and reputation), signaling similarities in the codes. This is illustrated in the following selected quotations (italicized codes are researcher’s illustrations):

Private university: ‘And now the last one is also a renowned [*reputation*] university perhaps; a university that has been on the market for some time [*credibility*] because it has got a name [*recognition*]. Because they say if I go to UNZA people will say yes I'm from UNZA [*credibility, recognition and reputation*]; but perhaps if I go to Victoria Falls University, it is not even known [*recognition*’], even the first graduates have not yet come out [*credibility*]. So they begin to become a bit skeptical about going to such a university’ [*reputation*].

Private HEI: ‘Ehm usually they want to know issues like whom are you affiliated with [*collaborations, recognition*] especially in the Zambian circles (laughter, both). If you are not very, so right now the private universities that are just coming up and people are not so much aware that private universities can be as credible as the public universities [*credibility, reputation*] the issue here, issues we are getting is who are you accredited with, are you registered with the Ministry of Education?’ [*recognition*].

ZCAS interviewee: ‘Again, uh, when you think of ZCAS, ZCAS has got a very good name [*credibility, recognition, and reputation*]. Over the years it has uh, recorded a lot of success in terms

of pass rates [*'credibility', 'reputation'*] and then if I'm, if I'm not mistaken it has also received international recognition [*recognition*]. Ehm, currently it is one of the like, the platinum colleges for ACCA; it has got the platinum grading, so that has attracted a lot of students to come and study for instance ACCA from ZCAS' [*recognition and reputation*].

Private university: 'So far we have made a lot of exchanges we have had a lot of visiting professors young as we are, you know, to us that's a lot of potential, you know because once universities especially renowned universities from abroad and so on when they begin to court you and they want to show interest in you, for example, the way Copperbelt University has courted us and that we have even signed a memorandum of understanding to us it shows that you see we have, we have potential, yes [*collaborations, recognition, credibility and reputation*].'

'Teaching quality' as a code had more co-occurrences than any other code (see Appendix 13). This is probably because, as shown in Table 4.1 above, it had far many more quotations, thereby increasing the number of overlapping and embedded quotations. For example, a detailed review of the co-occurring quotations with facilities (10) and course availability (9) using the co-occurrence tree explorer indicates overlapping and embedded quotations, not similarities with these codes. One of the co-occurring quotations clearly suggests this lack of correlation between teaching quality and facilities:

Private university interviewee: 'Because if you've got a very beautiful place, state of art building, facilities what have you, and the lecturer doesn't turn up what you have done maybe you have turned that into a hotel, it doesn't save its purpose as a learning institution ...'

The co-occurrences that suggest a correlation with teaching quality are those with credibility (7), pass rates (6) and reputation (5). For example, when asked to identify what made his institution stand out, one private university interviewee said:

'I think one aspect is the, probably the quality of staff that are here [*teaching quality*]. I think it's one of the few institutions, say private institutions, that has got well distinguished scholars [*credibility, reputation*].'

This suggests a link between teaching quality, credibility and reputation of staff. The following quotations also illustrate this:

We are identical to School of Medicine, UNZA [*credibility*], reason being we are a new university and private university and if you bring a new curriculum in perspective, people will be asking questions like 'Will they be the same doctors as trained by UTH or the University of Zambia?' [*Teaching quality, credibility, reputation*] So we agreed and we went into a memorandum of understanding with University of Zambia that we should train doctors same curriculum and same processes in terms of management of the examinations and so on. When it comes to teaching staff, we basically have no staff of our own [*Suggesting concerns about teaching quality, credibility and reputation of teaching staff*].

P: I think if you look at the staff who are here most of them have got higher degrees, they have PhDs and many of them have already distinguished themselves in other institutions. So we have currently I think about ten professors many of whom have had illustrious careers at other institutions like the University of Zambia [*Suggesting a link between teaching quality, credibility and reputation, in response to a question on what he meant by quality of staff*].

Teaching quality had six co-occurrences with infrastructure. However, infrastructure had more co-occurrences with facilities and is discussed in more detail in Sub-section 4.8.4 below.

The co-occurring quotations above suggest that entering into collaborations with other institutions, especially universities, signals recognition of that HEI. This enhances its credibility and reputation. Recognition of a HEI by regulatory authorities, e.g. by being registered or getting affiliated may also signal credibility of that institution. This may boost its reputation. It can also be inferred that the academic standing of teaching staff enhances the institutions credibility and reputation. It can therefore be argued that collaborations, recognition, credibility and teaching quality of a university contribute to how that institution is perceived by various stakeholders i.e. its academic reputation.

The code 'academic reputation' was chosen as a super code to represent the other similar codes because it was used more frequently in other studies e.g. see Table 2.3 of the literature review chapter, Kusumawati's (2010) developing country HE literature review findings and the conclusions in Sub-section 4.7.1 above. However, because of the importance attached to 'teaching quality' as a branding element and source of competitive advantage in Zambia, this term was also shown and used interchangeably with 'academic reputation' in the second research phase data collection instruments, findings and analysis.

4.8.2 'Fees'

As a code, 'fees' had co-occurrences with course availability, infrastructure, learning materials, location, pass rates, recognition, reputation, teaching quality and course duration. A review of the actual quotations revealed that the co-occurrence was due to overlaps and entrenchments, not any similarities or ambiguities with the other codes.

As discussed in Sub-section 4.3.3, fees are a major branding issue in Zambia. Therefore, this branding element was treated as a stand-alone variable in the conjoint analysis in the second research phase.

4.8.3 'Course availability' super code (course availability and ease of entry)

Appendix 13 shows that course availability had a significant number of co-occurrences with teaching quality (9) and fees (8). However, as stated in Sub-sections 4.8.1 and 4.8.2 above, these co-occurrences did not indicate correlation between these codes. Most of the other co-occurrences (e.g. with credibility, employability, infrastructure, facilities, reputation, recognition and location) are with codes classified under other super codes.

The only co-occurrences that suggest correlation are with 'ease of entry' and 'course duration'. One of the co-occurring quotations suggested this relationship:

'... first and foremost they want to find out the programmes on offer ... programme on offer [*course availability*] is also compacted in the sense that programme on offer they want to know the duration for each particular programme [*course duration*], subject combination to be accepted into the university, how many points they would require to be admitted' [*ease of entry*].

Even the definitions of the codes as given in the coding manual in Appendix 5 suggest a link because if it is difficult to enter into a programme or if the course duration is too long, then technically that course cannot be said to be available to the student.

The code 'course availability' was chosen as a super code to represent the other similar codes because it was cited more often in the interview and focus group transcripts. In

addition, ‘course availability’ was used more frequently in other studies (see Table 2.3 of the literature review chapter, Kusumawati’s (2010) developing country HE literature review findings and the conclusions in Sub-section 4.7.1 above).

4.8.4 ‘Learning environment’ super code (infrastructure, facilities, learning materials, environment, culture and location)

There were more co-occurring quotations between infrastructure and facilities (14) than between any other two codes in the code co-occurrence table (see Appendix 13). Most of these co-occurrences suggested correlation between the two codes. In fact most participants seem to have used the two words interchangeably. For instance, one participant said:

‘...school leavers mostly the influence will be infrastructure, to share with the friends to say oh no we'll go to this school, this school has this facility. It has got a nice library ...’ while another stated ‘Ehm, of course even the amenities [*facilities*] that are also in the university, the infrastructure also is something that can attract students to a particular university’.

Strong correlation between ‘infrastructure’ and ‘facilities’ is also indicated by a selection of co-occurring quotations below that suggest interchangeable use of these words:

ZCAS interviewee: ‘One of it is the facility, what type of infrastructure do you have as an institution because a parent doesn’t want to send a child, they don't want to spend money on an institution that has no infrastructure. Infrastructure meaning in terms of 'Do you have a building?'; 'Do you have the classrooms?'; 'Do you have the furniture?’

ZCAS interviewee: ‘...infrastructure is a competitive advantage because you can also, you use it as a competitive advantage in the sense that the maintenance, the level of maintenance and the level of care that you look at it, because others they just put it there, I know you can find a computer anywhere but do we have the latest version of that computer? Do we have, has it got the speed that the student wants?’

Private university interviewee: ‘Ehm I think obviously we are limited in terms of infrastructures in that we don't have our own place at the moment, but as I have already alluded to we are having, we'll soon be having our own. So at the moment I can imagine if we had our own boarding facilities, our own ehm never ending classrooms or something (laughter) I think definitely that would be a big success’.

Learning materials is related to infrastructure through facilities. Most of the references to learning materials were associated with library facilities, suggesting a link between the two. For example, one focus group participant lamented that her former college didn't really offer much material to read because the library wasn't well stocked; while a ZCAS interviewee said that ZCAS had a library which was well stocked with books and that she this enhanced the learning process.

Of the 22 quotations co-occurring with 'environment', 50% were with facilities (6) and infrastructure (5). The actual quotations suggest that facilities and infrastructure are considered to be part of the overall learning environment in an institution. This is suggested in the quotation below:

'... now we have looked at trying to put up infrastructure that is very acceptable, tried to put ehm, tried to put state of art libraries, air conditions ehm, buildings ehm and you know just a good decor. So we have looked at the decor of the place that it is very, very good in terms of the tangible aspects of the service and that has really worked to our advantage in that recruitment of students has gone up two, threefold from the time we moved from very congested low, very congested not very good standard building to a building of a good standard. So I feel from the numbers I'm looking at ehm, the environment, the physical environment has been critical and has shown so many results.'

Co-occurrences with learning materials, pass rates and teaching quality have already been classified under more suitable super codes as discussed in the various sections above.

The other two co-occurring codes, i.e. culture and location had quotations that suggested a link with environment. For example, when asked to elaborate on the term 'learning environment' one public university interviewee said:

'The learning environment starts from when they come, the people they are meeting. We have the dean of students, how they are treated by the dean of students ... they go to the school level they have the deans' offices are open students can walk in walk out, queries are responded to if they need to write you can see this heap of files we respond we try as much as possible to help our students, to give advice ...'

This quotation seems to suggest that the attitude of university staff (the culture within the university) is part of the overall learning environment in that institution.

Co-occurring quotations between environment and location could also be interpreted to indicate correlation. The two quotations below seem to indicate this:

Private HEI: ‘How prospective students perceive an environment can be positive and negative. I can imagine you are putting a university in the middle of Kanyama [*a slum located in Lusaka*], what are you saying. Some student will just shun that university because of the environment. To start with getting to Kanyama, roads leading to Kanyama, the people to Kanyama, in terms of rain season the environment itself it can cost you business’.

Public university with an out of town campus: ‘And also our setting it's natural serene environment; we are isolated almost 26 kilometers from the main town. It's quiet in the woodlands, anyone who is seriously considering studies they have no excuse to make. The disturbance is minimal, yea’.

Learning environment was selected as a super code for this group of codes because it appears more encompassing than the others. For example, learning materials are usually found in the library (a facility) and facilities are usually found in buildings (infrastructure). The state of the infrastructure together with culture and location of the institution may affect that institution’s learning environment.

4.8.5 ‘Employability’

All the co-occurring codes with employability (i.e. course availability, credibility, facilities, pass rates, recognition, reputation, teaching quality and course duration) have already been classified under more suitable super codes as discussed in the various sections above. As discussed in Sub-section 4.3.5 above, employability of graduates is a major branding issue in Zambia. Consequently, this factor was treated as a stand-alone branding variable in the second research phase.

4.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined and discussed the outcomes of the first research phase. The study has revealed that using content analysis, the ten most considered HE branding factors in Zambia in order of importance were teaching quality, fees, course availability, facilities, employability, infrastructure, recognition, credibility, culture and environment. Of these the top four factors identified as sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE environment, in order of importance, were course availability, teaching quality, facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, the most consulted information sources were print media (mostly newspapers), friends, education expos, electronic media (mostly radio and TV), school visitations and internet; while the most prolific influencers identified were friends, parents and self.

Most of these findings were similar to those in the extant literature in the field. However, the Zambian HE brand model has some peculiar elements probably because the HE sector is still in its infancy and also due to the high levels of unemployment in the country. For example, recognition, credibility and course duration/timely completion were considered to be more important branding issues in Zambia than elsewhere in the extant literature, while facilitating employment opportunities for graduates is a source of competitive advantage atypical to the Zambian HE sector. Additionally, the internet is not as widely used as a source of information about HEIs in Zambia as it is elsewhere probably due to inadequate infrastructure in this developing country; while employers seem to have more influence on student HE choices in Zambia than elsewhere.

Implications of these research findings for the second research phase were also considered. Since the second research phase was a conjoint study, it was not practicable to include all the individual HE choice criteria identified in the first research phase. Instead, the Zambian HE branding factors were aggregated by using content analysis as well as common themes in the extant literature and other conjoint studies. Consequently, the main HE choice criteria employed in the comparative study in the second research phase were ‘academic reputation’, ‘fees’, ‘course availability’, ‘employability’ and ‘learning environment’.

CHAPTER 5: SECOND RESEARCH PHASE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is an outline and analysis of the findings from the second research phase. The findings from the qualitative study discussed in Chapter 4 above provided the underpinning for this conjoint study. The objectives of this conjoint study were twofold: firstly, to identify the current position of the ZCAS brand as a case study (RO2) and secondly, to establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia (RO3).

In order to establish RO2 on ZCAS' current brand position in the Zambian HE market, a sample of 110 ZCAS first year degree students completed a conjoint questionnaire that required them to rate factor profiles based on the principal branding elements that attracted them to the institution. Their ratings for choosing ZCAS were then compared to the principal branding elements in Zambia as ascertained in the first research phase in Chapter 4 in order to identify the current position of the ZCAS brand in the Zambian HE sector.

With respect to RO3 regarding the ZCAS brand's relative position to its higher education competitors in Zambia, a sample of 280 first year students in seven other HEIs in Zambia also completed the conjoint questionnaire. Their factor profile ratings for choosing their HEIs were compared with those for ZCAS students as well as the principal branding elements that comprise the Zambian HE brand model.

As more fully discussed in Section 4.8 of Chapter 4, the 19 branding elements identified in the first research phase were aggregated using Atlas.ti's co-occurrence tools to facilitate this conjoint study. The HE choice criteria employed in this phase of the study are therefore as follows: academic reputation, fees, course availability, employability and learning environment. These factors and their respective levels are described in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Attributes and attribute levels

No	Attribute	Description	Attribute level	Adapted from
1	Academic reputation or teaching quality of university or college	This refers to the fame of the university or college and the esteem in which it is held by the public. Many factors affect academic reputation, including teaching quality, age of institution; attitude, qualifications and experience of staff; international status and recognition of qualifications; name of department, league tables, local and foreign accreditations.	a) Outstanding b) Average c) Poor	Kusumawati, 2011; Soutar and Turner, 2002; Moogan <i>et al.</i> , 2001; Hooley and Lynch, 1981
2	Total expenses	Total fees payable for entire programme as well as flexibility in payment methods. Also included are discounts, availability of scholarships and bursaries.	a) Low or inexpensive b) Average or affordable c) High or expensive	Kusumawati, 2011; Hagel and Shaw, 2008
3	Course availability or suitability	This branding attribute refers to the number of programmes and courses a HEI offers. It also refers to whether the courses are available on full time, part time, distance learning, e-learning or block release. This attribute also includes ease of entry into the programme and course duration.	a) Just what I want b) More or less what I want c) Not really what I want	Soutar and Turner, 2002; Moogan <i>et al.</i> , 2001; Hooley and Lynch, 1981
4	Employability (job prospects)	This refers to the availability of employment opportunities upon graduating from the university or college, including self-employment. It also includes international mobility of students.	a) Good b) Average c) Poor	Kusumawati, 2011; Soutar and Turner, 2002
5	Learning environment	This is the aura, climate and general feel of the university including its location, infrastructure and facilities (e.g. libraries, learning materials and IT facilities); also includes physical aspects of environment such as cleanliness, hygiene, greens and architecture.	a) Conducive b) Average c) Poor	Kusumawati, 2011; Soutar and Turner, 2002

In order to enhance credibility of the conjoint study, the seven conjoint analysis steps in Hair *et al.* (2010, pp.421-459) were followed in executing the conjoint experiment, i.e.:

1. Set objectives/research questions;
2. Design the conjoint analysis;
3. Define assumptions used;
4. Estimate conjoint model and assess overall fit;
5. Interpret results;
6. Validate results; and
7. Apply the conjoint results.

The first two steps were followed in designing the study and were fully discussed in Section 3.4 of the methodology chapter, while the rest of the steps are followed in discussing the findings and analysis in the sections below.

Even though conjoint analysis is traditionally performed at the individual respondent level as well as at the aggregate level, the nature of the research objectives addressed in the second research phase (i.e. RO2: to identify the current position of the ZCAS brand as a case study and RO3: to establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia) favoured consideration of aggregate results only. This is because, for this comparative phase of the study, what mattered was arguably the aggregate preference structure of respondents and not their individual preferences. This view was supported by Hair *et al.* (2010, p.446). Additionally, the large sample size of 390 students implied that it was impracticable to utilize the disaggregate approach (p.441).

Consequently, nothing was done about reversals (i.e. when part-worths are inconsistent with the theorized monotonic pattern) as they were considered to have been compensated for during the aggregation process (Hair *et al.* 2010, p.449). Similarly, the assessment of goodness-of-fit and interpretation of results was done at the aggregate level only (p.446).

This chapter is therefore structured as follows. Section 5.2 is an outline and discussion of the findings on ZCAS' brand position in the Zambian HE sector (RO2) while Section 5.3

is an outline and discussion of the findings on ZCAS' comparative brand position in the Zambian HE sector (RO3). The chapter is then summarized in Section 5.4.

5.2 Findings and analysis: ZCAS' brand position in the Zambian higher education sector

As more fully discussed in Sub-section 3.4.2 of Chapter 3, quota sampling techniques were employed in selection of the sample of 110 ZCAS students. Although quota sampling is a non-probability sampling technique, sample representativeness was enhanced because the quota system ensured that all aspects of the population were considered; for example part time students, full time students, students undertaking degree programmes and those on professional courses were included in the sample (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p.193; Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p.235). Coupled with the large sample size, it was envisaged that statistical inferences could be made about the population based on this sample (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.187-188; Saunders *et al.*, 2009, pp.217-218).

Of the 110 questionnaires administered at ZCAS, 6 were found unusable due to missing data, leaving a total of 104 that were used in the analysis. 70% of the respondents were female while the rest were male. In terms of age distribution, 58% were aged under 25, 24% were aged between 26 and 35 years while 18% were over 35 years old. The demographic data were as expected. More females are entering higher education in Zambia due to demands by the government and civil society organisations to educate the girl-child. Similar recent studies have also found more female than male respondents in African HEIs (e.g. Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei, 2010; Wiese *et al.*, 2009) Meanwhile, the wide age range is because both full time (mostly school leavers) and part time/evening (mostly working class) students responded to the questionnaire.

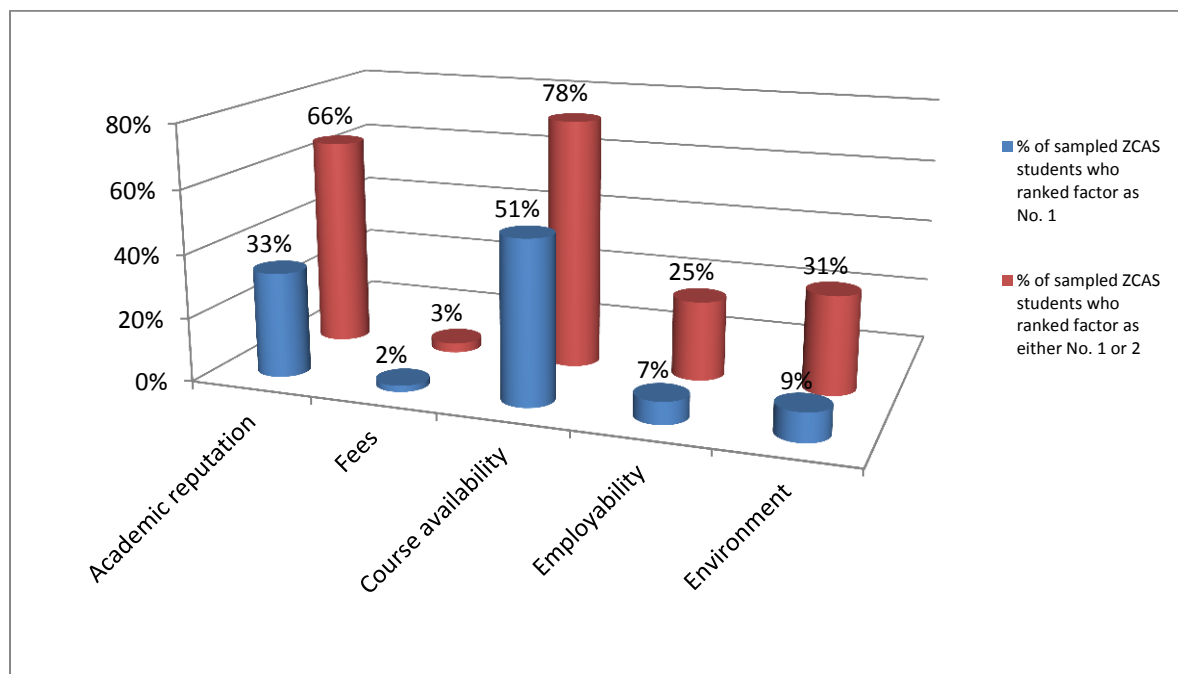
5.2.1 Ranking of the five main branding elements by ZCAS students

The first part of the questionnaire required respondents to rank the five main branding factors (i.e. academic reputation, fees, course availability, employability and learning environment) from number 1 to 5, with the most important factor that attracted the student

to ZCAS being ranked number 1 and the least important as number 5 (see sub-section 2.1 of the questionnaire at Appendix 13).

As shown in Figure 5.1 below, half of the sampled ZCAS students ranked course availability as their greatest attraction to ZCAS, while more than three-quarters ranked this factor as either number 1 or number 2 in attracting them to the institution. Academic reputation was ranked second (by 33%), followed by learning environment (by 9%) and employability (by 7%) in third and fourth places respectively. ZCAS fees were not considered attractive, with only 2% ranking this factor as their number one attraction.

Figure 5.1 Ranking of branding elements by ZCAS students



The content analysis in the first research phase identified teaching quality and course availability as being among the top three branding elements as well as sources of competitive advantage in Zambia, based on frequency of occurrence of these factors in the interview and focus group transcripts (see Table 4.1 and Figure 4.6 of Chapter 4 above). The findings from the second research phase, as shown in Figure 5.1 above, validates the first research phase findings regarding the position of course availability and teaching quality as the premier branding elements in the Zambian higher education market.

In the case of ZCAS, the ranking of course availability as the number 1 attraction could be because the institution offers tuition for world renowned professional qualifications (e.g. ACCA, CIMA and CFA). Additionally, the institution offers undergraduate and post graduate degree programmes in collaboration with highly rated world class partners (e.g. London School of Economics and Political Science and Lancaster Business School). ZCAS therefore seems to benefit from these strong brands as the courses offered are highly reputed and very attractive to potential students.

With regard to teaching quality, ZCAS maintains stringent quality controls over lecturers. For example, whereas punctuality and absenteeism from class may be a common challenge for lecturers in public universities, ZCAS lecturers are strictly monitored to ensure that learning is not disrupted. Coupled with a student-centred organizational culture, ZCAS seems to have created a favourable perception of the institution's academic reputation.

Similarly, it is not surprising that the learning environment at ZCAS came third in the ranking. ZCAS boasts of relatively good facilities; and from the researcher's visits to most HEIs, very few can compare with ZCAS' infrastructure and facilities in the country. As more fully discussed in Sub-section 4.3.4 of Chapter 4, facilities (a major component of the learning environment) were referred to extensively by ZCAS students during the focus group discussions; implying that this branding element is close to their hearts and plays a significant role in the HEI choice decision.

Fees charged by ZCAS were ranked as the least attractive factor. This is understandable too, given that, unlike most other students in government HEIs, ZCAS students do not have access to government bursaries and therefore have to pay the full commercial fees the institution charges.

The findings from the direct ranking of the factors by ZCAS students are similar to those for other studies in an African context. For example, Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010) found that academic reputation, availability of desired programme and quality of teaching had the most influence on students' choice of a Ghanaian university, while Wiese *et al.* (2009) concluded that teaching quality exerted the most influence on HE choice in a

sample of South African universities. Similarly, these studies found that fees were not of much concern to students.

5.2.2 ZCAS conjoint analysis

The conjoint module in IBM SPSS 20 software was used to analyse the data (see sub-section 3.4.6 of Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion). Reliability of the questionnaire results was measured using Cronbach's α , which at 0.779 indicated that the results could be taken as reliable. A description of the conjoint model is given in Table 5.2 below.

Model estimation assumptions

The model assumes that potential students consider branding elements as a bundle or set, not as individual factors. A deficiency in one factor can therefore be traded off or off-set by other factors when choosing a particular higher education institution.

The model also assumes that the relationship between the factors and scores is linear. For reputation, employability, environment and course, the higher the respondent's score, the greater the preference or utility for that factor; i.e. the greater a university's reputation or the more courses it offers, the more that institution is preferred. On the other hand, the presumed preference structure for fees has an inverse linear relationship between scores and preference, i.e. the higher the level of fees, the lower the preference.

Table 5.2 Conjoint Model Description

Factor	Number of Levels	Relation to Scores
Reputation	3	Linear (more)
Fees	3	Linear (less)
Employability	3	Linear (more)
Environment	3	Linear (more)
Course	3	Linear (more)

All factors are orthogonal.

Conjoint model estimation and goodness-of-fit

Since the conjoint analysis was performed using a computer programme, estimation of part-worths was automatically selected and executed by the software.

Three goodness-of-fit measures were provided by the analysis software i.e. Pearson's correlation and Kendall's tau for the estimation sample as well as Kendall's tau for the validation sample. For the ZCAS sample, these measures are as shown in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 ZCAS goodness-of-fit measures

Correlations ^a		
	Value	Sig.
Pearson's R	.936	.000
Kendall's tau	.708	.000
Kendall's tau for Holdouts	1.000	.021

a. Correlations between observed and estimated preferences

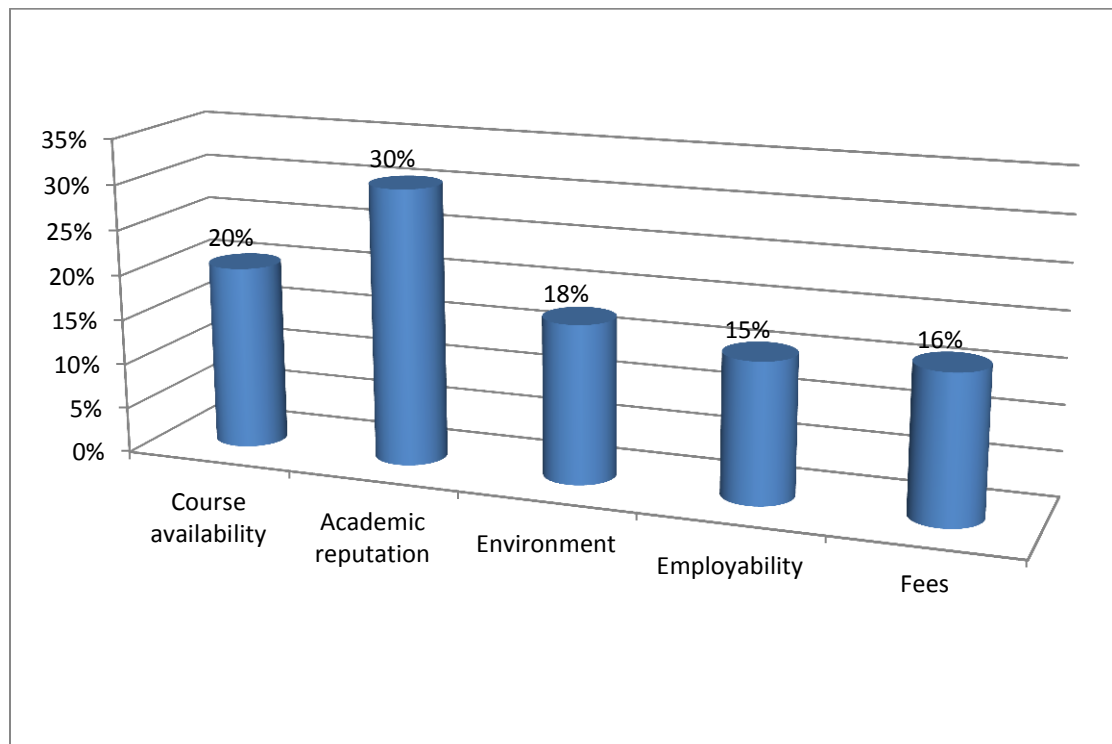
Hair *et al.* (2010, pp.464-465) assert that for an estimation process involving 18 profiles and five attributes (as was the case in this conjoint study), the minimum correlation should be .55, while a correlation of .707 would be required if the estimation process was to explain at least 50% of the variation. The high correlation – Pearson's r (.936) and Kendall's tau τ (.708) – statistics for the ZCAS estimation sample indicates strong fit between the model and the obtained data and strongly suggests that the conjoint analysis was valid.

Similarly, the Kendall's tau for hold-outs of 1.000 indicates strong correlation between the predicted model and the validation sample. Given that the hold-out set had only four profiles, a high Kendall's tau suggests overall suitability of the main effects model (Kusumawati, 2011; Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.466).

Interpretation of results

Conjoint analysis results revealed that ZCAS' academic reputation/teaching quality was the most important attribute in attracting students to the institution, followed by course availability, learning environment, fees and lastly employability. The results are as shown in Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 5.2 ZCAS averaged importance values



As shown in Table 5.4 below, further analysis of the conjoint results suggests that ZCAS students had high preference for outstanding teaching quality (with mean utility of 1.370). The preference level declined as the teaching quality deteriorated (moderate reputation utility = .913 and poor reputation utility of only .457). Similar attribute level results were also observed for employment prospects (good employment prospects mean utility of .421, average job prospects utility = .280 and poor employment opportunities with utility of .140); learning environment (conducive environment mean utility = .791, average environment = .527 and poor learning environment utility of .264) and course availability

(just what I wanted = .774, more or less what I wanted = .516 and not really what I wanted = .258).

Surprisingly, the results suggest that ZCAS students prefer high fees (mean utility = .459) to average fees (mean utility .306) and worse still low fees (mean utility = .153). This could be because:

1. As suggested by some of the interviewees during the first research phase, low fees signal poor quality of service (see Sub-section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4); hence students and their sponsors found comfort in higher fees.
2. Since most of the first year students are sponsored by their parents, guardians or employers (who did not take part in the survey), fees may not pre-occupy them so much because they may not directly experience the impact of high fees.
3. Research participants were already enrolled in the institution, implying that they could afford the fees. The impact of fees on the HE choice decision might have been different if prospective students had been used instead.

Table 5.4 ZCAS Conjoint attribute level utilities

Attribute	Attribute level	Utility Estimate	Std. Error
Reputation	Poor	.457	.068
	Average	.913	.136
	Outstanding	1.370	.203
Fees	Low	.153	.068
	Average	.306	.136
	High	.459	.203
Employability	Poor	.140	.068
	Average	.280	.136
	Good	.421	.203
Environment	Poor	.264	.068
	Average	.527	.136
	Conducive	.791	.203
Course	Not really what I wanted	.258	.068
	More or less what I wanted	.516	.136
	Just what I wanted	.774	.203
(Constant)		-.019	.308

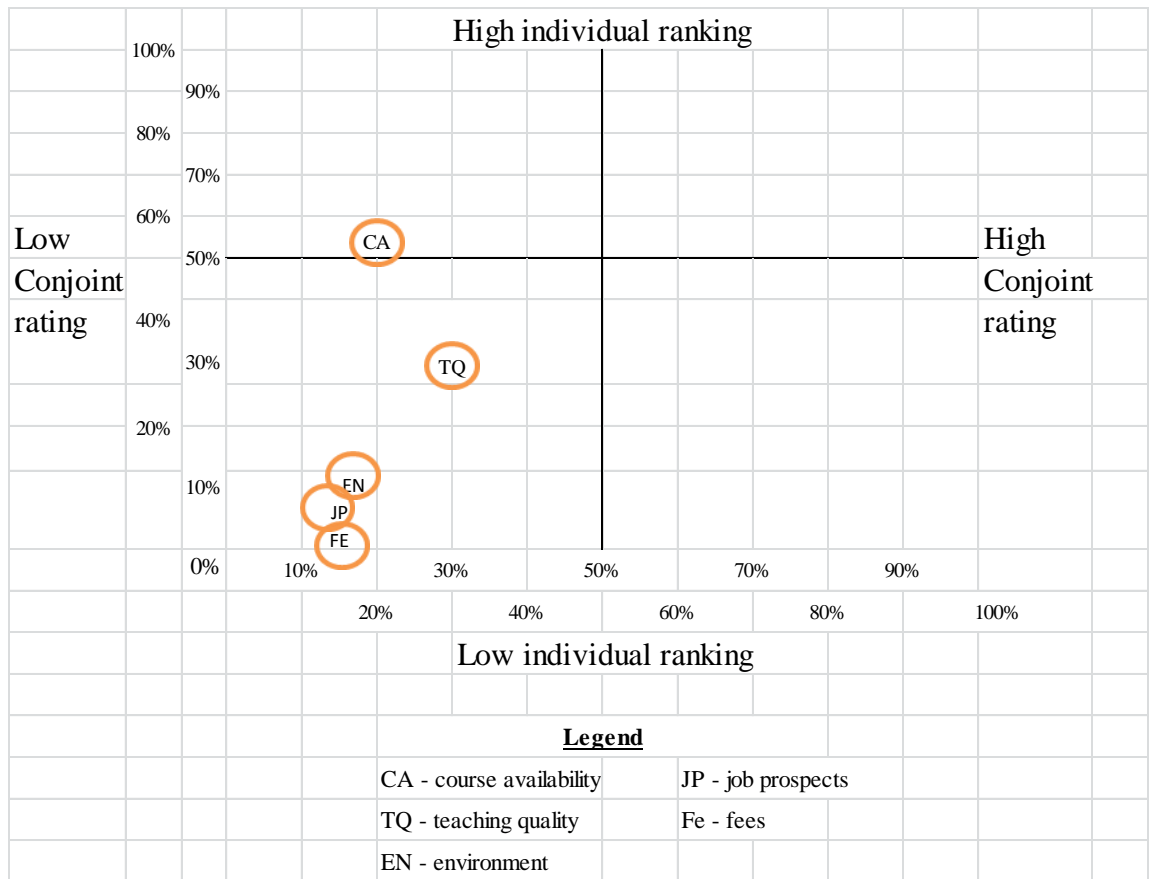
The conjoint analysis results are largely in line with those for the direct ranking of the branding factors shown in Figure 5.1 above. However, as shown in the perceptual map in Figure 5.3 below, ZCAS students ranked course availability (51%) and teaching quality (33%) as their respective number 1 and number 2 major attractions to the institution, while the conjoint analysis indicates that teaching quality (30%) plays a more important role than course availability (20%) when it comes to making actual choices in a tradeoff situation. Like the other perceptual maps in Figures 5.6 – 5.8 below, the diagram in Figure 5.3 is a simple manual graphic display in which the percentages represent the proportion of students in the sample who ranked the brand attribute as their number one attraction to their institution.

The model assumption that potential students consider personal constraints and perceive HE choice criteria as bundles of factors when choosing higher education institutions is therefore upheld. In other words, even though potential ZCAS students think that course availability is their major attraction to ZCAS, this factor is traded-off against the other factors, particularly teaching quality, in the final choice of HEI. Similarly, even though employability was ranked above fees in the direct ranking, fees play a slightly more important role in the HE choice decision.

The research objective applicable to this phase of the study is *RO2: Based on the brand components identified in RO1 above, identify the current position of the ZCAS brand as a case study*. In order to establish this research objective, students' perceptions about the ZCAS brand from both the direct ranking and conjoint analysis in the second research phase were compared to the Zambian principal branding factors identified in the first research phase as discussed in Chapter 4.

As shown in Figure 5.3, teaching quality and course availability play a crucial role in students' choice of ZCAS. For example, when asked to individually rank these factors, more than 50% of the respondents thought that course availability was their number one attraction to ZCAS followed by teaching quality. However, when presented with bundles of factors in the conjoint analysis, teaching quality had more bearing on the decision to choose ZCAS. It would therefore seem that potential students are torn between these two factors and are willing to trade one for the other.

Figure 5.3 Perceptual map of ZCAS students' direct ranking and conjoint analysis of brand attributes



Course availability and teaching quality are also very important branding elements in the Zambian HE market. As more fully discussed in Sub-sections 4.3.1 and 4.4.1 of Chapter 4, content analysis identified teaching quality as the most important branding factor in Zambia, while course availability was seen as the most significant source of competitive advantage by Zambian university marketing executives. It can therefore be concluded that based on the two research phase findings, ZCAS has a strong brand position in the Zambian HE market because its premier brand factors are also the most important in the country as a whole.

5.3 Findings and analysis: ZCAS' comparative brand position in the Zambian higher education sector

In order to establish RO3 regarding the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia, the conjoint questionnaire that was used in the ZCAS survey was also administered to 280 first year students in seven public and private universities in the country. Quota sampling techniques were employed in selection of the sample. Although quota sampling is a non-probability sampling technique, sample representativeness was enhanced because the quota system ensured that all aspects of the population were considered both in terms of geographical location (i.e. samples selected from 1 out of 2 universities in Southern Province, 2 out of 7 universities on the Copperbelt Province and 4 out of 11 in Lusaka province) as well as type of university (i.e. samples selected from 1 out of 6 public universities and 6 out of 14 private universities). Coupled with the large sample size, it was envisaged that statistical inferences could be made about the population based on this sample (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp.187-188; Saunders *et al.*, 2009, pp.217-218).

Of the 280 questionnaires administered, 269 were found usable for the analysis. 94% of the respondents were aged 25 and below while 54% were female. Unlike the ZCAS sample that comprised full time and evening students, all university respondents were full time students as most such institutions do not offer evening classes. This explains why most of the respondents are aged 25 and below.

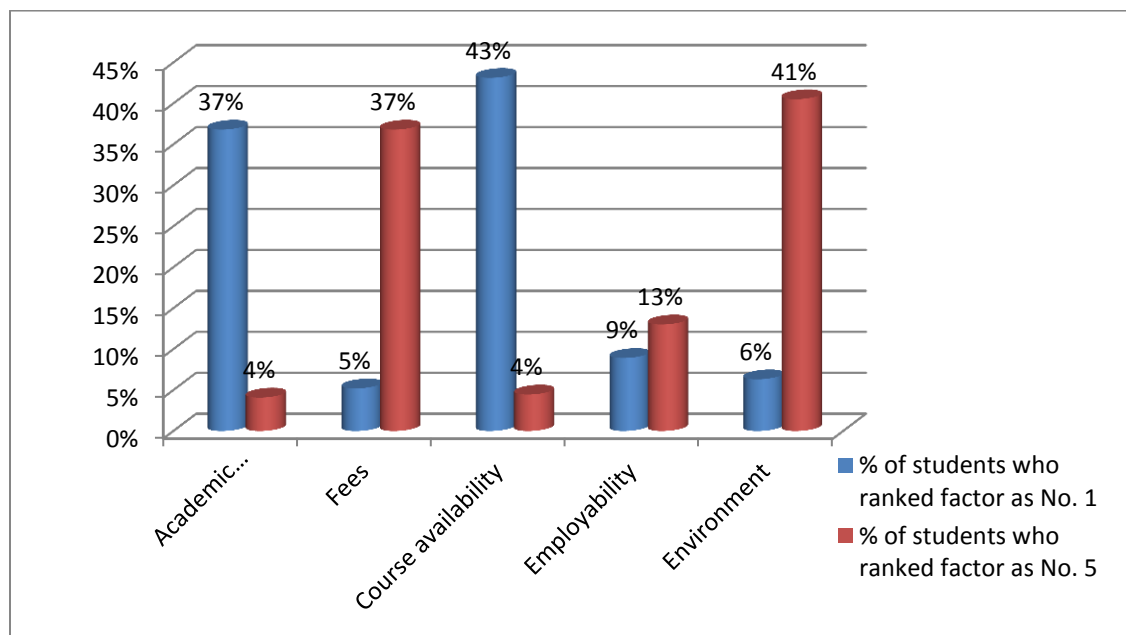
5.3.1 Ranking of the five main branding elements by university students

As shown in Figure 5.4 below, course availability (43%) and teaching quality/academic reputation (37%) were ranked as the two most important factors in student choice of university. These findings further validate the first research phase outcomes regarding the position of course availability and teaching quality as the premier branding elements in the Zambian higher education market. The other factors played a limited role (employability 9%; environment 6% and fees 5%). Except for environment and employability (ranked

third and fourth respectively by ZCAS students), the positions of the other factors are identical to ZCAS (see sub-section 5.2.1 above).

Employability seems to be of greater concern to university students than ZCAS students. This could be because, as more fully explained in Sub-sections 4.3.5 and 4.3.7 of Chapter 4, students in private universities were concerned about the recognition of these institutions. Qualifications obtained from private universities might therefore be perceived to be less attractive on the job market, hence this factor having a greater bearing on the choice decision.

Figure 5.4 Ranking of branding elements by university students



5.3.2 Universities conjoint analysis

As shown in Table 5.5 below, the universities estimation sample had high correlation – Pearson's r (.883) and Kendall's tau τ (.638) – indicating strong fit between the model and the obtained data (Hair *et al.*, 2010, pp.464-466). Similarly, the Kendall's tau for hold-outs of .667 indicates strong correlation between the predicted model and the validation sample. These goodness-of-fit measures suggest that the conjoint analysis was valid.

Table 5.5 Universities goodness-of-fit measures

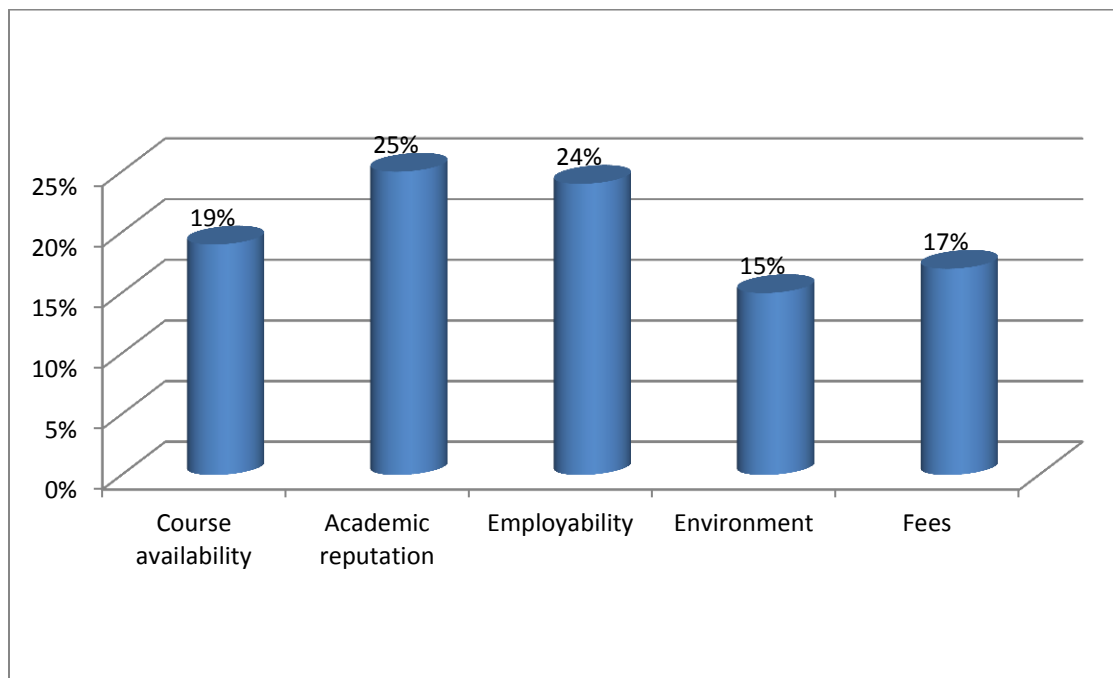
Correlations ^a		
	Value	Sig.
Pearson's R	.883	.000
Kendall's tau	.638	.000
Kendall's tau for Holdouts	.667	.087

a. Correlations between observed and estimated preferences

Interpretation of results

The conjoint analysis results presented in Figure 5.5 below revealed that academic reputation/teaching quality (25%) had the most influence on the decision to choose a university. This was closely followed by job prospects (24%). Course availability (19%), fees (17%) and learning environment (15%) had less impact on university choice decision.

Figure 5.5 Universities averaged importance values



Further analysis of the conjoint results suggests that university students had high preference for outstanding teaching quality with mean utility of 1.185 (see Table 5.6). The

preference level declined as the teaching quality deteriorated (moderate reputation utility = .790 and poor reputation utility of .395). Similar attribute level results were also observed for employment prospects (good employment prospects mean utility of 1.121, average job prospects utility = .747 and poor employment opportunities with utility of .374); learning environment (conducive environment mean utility = .234, average environment = .156 and poor learning environment utility of .078) and course availability (just what I wanted = .596, more or less what I wanted = .397 and not really what I wanted = .199).

Table 5.6 Universities Conjoint attribute level utilities

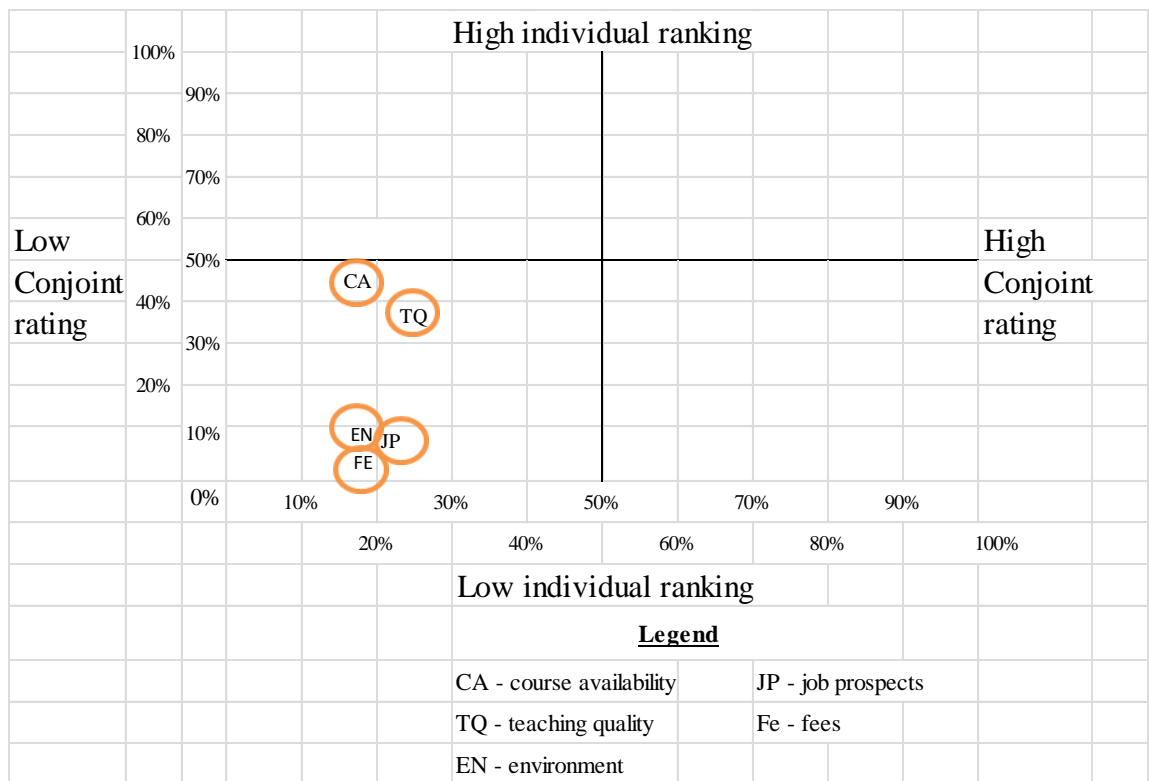
Factor	Factor Level	Utility Estimate	Std. Error
Reputation	Poor	.395	.090
	Average	.790	.180
	Outstanding	1.185	.270
Fees	Low	.041	.090
	Average	.082	.180
	High	.124	.270
Employability	Poor	.374	.090
	Average	.747	.180
	Good	1.121	.270
Environment	Poor	.078	.090
	Average	.156	.180
	Conducive	.234	.270
Course	Not really what I wanted	.199	.090
	More or less what I wanted	.397	.180
	Just what I wanted	.596	.270
(Constant)		.396	.409

Surprisingly, university students, just like their ZCAS counterparts, do not mind higher fees (mean utility = .124); and in fact get discouraged when fees are average (mean utility .082) and worse still when fees are low (mean utility = .041). Similar reasons as to why fees are not a significant influence on ZCAS students' choice decision may also be at play here (see Sub-section 5.2.2 above, i.e. low fees signaling poor quality and fees not being an issue because the students themselves not actually being the ones paying the fees for example). Additionally, for students in public universities, Government bursaries help to

cushion the impact of high fees, resulting in this factor having a reduced bearing on university choice decision.

Figure 5.6 below is a comparison of the direct ranking of the individual brand attributes against the rating of profiles or bundles of attributes in the conjoint analysis. The percentages reflect the number of students in the sample who ranked the brand attribute as their number one attraction to their university. As for ZCAS students, it is interesting to note that even though university students ranked course availability as their greatest attraction to their universities, this was not reflected in the actual choice decision. When confronted with practical situations in which they had to consider all factors and make some trade-offs, academic reputation and employability had a more significant bearing on the choice of university than course availability.

Figure 5.6 Perceptual map of universities' direct ranking and conjoint analysis of branding attributes



Teaching quality and employability seem to weigh heavily on the university choice decision probably because of Zambia's poor economic situation. As more fully discussed in Sub-section 4.3.1 in Chapter 4, university lecturers engage in consultancy work to earn extra income to supplement their low wages. This means that there is a reduced level of commitment to their teaching obligations, resulting in poor teaching quality.

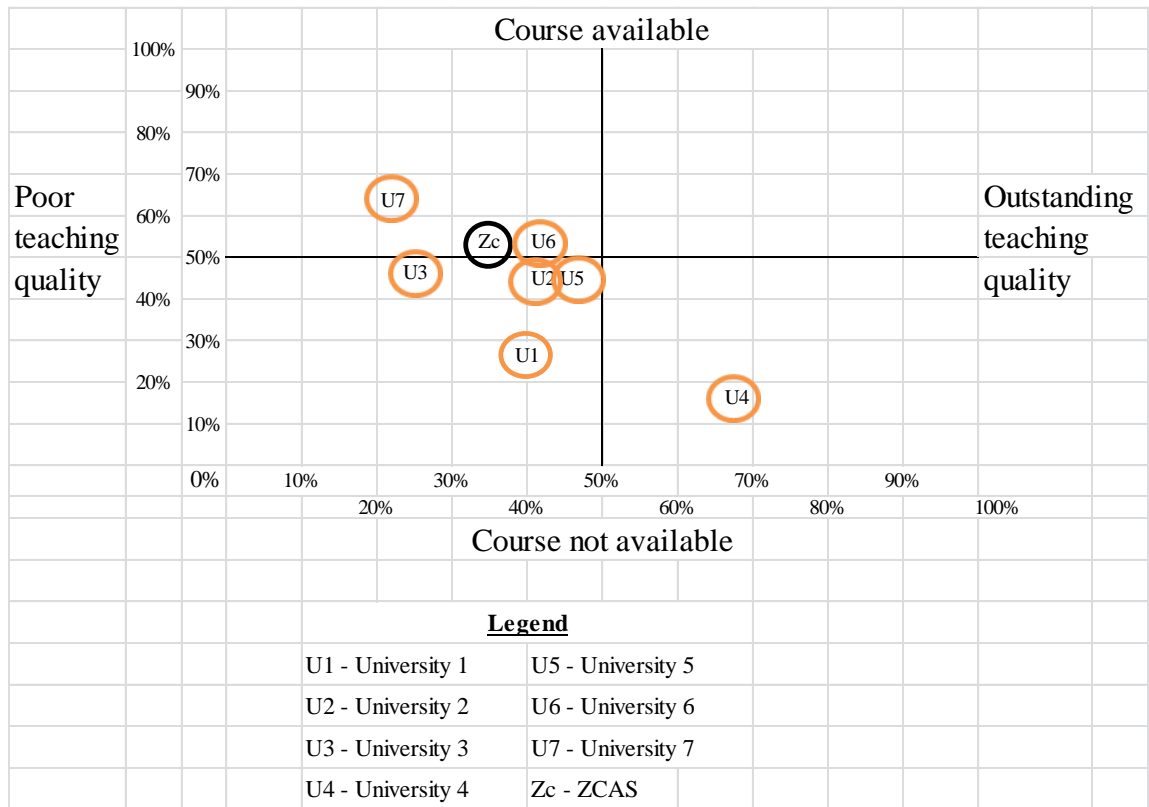
With regards to employability, the concerns of students getting qualifications or attending HEIs that enhance their employment opportunities were discussed in Sub-section 4.3.5 of Chapter 4. Zambia has a relatively high youth unemployment rate of over 20% (IndexMundi, 2011); this forces students to consider the reputation of a university's qualifications on the job market.

The research objective applicable to this phase of the second research is *RO3: Establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia.* In order to establish this research objective, university students' individual ranking and conjoint factor profile ratings for choosing their universities were compared firstly with those for ZCAS students and secondly against the principal branding elements that comprise the *Zambian HE brand model*.

Figures 5.7 and 5.8 below (both constructed on the basis of percentage of sampled students who ranked the brand attribute as their number one attraction to their HEI) , are simple manual graphic comparisons of ZCAS and sampled university students' perceptions of their HEIs on several brand attributes based on their individual ranking results.

Both Figures 5.7 and 5.8 below suggest that there is strong competition within the HE sector in Zambia because most of the universities are clustered together (Fill, 2006, p.378). ZCAS, in particular, has not positioned itself in a distinctive position in the market and has too many direct competitors. As can be seen from Figure 5.7 below, ZCAS has a fairly strong competitive position in terms of course availability; however, its competitive position in terms of teaching quality is relatively weak. With regard to learning environment and job prospects, ZCAS has a slight competitive edge over some of its competitors (see Figure 5.8 below). Several positioning strategies are recommended in Chapter 6.

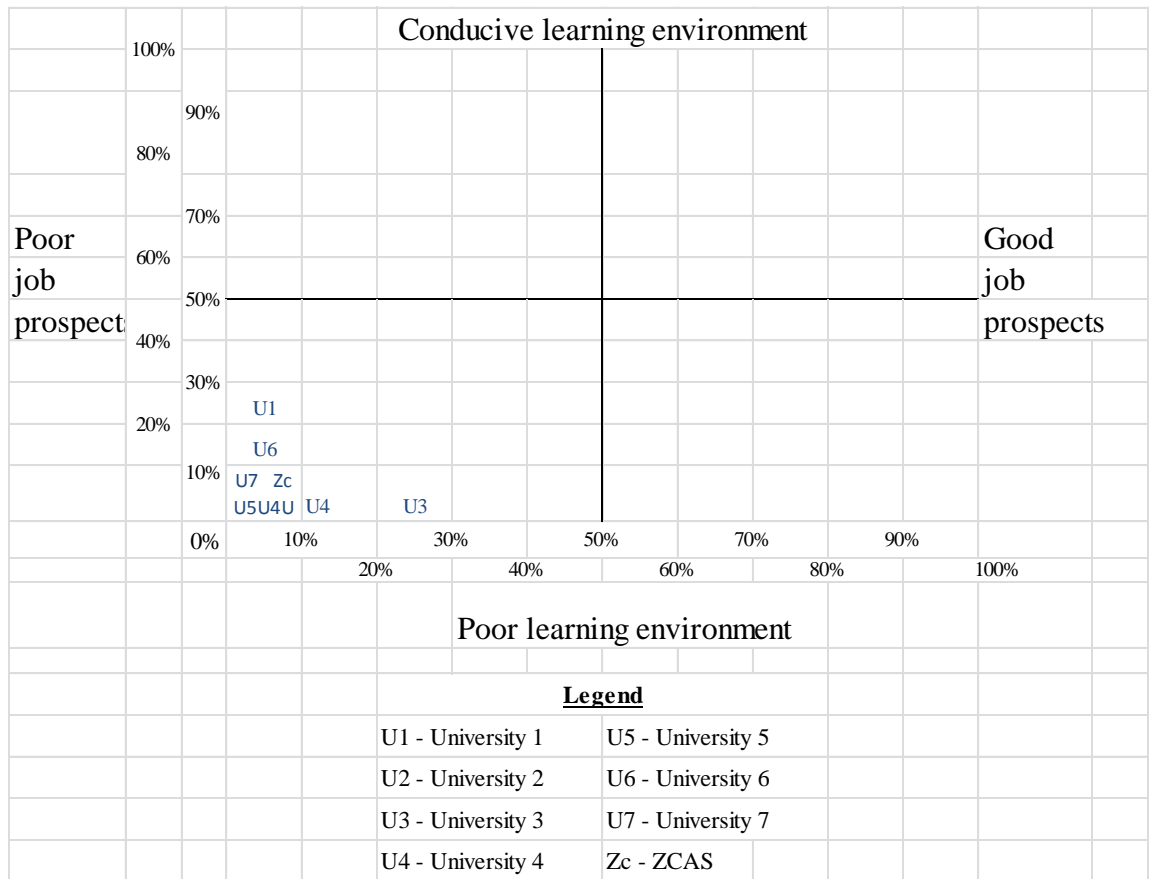
Figure 5.7 Perceptual map of ZCAS versus universities (course availability versus teaching quality)



According to the content analysis in Chapter 4, the five most considered HE branding factors in Zambia in order of importance were teaching quality, fees, course availability, facilities and employability; while course availability, teaching quality, facilities and infrastructure were perceived to be the most significant sources of competitive advantage (see Sections 4.3 and 4.4 respectively). From these findings, it can be argued, by using content analysis principles, that teaching quality, course availability and facilities are the most important higher education brand elements in Zambia.

Zambian university students value teaching quality, employment prospects and course availability more than the other factors when confronted with practical situations in which they have to consider all factors and make some trade-offs in the choice of a university (see Figure 5.5 above). Their ZCAS counterparts chose the institution because of teaching quality, course availability and environment (which includes facilities) (see Figure 5.2 above).

Figure 5.8 Perceptual map of ZCAS versus universities (environment versus employability)



ZCAS therefore seems to be competing fairly well in terms of how it is perceived by potential students in the Zambian HE recruitment market. This is because the reasons for choosing ZCAS are in line with the most important brand perceptions in the country and similar to those for university students. In fact it can be argued that ZCAS has a competitive edge over the other HEIs that participated in the second research phase because its brand perception is more in line with the Zambian HE brand model (i.e. the three reasons why students chose ZCAS are the most important factors that comprise the Zambian HE brand model).

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined and discussed the outcomes of the second research phase. The findings from the qualitative study discussed in Chapter 4 provided the underpinning for this conjoint study. The objectives of this conjoint study were twofold: firstly, to identify

the current position of the ZCAS brand as a case study (RO2) and secondly, to establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia (RO3).

In order to establish RO2, a sample of 110 ZCAS first year degree students completed a conjoint questionnaire that required them to rate factor profiles based on the principal branding elements that attracted them to the institution. Their ratings for choosing ZCAS were then compared to the principal branding elements in Zambia as ascertained in the first research phase in Chapter 4 in order to identify the current position of the ZCAS brand in the Zambian HE sector.

The study revealed that outstanding teaching quality, course availability and conducive learning environment had the greatest bearing on potential students' decision to choose ZCAS. These three factors are also very important branding elements in the Zambian HE market because content analysis identified teaching quality as the most important branding factor in Zambia, while course availability was seen as the most significant source of competitive advantage. It was therefore concluded that, based on the two research phase findings, ZCAS has a strong brand position in the Zambian HE market because its premier brand factors are also the most important in the country.

With respect to RO3 regarding the ZCAS brand's relative position to its higher education competitors in Zambia, a sample of 280 first year students in seven other HEIs in Zambia also completed the conjoint questionnaire. Their factor profile ratings for choosing their HEIs were compared with those for ZCAS students as well as the principal branding elements that comprise the Zambian HE brand model.

Perceptual mapping revealed that the HE market in Zambia was fairly competitive and that ZCAS had not sufficiently positioned itself away from the competition. However, the institution was competing fairly well in the market, even though there was a need to reposition itself.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to identify and measure the ZCAS brand in the higher education sector in Zambia, and consequently, identify areas for strengthening the brand's competitive position. Although there is substantial literature on higher education (HE) marketing generally, not much published empirical research has been undertaken on brand orientation in higher education, particularly in Zambia. The research findings would therefore not only be valuable to ZCAS and the HE sector in Zambia, but also contribute to the growing literature on HE branding in general.

In order to fulfill the research aim above, the study was designed to answer the following research question: *How can a higher education brand be identified, measured and used for competitive positioning?* Four research objectives were set up to help answer this research question and these form the basis of the conclusions on the study. RO1 on identification of branding elements forms the basis for contributions of the research to the branding literature in general while the rest of the research objectives provide the underpinning for managerial and operational contributions of the study.

This chapter therefore outlines the conclusions from the study, including recommendations on how ZCAS can strengthen its brand position, discusses the study's limitations and suggests possible areas in which further research may be undertaken. It is accordingly structured as follows. Contributions of the study to the literature on higher education branding are outlined in Section 6.2. Brand positioning issues relevant to ZCAS (i.e. contributions of the study at managerial and operational levels) are discussed in Section 6.3. A discussion of the limitations of the study and directions for future research is given in Section 6.4. Finally, a summary of the chapter is given in Section 6.5.

6.2 Contributions of the study to higher education brand management

This section summarises the contributions that this research has made to the literature on higher education branding. The findings are of particular interest to brand management of higher education brands in developing countries. The relevant research objective that addressed this issue is *ROI: Identify the relevant components that constitute a higher education brand model in the Zambian context.*

The purpose of this research objective was to unveil the principal Zambian higher education brand orientation dimensions. These include factors students consider when choosing HEIs, sources of competitive advantage in the higher education sector, the influencers of student choice of HEI and sources of information students consult when making higher education related decisions. The findings of the study are compared to the main themes in the literature review and significant new insights into HE branding are highlighted as the study's contributions.

6.2.1 Elements of a higher education brand

The elements of a higher education brand that students consider when choosing colleges or universities were discussed in Section 4.3 of Chapter 4. Using content analysis, the ten most considered HE branding factors in Zambia in order of importance were teaching quality, fees, course availability, facilities, employability, infrastructure, recognition, credibility, culture and environment. Other factors identified that may have some impact on the HE decision in Zambia were reputation, location, timely completion/course duration, collaborations, learning materials and safety and security.

Most of the Zambian HE branding elements unveiled in the current study are comparable to other empirical research findings world-wide as summarised in Table 2.3 of the literature review chapter and in Kusumawati's (2010) developing country HE literature review findings (see Sub-section 2.5.1 of Chapter 2). Of the top ten Zambian HE branding elements, recognition and credibility do not seem to feature very prominently in other countries. These brand attributes may be more prominent in Zambia (and perhaps many other developing countries) than elsewhere because most of the Zambian HE sector is still

in its infancy. As more fully discussed in Sub-Sections 4.3.7 and 4.3.8 of Chapter 4, recognition and credibility are issues which concern private universities in the country because most of these institutions are newly established, which may not be the case elsewhere. The continued setting up of new universities by the government and private sector implies that recognition and credibility are likely to remain as significant branding factors in the short to medium term in Zambia.

Another factor identified in the current research that was not evident in Kusumawati's (2010) developing country HE literature review findings is timely completion or course duration (i.e. the time it takes to complete a given programme of study). As more fully discussed in Sub-section 4.3.14 of Chapter 4, publicly funded universities in Zambia are subject to political interference which occasionally disrupts the academic calendar. Programmes of study therefore take longer to complete than would be the case if there were no such disruptions. This situation may be peculiar to Zambia and is likely to persist as more government funded universities are being set up.

The findings from the current study have strengthened the conclusions made in the literature review chapter to the effect that there are differences in the significance of student choice criteria of HEIs (and the consequent marketing/branding implications) between developed and developing countries and even amongst and within developed and developing countries due to contextual differences (see Sub-section 2.5.1 of Chapter 2). For example, whilst in Zambia teaching quality, fees and course availability are the three most important choice criteria as shown in Figure 4.1 of Chapter 4, reputation, geographic location and campus safety are considered to be the three most important brand attributes in South African HE choice (Beneke and Human, 2010). In Ghana, another Sub-Saharan African country, Afful-Broni and Noi-Okwei (2010) identified availability of desired programme, academic reputation and quality of teaching as the main reasons students enroll at a particular university.

6.2.2 Sources of competitive advantage in Zambia

As more fully discussed in Section 4.4 of Chapter 4, the top four factors identified as sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE environment, in order of importance,

were course availability, teaching quality, facilities and infrastructure. Fees, employability and credibility were tied in fifth place. These sources of competitive advantage are similar to those found in the other empirical studies carried out in other countries, even though the order of importance is different for contextual reasons (e.g. see Huang, 2012, p.167; Lynch and Baines, 2004).

The disparities in the HE sources of competitive advantage and their importance can be attributed to the different HE environments in which the studies referred to above were carried out. For example, being a developing country, Zambia is likely to have a much higher unemployment rate than the UK and Taiwan. This implies that whilst facilitating employment opportunities for graduates can be used as a significant source of competitive advantage in Zambia (and other countries in which unemployment is high), this may not apply to the same extent in many other jurisdictions.

According to De Chernatony, McDonald and Wallace (2011, pp.324-329), Dibb *et al.* (2006, pp.49-50) and Porter (1985, p.3), a brand's competitive advantage arises from two sources, namely cost leadership and differentiation. Cost leadership creates value for consumers because it costs them less to buy the brand than competing brands offering similar benefits, while differentiation creates unique benefits for consumers. An application of these definitions to the top four sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE sector (i.e. course availability, teaching quality, facilities and infrastructure) suggests that Zambian universities use more differentiation strategies than cost leadership approaches. This means that there is still scope, at least in the short to medium term, for Zambian HEIs to find more sustainable competitive advantages in terms of managing their costs better than competitors.

6.2.3 Information sources

As discussed in more detail in Section 4.5 of Chapter 4, the current research identified, in order of importance, print media (mostly newspapers), friends and alumni (i.e. current and former students of the HEI), education expos, electronic media (mostly radio and TV), school visitations and internet as the most frequently consulted information sources by potential Zambian students seeking information about the HE sector.

Four of the information sources mentioned above – i.e. internet, friends and alumni (‘friends’ in literature review), education expos (‘visit or open days at university’ in literature review) and print media – are also the four most commonly used information sources by potential students elsewhere in the world (e.g. see Al-Fattal, 2010; Johnston, 2010; Songan *et al.*, 2010; Carter and Yeo, 2009; Ali and Miller, 2007; Gray *et al.*, 2003) as discussed in Sub-section 2.5.2 of the literature review chapter. Of these four information sources, only the ‘internet’ is not a top four information source in Zambia. This could be because, being a developing country, Zambia’s ICT infrastructure is not very developed to enable universal internet access. In addition, as discussed in more detail in Sub-section 4.5.6 of Chapter 4, many universities are struggling to update and maintain their websites in a serviceable state.

The other two important information sources in Zambia, i.e. electronic media and school visitations, seem to be less relevant in HE markets elsewhere as they were hardly mentioned in the literature reviewed. The reason for this could be that in more advanced economies, universities are using more accessible technologies such as the internet to reach potential students instead of these traditional marketing communications media.

6.2.4 Influencers of student choice

As more fully discussed in Section 4.6 of Chapter 4, the most prolific influencers of student HE choice in Zambia were friends, parents and self. These influencers are also the top three identified by other researchers in other jurisdictions (e.g. Morrisha and Leeb, 2011; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Hooley and Lynch, 1981). Other influencers with relatively less influence were sponsors, career masters, relatives, employers and university agents.

The most peculiar influencer in Zambia as unveiled by the current research is the employer. There is no mention of employers being influencers of student choice in the literature reviewed. This is probably because most of the published research on influencers of student choice has been carried out in developed countries where the rate of unemployment is generally low; in such circumstances, the wishes or demands of

prospective employers may not have a significant impact on student choice. In Zambia however, the unemployment rate is high, hence many employers may not only be interested in the prospective employee's qualifications, but also the HEI where those qualifications were obtained from. Prospective students may therefore be influenced to choose HEIs that are considered credible by their current or potential employers.

6.3 Managerial and operational contributions of the research

This section is a summary of the main managerial and operational contributions of the study. These relate to ZCAS' brand positioning and how that position could be strengthened further.

6.3.1 RO2: Based on the brand components identified in RO1 above, identify the current position of the ZCAS brand as a case study.

The purpose of this research objective was to establish ZCAS' current brand position in the Zambian HE market. The data collection instrument used required respondents (i.e. a sample of 110 ZCAS students) to rank the five main branding elements identified in the first research phase (i.e. academic reputation, fees, course availability, employability and learning environment) from number 1 to 5, with the most important factor that attracted the student to ZCAS being ranked number 1 and the least important as number 5. The second part of the questionnaire required the same respondents to rate bundles of the factors in a conjoint experiment. The ranking and ratings for choosing ZCAS were then compared to the principal branding elements in Zambia as ascertained in the first research phase in Chapter 4 in order to identify the current position of the ZCAS brand in the Zambian HE sector.

The results indicated that teaching quality, course availability and facilities play a crucial role in students' choice of ZCAS. For example, whereas the direct ranking of factors showed that more than 50% of the respondents thought that course availability was their number one attraction to ZCAS followed by teaching quality, the conjoint experiment suggested that teaching quality played a superior role in the decision to choose ZCAS. It

would therefore seem that potential students are torn between these two factors and are therefore willing to trade one for the other.

Course availability and teaching quality are also very important branding elements in the Zambian HE market. As more fully discussed in Sub-sections 4.3.1 and 4.4.1 of Chapter 4, content analysis identified teaching quality as the most important branding factor in Zambia, while course availability was seen as the most significant source of competitive advantage by Zambian university marketing executives. It can therefore be concluded that based on the two research phase findings, ZCAS has a strong brand position in the Zambian HE market because its premier brand factors are also the most important in the HE sector in Zambia.

6.3.2 RO3: Establish the current position of the ZCAS brand relative to its higher education competitors in Zambia.

With respect to RO3 regarding the ZCAS brand's relative position to its higher education competitors in Zambia, a sample of 280 first year students in seven universities in Zambia completed the conjoint questionnaire. Their factor profile ratings for choosing their universities were compared with those for ZCAS students as well as the principal branding elements that comprise the Zambian HE brand model.

Perceptual mapping revealed that the HE market in Zambia was fairly competitive and that ZCAS had not sufficiently positioned itself away from the competition (see Figures 5.7 and 5.8 in Sub-section 5.3.2 of Chapter 5). However, the institution was competing fairly well in the market, especially in terms of its course availability and learning environment.

Zambian university students valued teaching quality, employment prospects and course availability more than the other factors when confronted with practical situations in which they had to consider all factors and make some trade-offs in the choice of a university. For ZCAS and the Zambian HE sector in general, the three most valued branding factors on which the HEI choice is based are teaching quality, course availability and facilities.

ZCAS therefore seems to be competing fairly well in the Zambian HE recruitment market because the reasons why potential students chose the institution were more in line with the most important brand perceptions in the country.

6.3.3 RO4: Make recommendations on how ZCAS can strengthen its brand position in the higher education sector in Zambia.

This section suggests steps that ZCAS can take to become more competitive in the Zambian HE market. In making the recommendations, consideration was given to the literature review in Chapter 2 and the findings from the two research phases in Chapter 4 and 5.

As more fully discussed in Section 4.4 of Chapter 4, the top four factors identified as sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE environment were course availability, teaching quality, facilities and infrastructure. Recommendations on how ZCAS can become more competitive are based on these factors.

Course availability

As more fully discussed in Section 4.4 of Chapter 4, course availability was identified as the premier source of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE environment. And as suggested in Sub-section 5.2.1 of Chapter 5, course availability was ranked as the number 1 attraction for ZCAS students because the institution does not only provide tuition for world renowned professional qualifications but also offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in collaboration with highly ranked world class HEIs. However, ZCAS' position on the perceptual map on course availability (see Figure 5.7 in Chapter 5 above) suggests that the institution needs to do more to get ahead of the competition.

ZCAS needs to introduce more programmes in collaboration with renowned HEIs. However, the current collaborations the institution has with UK universities are very expensive to maintain mainly due to high costs of quality assurance requirements. The relatively high student fees charged by these universities also force ZCAS to reduce tuition fees in order to remain competitive, thereby reducing its revenue.

Recommendation:

ZCAS should try to enter into collaborations with top HEIs in the Southern African region, particularly with South African universities such as the University of Cape Town and the University of South Africa that are highly ranked (4ICU, 2013; TSL Education, 2013) to possibly cut down on collaboration franchise costs. According to UNESCO-UIS (2012c), South African universities attract more students from the sub-Saharan region than any other country because South Africa has one of the most extensive tertiary education systems in Africa. ZCAS can therefore benefit from these universities' strong brands. The close proximity to South Africa, compared to Europe, for example, implies that quality assurance costs are likely to be much lower.

The Technical Director – Academic Programmes, who has overall responsibility for introducing new degree programmes, could contact the two universities mentioned above with a view to entering into a collaboration agreement to offer a number of their business and IT programmes at ZCAS. Considering that this process is quite long, any new courses should be earmarked for introduction in 2015 to enable ZCAS adequately prepare for the launch.

Teaching quality

Both marketing executives in Zambian universities and ZCAS students identified teaching quality as a major source of competitive advantage in the country (see Section 4.4 and 5.2 of Chapters 4 and 5 respectively). ZCAS' comparative position on teaching quality indicates that the institution is behind its competitors on this attribute (see the perceptual map at Figure 5.7 of Chapter 5 above). Even though the institution has stringent quality control standards, there is need to strengthen its quality control framework to become more competitive. An increase in the number of teaching staff with higher academic qualifications, especially doctorate degrees, might also help improve students' perception of the institution's teaching quality.

Recommendations:

1. Quality assurance policy. Even though ZCAS has stringent quality control procedures, there is no policy framework in place to provide direction. The institution must therefore draft a quality assurance policy. The policy should adopt a holistic approach to quality assurance and should not restrict quality control in relation to the teaching faculty alone.

The CEO must take charge of this exercise and set up a steering committee that should draft the policy for review by senior management and approval by the board. This exercise could be completed by June 2014, in time for the 2014/2015 academic year that commences in August 2014.

2. Quality assurance unit or department. There is currently no specific person or group of people responsible for quality assurance within ZCAS. In order to ensure that a more holistic approach to quality assurance (not just teaching quality) is adopted, the CEO should appoint a quality officer or interim committee from current members of staff. The quality officer or committee could then spearhead drafting the quality assurance policy suggested above.

In the meantime, the CEO should consider setting up a budget line for establishing a fully-fledged unit or department of properly trained staff in the 2014 or 2015 annual budget. The quality assurance unit or department could be in place to design, implement and monitor quality control within the institution in the next two years or so.

3. With regard to qualifications of teaching staff, ZCAS must continue supporting its employees who are pursuing doctorate studies. However, the benefits from this exercise are likely to be realized in the medium to long term as doctorate studies take a long time to complete. In the short term, the college should engage teaching staff with doctorate degrees, especially on its postgraduate programmes, in order to boost students' perception of the institution's teaching quality. Such lecturing staff could be engaged on part-time basis to reduce staff costs. The Technical Director – Academic Programmes, who has overall responsibility for running undergraduate

and postgraduate degree programmes, should engage more staff with doctorate degrees to teach on postgraduate programmes. Given that the college has planned to introduce more postgraduate programmes during the academic year 2013/2014, three more lecturing staff with doctorate degrees should be targeted for part time employment to add to the existing three.

Facilities and Infrastructure

Facilities and infrastructure were aggregated with other factors to create a more embracing branding factor termed learning environment for the purpose of the second research phase (see Sub-section 4.8.4 of Chapter 4). The learning environment was ranked third among the five factors that attract students to ZCAS and was also the third most influential factor on student choice decision in the conjoint experiment (see Section 5.2 of Chapter 5).

ZCAS has a very good learning environment; from the researcher's observations during visits to most universities in the country, very few have as good infrastructure and facilities as ZCAS. However, this competitive advantage is not sustainable because it can easily be copied as long as one has financial resources. In fact several HEIs are currently developing new infrastructure and improving their facilities. The perceptual map at Figure 5.8 above suggests that ZCAS needs to do more to improve students' perception of its learning environment.

Recommendations:

1. ZCAS should continue maintaining its infrastructure and facilities in top operational condition. The Registrar, who has overall responsibility for maintenance of the college's infrastructure, should provide for an adequate annual budget line for maintenance purposes. This should include expenditure on repainting the buildings, cleaning of classrooms, offices and the surroundings, replacement of broken classroom and office furniture, landscaping and refuse collection.
2. ZCAS started offering its services on the Copperbelt (about 400km north of Lusaka) in order to bring education closer to this market. However, the institution has no infrastructure of its own and uses rented accommodation to run its

operations there. ZCAS should consider setting up permanent infrastructure and facilities in order to maintain a high standard of service delivery and cut down on renting costs. The Registrar should provide a budget line in either the 2015 or 2016 annual budget for acquisition of land and/or buildings in Kitwe.

6.4 Limitations of the study and directions for future research

There are a number of shortcomings to the current study which restrict generalizing its findings to the entire HE sector in Zambia. These limitations provide opportunities for further research.

Firstly, the research was largely carried out in universities and did not include colleges (apart from ZCAS, the main case study organisation). Additionally, the study combined public and private universities as if they were one type of HEI. As Kusumwati (2011) asserts, colleges are a different type of higher education institution from universities. By implication, publicly funded universities are also a different type of institution from private universities; for example, Songan *et al.* (2010) and Ancheh, Krishnan and Nurtjahja (2007) identified different brand attributes and their significance in student HE choice between public and private universities in Malaysia. Research that focuses on college education, public universities and private universities as having distinct recruitment markets could therefore reveal different brand models that could be used to strengthen the competitiveness of these HE sub sectors.

Secondly, only students that had already made the decision to choose particular HEIs were involved in the conjoint study. This excluded many of the school leavers who considered higher education but failed to achieve their objective. Targeting school leavers who are in the process of making the HE choice decision could have identified factors that potential students consider. Many researchers such as Souter and Turner (2002) and Moogan *et al.* (2001) adopted this approach. Marketing strategists could then devise more relevant strategies on how to attract these potential students to their institutions.

Thirdly, postgraduate students were not included in the study. Branding factors relevant to this category of higher education may be different from undergraduate students. For

example, employability or job prospects may not be an important consideration for prospective postgraduate students because most, if not all of them, are already in employment. For the same reason, facilitating employment opportunities may not be a significant source of competitive advantage in relation to this category of students. However, as Mpinganjira's (2011) study revealed, the desire to acquire qualifications of international repute drives postgraduate student recruitment; and yet this attribute may not apply to undergraduate students equally. Research that focuses on the postgraduate market could help marketing executives develop more tailored marketing strategies, plans and tactics for this market segment.

Fourthly, the university sample was considered to be homogenous and no cluster analysis was carried out during the conjoint experiment. It is possible that within the Zambian HE sector, different groups of candidates, perhaps based on their socio-economic status, have different preference structures when it comes to choice of university. For example, some conjoint studies such as Kusumawati (2011) and Hooley and Lynch (1981) identified clusters of students with different attribute preferences within the same HE market. Future studies could therefore carry out cluster analysis to identify market segments, if any, for whom specific branding elements are more important than others. This could help market nichers develop more relevant marketing strategies, plans and tactics.

6.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the contributions that the study has made to the literature on higher education branding in general and particularly to the HE sector in Zambia. Limitations of the study and suggested possible areas in which further research could be undertaken have also been discussed.

The study concluded that many of the characteristics of the Zambian HE brand model are similar to those identified in other jurisdictions. Unique to Zambia is the importance attached to recognition and credibility of a HEI as branding factors, mainly because most of the universities are new and yet to achieve universal recognition as credible providers of higher education. Similarly, the internet is yet to be exploited fully as a source of

information about HEIs, while Zambian employers are considered to have greater influence on student HE choices than elsewhere due to high unemployment levels in the country.

The ZCAS brand seems to be competing favourably on the Zambian HE market. Students seem to be attracted to the institution because of its outstanding teaching quality, highly reputed courses and a conducive learning environment. These factors are also the most important branding elements and sources of competitive advantage in the Zambian HE environment. However, ZCAS needs to continuously innovate in order to sustain its competitive edge. Some of the recommended innovations to ensure sustainable competitive advantage in the interim period include entering into collaborations with top South African universities, strengthening its quality assurance policy framework and setting up a quality assurance team.

The current study was limited in scope as it only focused on the HE brand perceptions of first year university students by using conjoint analysis techniques. This means that there are many opportunities for further research on brand management in higher education in Zambia. Future studies could focus on school leavers intending to enroll not only in universities, but also in colleges. The postgraduate university choice process could also be a subject of study. Furthermore, other multivariate data analysis techniques, such as cluster analysis, could be used to identify market segments with differing university choice preference models to achieve better focus in marketing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 List of higher education institutions in Zambia

Sl/ no.	HE institution	City/town	Programmes offered	Government or private
1	Cavendish University (Z)	Lusaka	Business** and medical up to master's degree level	Private
2	Copperbelt University	Kitwe	Business, engineering and medical up to PhD level	Government
3	Copperstone University	Kitwe	Business and engineering up to master's degree level	Private
4	Chreso University	Lusaka	Business, medical and theology up to PhD level	Private
5	Levy Mwanawasa University	Ndola	Teacher education up to bachelor's degree level	Government
6	DMI – St Eugene University	Lusaka	Business and engineering up to master's degree level	Private
7	LIUTEBM	Lusaka and Livingstone	Business up to PhD level	Private
8	Lusaka Apex Medical University	Lusaka	Medical up to bachelor's degree level	Private
9	Mulungushi University	Kabwe	Business and science up to bachelor's degree level	Government
10	Nkrumah University	Kabwe	Mainly teacher education up to bachelor's degree level and a few business courses	Government
11	Northrise University	Ndola	Business up to master's degree	Private
12	Pamodzi University		Business and social science up to bachelor's degree level	Private
13	Rusangu University	Monze	Business, engineering and theology up to master's degree level	Private
14	University of Africa	Lusaka	Business up to master's degree	Private
15	University of Lusaka	Lusaka	Business up to PhD level	Private
16	University of Zambia	Lusaka	Business, science, engineering, medical, education up to PhD level	Government
17	Victoria Falls University	Livingstone	Business up to master's degree	Private
18	Zambia Catholic University	Kalulushi	Business and theology up to bachelor's degree level	Private
19	Zambian Open University	Lusaka	Business and social science up to master's degree level	Private
20	Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies (ZCAS)	Lusaka	Business up to master's degree level	Government

** Business courses include accountancy, marketing and business administration

Appendix 2 Focus group discussion introductory and request letter for students



Kelvin Kayombo,
Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies,
PO Box 35243,
Lusaka.

7th September, 2012

Request to participate in a focus group discussion about the branding of higher education institutions in Zambia.

Hello,

My name is Kelvin Kayombo; I'm a doctoral researcher from Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University, United Kingdom. My research aims to investigate the factors that affect higher education brands in Zambia.

The discussion does not need deep experience – you just need to express your knowledge and behaviour about how and why you chose to study in a particular university or college. I would ask whether you would like to participate in one of the focus groups - that will be great. Your participation is a chance for both of us to share the experience in one of the research methods.

Our discussions will last between one hour and one and a half hours. All the focus group discussions will be held at ZCAS. If you would like to participate and help in this important study, please reply and write down your contact details to make the process of contacting you and organising the venue and other matters easier.

Please reply by giving the following contact details:

My mobile is

My email is

Regards,

Kelvin Kayombo

DBA candidate

Cell-phone: +260 978 886879; E-mail: Kelvin.kayombo@zcas.edu.zm

Appendix 3 Student focus group discussion guide

Focus group procedures:

Overall subject: HE brand dimensions in Zambia.

Time required: 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes.

Focus group participants: 6 - 8 members

Audio voice recorder: switch on before introductions begin

Introduction

1. Welcome participants and introduce myself.
2. Ask participants to introduce themselves to one another.
3. Give an idea about the research objectives and study theme.
4. Explain the rationale behind conducting the focus group.
5. Illustrate the reasons why participants were chosen.
6. Give an idea about research ethics and confidentiality. Remind the participants that their sensitive personal data and contact details will not be used in any analysis or given to anyone else.
7. Explain general discussion roles and procedures, including voice recording of the discussion to facilitate processing.
8. Respond to participants' questions and explanations.

9. Collect some demographic and statistical data about participants by using a simple questionnaire that contains the following:

9.1 Gender (please tick whichever is applicable) Male..... Female.....

9.2 Age group (please tick whichever is applicable) 15 – 25 years

26 – 35 years

36 – 45 years

Over 45 years

9.3 Courses pursued

9.4 Educational level e.g. diploma, degree, MBA

9.5 Universities or colleges attended

9.6 Reasons for choosing current HE institution

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10. Start the discussion by using a number of key questions that guide the semi-structured focus group discussion in the following three areas.

11. Elements of a HEI brand – I would like us to discuss what, in general, attracts students to colleges and universities. Probe for the following, as appropriate:

11.1 What do you think attracts students to particular tuition providers?

11.2 What factors do you consider when deciding which higher education institution to go to and why? Which of these factors had the greatest impact on your decision to choose ZCAS?

11.3 Why would you choose to learn in a particular college or university?

11.4 Why did you decide to come to ZCAS?

11.5 Why did you decide to leave your former college or university?

11.6 What would make you leave ZCAS for another HE institution?

11.7 What do you value most about ZCAS?

11.8 What other HE institutions did you consider learning from? What makes ZCAS unique?

11.9 What do you think ZCAS is doing well to retain you and prevent you from leaving for another college/university?

11.10 Discuss the extent, if any, to which you considered the following issues when making your HE choices: reputation of the institution, location of the institution, employability of graduates, course suitability, teaching quality, costs (tuition and living expenses), HEI's facilities, learning environment, easy of entry and safety and security.***

**** Since this is a leading question, it will be the last to be asked in this category. This is meant to encourage participants to come up with the actual brand elements they considered in their HE decisions.*

12. Information sources consulted/used in HE decision making – I would like us to discuss the sources of information that you used in choosing your preferred HEI and what it offers. Probe for the following, as appropriate:

12.1 What sort of information did you need to make your HE choices? In particular what did you want to know about your preferred HEI?

12.2 How and from where did you get this information? How easy was it to get? What else would you have liked to know about HEIs when making your decisions?

12.3 Which source of information was most relevant to you? Please explain why.

12.4 Which media do you think HEIs should use to reach potential students? Please explain why.

12.5 How did you learn about ZCAS and what it offers? Was the information provided concise and easy to understand? What else would you have liked to know about ZCAS at the time you were deciding on which HEI to go to? Did the messages you got reflect what ZCAS actually does in practice?

12.6 Did you use any of the following information sources, if so how would you rate their importance to you? These include the internet, friends, visit or open days at university, print media, educational exhibition and fair, family and prospectuses. ***

**** Since this is a leading question, it will be the last to be asked in this category. This is meant to encourage participants to come up with the actual sources of information they used in their HE decisions.*

13. Influencers of HE decision – please let us now discuss who influenced your HE choices. Probe for the following, as appropriate:

13.1 Did you consult anyone for advice when deciding which HEI to study with or programme of study to pursue? If so what advice did you get?

13.2 What role did any advice you sought play in the HE decisions you made? Would you have made different choices if you had not taken the advice into account?

13.3 Who influenced you the most to choose ZCAS and the programme of study you are pursuing?

13.4 Who made the decision for you to come to ZCAS?

13.5 Did your parents, friends, college teachers or university agents influence your HE decisions or did you make the decision yourself without recourse to any of these people? In any case who influenced you the most? ***

**** Since this is a leading question, it will be the last question to be asked in this category. This is meant to encourage participants to come up with the actual people/parties who influenced their HE decisions.*

Closing – Summarise and thank the participants.

Appendix 4 HE marketing/brand management experts' interview guide (*Adapted from: Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani, 2009*)

Interview procedures:

Overall subject: HE brand dimensions in Zambia.

Time required: 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes.

Audio voice recorder: Request to record the interview and if participant is agreeable then switch on before introductions begin.

Ethics and confidentiality: Give an idea about research ethics and confidentiality. Remind the interviewee that their sensitive personal data and contact details will not be used in any analysis or given to anyone else. Inform the interviewee that views they express in the interview are used for research purposes only and that they will not be referred to by name in the thesis or other publications.

- 1.1 What is your interpretation of the term university brand, looking at the issue from a prospective student's perspective, e.g. how was the brand perceived during open days by prospective students?
- 1.2 If you had to describe the most important things in the brand of a university, looking at the matter from the viewpoint of prospective students, what would these be? Which two or three of these are most important and why?
- 1.3 What do prospective students normally want to know about your university e.g. during open days, trade fairs, exhibitions, school visitations, telephone/e-mail queries?
- 1.4 What reasons, if any, do exiting students give for leaving or dropping out of your university?
- 1.5 What are the main symbolic representations of the university and the main communications activities that contribute to the brand, e.g. name, logo, advertising slogans? Which elements of the brand are most important for marketing the brand?

- 1.6 What service elements do you think are important for a university brand (from a prospective student's point of view) and why, e.g. library, IT and other facilities, student support services, teaching staff and administrative support?
- 1.7 What impact do you think the institution's vision and mission has on potential students? Which aspects are most important, e.g. strategic directions, market position?
- 1.8 How do you think the physical situation and geographical location of the university influences prospective students, e.g. physical quality of the university's premises, attractiveness of the geographical areas in which campuses are situated, convenience of the location vis-à-vis travelling to classes?
- 1.9 How do you think the culture of the university influences potential students, e.g. its organisational values, positioning, organisational personality and corporate identity?
- 1.10 Which elements of the university's image are given particular emphasis in order to attract potential students, e.g. heritage and reputation, graduation prospects, modernity, innovativeness, suitability of the institution for certain types of student, ease of entry, and levels of fees?
- 1.11 What key factors influence decisions on your university's brand identity, e.g. recruitment considerations, internal educational beliefs/philosophy/ethos, financial problems? Who takes these decisions?
- 1.12 Whom do you think influences student choice of university in your recruitment markets? How does this affect your marketing strategy and marketing communications?
- 1.13 What information sources do you think students and their influencers consult in your recruitment markets? What media do you use to provide information about your university?

- 1.14 What actions, if any, are you taking to build an international brand?
- 1.15 What do you think are the unique characteristics of your university that attract potential students to the institution?
- 1.16 How is your university different from other HEIs? How does your university achieve and maintain this? Why is it difficult for other HEIs to imitate your university?
- 1.17 What do you think your university does better than other HEIs? Please explain and illustrate.
- 1.18 In which of the following differentiation features do you think your university is superior to other HEIs? Please illustrate. Features include functional excellence; having better trained employees (employee differentiation); superior distribution channel coverage, expertise and performance (channel differentiation); powerful, compelling images that appeal to consumers' social and psychological needs (image differentiation); and a better and faster service delivery system (service differentiation).
- 1.19 In which of the following cost leadership aspects do you think your university is superior to other HEIs? Please illustrate. Features include selecting cheaper sources of input materials, economies of scale, use of technology in service delivery, rationalizing the service range, gaining experience faster than competitors and reducing service levels.
- 1.20 Overall, to what do you attribute your "successful"/clear brand (or indeed other successful brands)? Please discuss and expand as you wish.
- 1.21 How many years have you worked in the area of marketing and what types of positions have you occupied?

Adapted from: Ali-Choudhury, Bennet and Savani (2009)

Appendix 5 Coding manual

All current codes

HU: DBA First Research Phase
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\kelvin.kayombo\Desktop\kelvin.ka...\DBA First Research Phase.hpr7]
Edited by: Super
Date/Time: 2012-12-20 07:48:21

Admissions office/HEI staff

Created: 2012-12-10 21:15:45 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:54:31

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 13

Comment:

This includes information obtained from the HEI's admissions office and staff.

Billboards

Created: 2012-12-12 07:01:23 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:54:33

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 2

Careers masters

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:51:43

Families (1): Influencers

Quotations: 11

Collaborations

Created: 2012-12-11 07:47:23 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:49:32

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 30

Comment:

These include partnerships and MOUs an HEI enters into with other organisations. Collaborations may enhance the status/recognition of a HEI.

Course availability

Created: 2012-12-10 20:59:37 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:49:37

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 95

Comment:

The range of courses/programmes offered by a HEI. For professional courses such as ACCA, CIMA etc. this includes whether all levels of the qualification are offered by the HEI. This also refers to whether the courses are available on full time, part time, distance learning, e-learning or block release. This factor also includes the course content.

Credibility

Created: 2012-12-11 20:12:03 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:49:39

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 49

Comment:

Credibility includes how long the institution has existed and is related to the recognition and reputation of the institution. Also includes whether institution is developing or growing in size, programmes, staff, technology etc.

Culture

Created: 2012-12-11 16:51:09 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:49:44

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 49

Comment:

This includes the overall culture of the HEI e.g. relations with students, relations amongst staff, attitudes to work, openness etc.

Ease of entry

Created: 2012-12-16 11:55:22 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:49:47

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 9

Education expos

Created: 2012-12-10 21:15:45 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:54:55

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 33

Comment:

These are exhibitions carried out by HEI at various fora/events such as career fairs, trade shows, public shows etc. They include open days conducted on campus.

Electronic media

Created: 2012-12-10 21:15:45 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:54:47

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 33

Comment:

Mainly TV and radio

Employability

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:49:59

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 72

Comment:

This includes job prospects after completing course/programme as well as opportunities for self-employment. It also includes how graduates perform in the workplace. Ability to find employment is particularly a concern for private HEI graduates. This factor is related to the recognition, credibility and reputation of the HEI.

Employment market

Created: 2012-12-12 07:13:19 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:51:56

Families (1): Influencers

Quotations: 8

Comment:

This refers to what qualifications the market wants, hence can influence a potential student to choose a particular course or HEI.

Environment

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:05

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 45

Comment:

The aura, climate, general feel of university; being friendly and inviting. Also includes physical aspects of environment such as cleanliness, hygiene, greens, architecture.

Facilities

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:08

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 92

Comment:

These are resources that aid/facilitate the learning process and stay at HEI such as library, computer labs, recreation facilities, car parks and canteen. Others are teaching aids such as projectors, white boards etc.

Fees

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:10

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 97

Comment:

Tuition and lodging fees as well as flexibility in payment methods. Also included are discounts, availability of scholarships and government bursaries.

Friends and alumni influence

Created: 2012-12-11 08:34:42 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:52:10

Families (1): Influencers

Quotations: 37

Comment:

These include existing and former students of the HEI.

Friends and alumni information

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:55:15

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 34

Comment:

These include existing and former students of the HEI.

Graduation ceremony

Created: 2012-12-11 16:38:22 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:53:30

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 3

Comment:

This refers to whether the HEI holds graduation ceremonies. Seems to apply only to ZCAS which only provides tuition but does not offer its own programmes.

Infrastructure

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:22

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 68

Comment:

This refers to the adequacy of buildings (offices, classrooms, student hostels) as well as general infrastructure in the HEI.

Internet

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:55:26

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 30

Comment:

This includes websites and use of social media such as Facebook.

Learning materials

Created: 2012-12-11 08:05:36 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:25

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 27

Comment:

These include text books, revision materials and hand-outs. Consideration is also given to how soon these are made available to students upon enrolment into the university programme.

Location

Created: 2012-12-10 21:00:42 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:27

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 37

Comment:

Where the HEI is located e.g. in city centre or outskirts of town. Also refers to remote campuses and proximity to transport systems such as bus and train stations; proximity from home.

Parents

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:52:30

Families (1): Influencers

Quotations: 31

Pass rates

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:30

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 39

Comment:

Pass rates refer to percentage of candidates in a class who manage to pass their exams. It is more relevant to professional courses such as ACCA and CIMA than degree programmes. It may reflect the quality of teaching in a HEI.

Print media

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:55:33

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 36

Comment:

This mostly refers to adverts in newspapers.

Recognition

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:32

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 61

Comment:

This is more relevant to private HEIs, particularly new ones. Includes whether HEI is registered and regulated by government and whether graduates are employable by government and other employers (recognition of both HEI and/or qualification). Also includes international mobility of qualification.

Relatives influence

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:54:16

Families (1): Influencers

Quotations: 10

Comment:

Relatives comprised parents, siblings, uncles, aunties and the wider extended family

Relatives information

Created: 2012-12-11 08:36:06 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:55:36

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 8

Reputation

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-18 08:29:48

Quotations: 41

Comment:

Fame of HEI; esteem in which it is held by public. Many factors affect the reputation, including age of HEI, calibre and conduct of staff, international status, recognition of qualification, name or department, league tables, local and foreign accreditations etc.

Safety and security

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:44

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 17

Comment:

Includes safety and security of students and their property.

School visitations

Created: 2012-12-10 21:15:45 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:58:07

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 32

Sponsors

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:53:01

Families (1): Influencers

Quotations: 11

Comment:

Excludes parents and relatives and mostly refers to employers, including the government.

Students/self

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:53:04

Families (1): Influencers

Quotations: 25

Teaching quality

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:48

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 159

Comment:

Teaching quality is mostly about the qualifications, competence, experience and reputation of teaching/lecturing staff. Also refers to teaching staff attitude to students including friendliness, willingness to help etc. Teaching quality can be enhanced by good management of the HEI, so quality of HEI leadership is also included here.

Timely completion/course duration

Created: 2012-12-11 07:40:59 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-19 09:50:52

Families (1): HEI factors

Quotations: 31

Comment:

Whether students can complete their studies as scheduled. This is an issue in government HEI due to unplanned closures, student riots, staff boycotts, political interference etc. disrupting studies and as a result courses taking longer to complete.

University agents

Created: 2012-12-10 21:10:28 by Super
Modified: 2012-12-17 08:39:58

Quotations: 5

Word of mouth

Created: 2012-12-10 21:15:45 by Super

Modified: 2012-12-19 09:55:47

Families (1): Information sources

Quotations: 12

Appendix 6 Conjoint Questionnaire Codebook

<i>Description of variable</i>	<i>SPSS variable name</i>	<i>Coding instruction</i>
Case identification number	ID	
Sex	Sex	1 = female, 2 = male
Age	Age group	15-25 years = 1, 26-35 years = 2, 36-45 years = 3, over 45 years = 4
Level of education attained	Education	Certificate = 1, Diploma = 2, Undergraduate Degree = 3, Post graduate degree = 4
Type of institution	Institution	Government = 1, Private = 2
Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Reputation	Outstanding = 1, Average = 2, Poor = 3
Total expenses for entire programme until completion	Fees	Low = 1, Average = 2, High = 3
Job prospects	Employability	Good = 1, average = 2, poor = 3
Learning environment and facilities	Environment	Conducive = 1, average = 2, poor = 3
Availability of course	Course	Just what I wanted = 1, More or less what I wanted = 2, Not really what I wanted = 3
Score for each profile	Score	Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neither agree nor disagree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1

NB: expected relationship between factors and factors levels - REPUTATION (LINEAR MORE) FEES (LINEAR LESS) EMPLOYABILITY (LINEAR MORE) ENVIRONMENT (LINEAR MORE) COURSE (LINEAR MORE)

Appendix 7 Questionnaire Introductory Letter



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a postgraduate student at the Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University (United Kingdom). As part of my doctoral research, I am investigating the factors that affect higher education brands in Zambia. You could be of great help if you would kindly complete the following questionnaire.

The questionnaire takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The information you provide will only be used for academic purposes and will remain strictly confidential.

Your thoughtful input to the study is greatly appreciated and will be of substantial value to me. If you have any questions during your participation in the study, please do not hesitate to ask for assistance or clarification.

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Kelvin Kayombo
Edinburg Business School
Hariot-Watt University

Cellphone: +260 978 886879

E-mail: Kelvin.kayombo@zcas.edu.zm

Appendix 8 Request to HEI to participate in study

The Registrar,
Zambian Open University,
Lusaka

31 January, 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

**REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN A HIGHER EDUCATION BRAND
MANAGEMENT STUDY IN ZAMBIA**

One of our Principal Lecturers, Capt. Kelvin Kayombo, is currently pursuing doctoral studies in Brand Management with the Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University, United Kingdom. As part of his doctoral research, he is investigating the factors that affect higher education (HE) brands in Zambia.

As one of the highest institutions of learning in Zambia, we request for your participation in this study by granting permission to interview your marketing/brand management official later in 2012, and to distribute one hundred (100) self-administered questionnaires to a sample of your students in 2013.

The study results will be made available to participating institutions and are likely to be of use to HE marketing practitioners and academics alike. In particular, your institution could use the study results, including the HE brand model that will be developed, to strengthen your brand and counter the increasing global competition in the higher education sector further.

Capt. Kayombo undertakes, in accordance with the university's research ethics regulations, to use any information you provide for academic purposes only and to treat it as strictly confidential. No institution or individual will be mentioned by name in the thesis.

Please communicate your approval to participate in the research study to the DBA Research Committee through Capt. Kayombo as per the attached sample letter. Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Yours faithfully,
Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies

Dr. Y. G. Rao
Executive Director

Appendix 9 Conjoint Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY BRAND MANAGEMENT CONJOINT QUESTIONNAIRE

1.0 RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1.1 What is your sex?

(Please tick the appropriate box)

Female	[]
Male	[]

1.2 How old are you?

(Please tick the appropriate box)

15 to 25 years	[]
26 to 35 years	[]
36 to 45 years	[]
Over 45 years	[]

1.3 Level of education attained to date

(Please tick the appropriate box)

Certificate	[]
Diploma	[]
Undergraduate degree	[]
Post graduate degree	[]

1.4 Type of institution

(Please tick the appropriate box)

Government	[]
Private	[]

2.0 CONJOINT QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUCTIONS

The five **main factors** that Zambian students consider when deciding which college or university to go to are:

- 1) The academic reputation of the institution or quality of teaching (which can be outstanding, average or poor);
- 2) Total expenses (which can be considered to be low/inexpensive, average/affordable or high/very expensive);
- 3) Availability of course at the college/university (just what I wanted, more or less what I wanted or not really what I wanted);
- 4) Job prospects after graduating (good, average or poor); and
- 5) How conducive the learning environment is (conducive, average or poor)

A detailed explanation of each of these factors is given at the end of this questionnaire.

2.1 Part I: Ranking individual factors that attract students to colleges or universities

Please rank the five main factors listed above in order of importance to you in your choice of your university. Number the most important factor that attracted you to your university as 1, the next most important 2, the third and fourth most important 3 and 4 respectively and the least important 5.

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Importance</i>
Academic reputation or teaching quality	[]
Fees (total expenses)	[]
Availability of programme/course	[]
Job prospects	[]
Learning environment and facilities	[]

2.2 Part II: Rating bundles of factors that attract students to colleges or universities

Below are 22 sets or bundles of the five **main factors** or issues that Zambian students consider when deciding which college or university to go to. It is assumed that potential students consider these main factors together as a **bundle** or set, not as individual factors. A deficiency in one factor can therefore be ‘traded off’ or off-set by another factor when choosing a particular higher education institution.

To complete the questionnaire please answer the following question about **EACH** of the 22 bundles or set of factors taken as a whole:

To what extent do you agree that this bundle of factors taken as a whole attracted you to your university?

Please rate a bundle or bundles with the most favourable combination of factors that attracted you to your university as ‘Strongly agree’ and those with less favourable factor combinations as ‘Agree’. A bundle or bundles with factor combinations that did not or could not have attracted you to your university should be rated either as ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Disagree’. A bundle or bundles that neither attracted you nor discouraged you from coming to your university should be marked as ‘Neither agree nor disagree’.

For <u>EACH</u> of the 22 bundles of factors below, please answer the question below:										
To what extent do you agree that this <u>bundle of factors</u> attracted you to your university?										
<i>Please tick the answer you agree most with</i>										
Bundle Number 1						<i>Tick one answer only for the whole bundle</i>				
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Outstanding	High	Avarage	Average	Not really what I wanted					
Bundle Number 2										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2	Average	High	Avarage	Conductive	Not really what I wanted					
Bundle Number 3										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
3	Poor	High	Good	Average	Just what I wanted					
Bundle Number 4										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
4	Poor	Low	Avarage	Conductive	More or less what I wanted					
Bundle Number 5										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
5	Average	High	Avarage	Poor	Not really what I wanted					
Bundle Number 6										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
6	Poor	Average	Poor	Average	Not really what I wanted					

For EACH of the bundles of factors below, please answer the question below:

To what extent do you agree that this bundle of factors attracted you to your university?

Please tick the answer you agree most with

Bundle Number 7

Tick one answer only for the whole bundle

Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
7	Outstanding	Low	Poor	Poor	Just what I wanted					

Bundle Number 8

Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
8	Outstanding	Average	Poor	Conducive	Not really what I wanted					

Bundle Number 9

Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
9	Outstanding	Low	Avarage	Average	More or less what I wanted					

Bundle Number 10

Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
10	Average	High	Poor	Conducive	More or less what I wanted					

Bundle Number 11

Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
11	Average	Average	Avarage	Poor	Just what I wanted					

Bundle Number 12

Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
12	Average	Low	Good	Average	Just what I wanted					

For EACH of the bundles of factors below, please answer the question below:										
<i>To what extent do you agree that this <u>bundle of factors</u> attracted you to your university?</i>										
						<i>Please tick the answer you agree most with</i>				
Bundle Number 13						<i>Tick one answer only for the whole bundle</i>				
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
13	Poor	Average	Poor	Average	Not really what I wanted					
Bundle Number 14										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
14	Outstanding	Low	Poor	Conducive	Just what I wanted					
Bundle Number 15										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
15	Outstanding	Average	Good	Conducive	Not really what I wanted					
Bundle Number 16										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16	Poor	High	Good	Poor	More or less what I wanted					
Bundle Number 17										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
17	Poor	Low	Poor	Poor	Not really what I wanted					
Bundle Number 18										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
18	Poor	Average	Avarage	Conducive	Just what I wanted					

For EACH of the bundles of factors below, please answer the question below:										
<i>To what extent do you agree that this bundle of factors attracted you to your university?</i>										
						<i>Please tick the answer you agree most with</i>				
Bundle Number 19						<i>Tick one answer only for the whole bundle</i>				
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
19	Outstanding	High	Poor	Conducive	Just what I wanted					
Bundle Number 20										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
20	Average	Low	Good	Conducive	Not really what I wanted					
Bundle Number 21										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
21	Average	Average	Poor	Average	More or less what I wanted					
Bundle Number 22										
Card ID	Academic reputation or teaching quality of institution	Total expenses for entire program until completion	Job prospects	Learning environment and facilities	Availability of course	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
22	Outstanding	Average	Good	Poor	More or less what I wanted					

3.0 Explanation of university/college choice factors and their levels

No	Attribute	Description	Attribute level
1	Academic reputation of university or college	This refers to the fame of the university or college and the esteem in which it is held by the public. Many factors affect the reputation, including age of institution; attitude, qualifications and experience of staff; international status and recognition of qualifications; name of department, league tables, local and foreign accreditations.	a) Outstanding b) Average c) Poor
2	Total expenses	Total fees payable for entire programme as well as flexibility in payment methods. Also included are discounts, availability of scholarships and bursaries.	a) Low/inexpensive b) Average/affordable c) High/expensive
3	Course availability or suitability	This factor includes the availability and range of courses/programmes offered by a college/university. It also refers to whether the courses are available on full time, part time, distance learning, e-learning or block release. This attribute also includes ease of entry into the programme and course duration.	a) Just what I want b) More or less what I want c) Not really what I want
4	Employability (job prospects)	This refers to the availability of employment opportunities upon graduating from the university or college, including self-employment. It also includes international mobility of students.	a) Good b) Average c) Poor
5	Learning environment	This is the aura, climate and general feel of the university including its location, infrastructure and facilities (e.g. libraries, learning materials and IT facilities); also includes physical aspects of environment such as cleanliness, hygiene, greens and architecture.	a) Conducive b) Average c) Poor

Appendix 10 HEI factors

CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE

Report created by Super - 24/12/2012 15:09:05

HU: [C:\Documents and Settings\kelvin.kayombo\Desktop\kelvin.ka...DBA First Research.hpr7]

Code-Filter: All [37]

PD-Filter: All [46]

Quotation-Filter: All [1153]

	Collaborations	Course availability	Credibility	Culture	Ease of entry	Employability	Environment	Facilities	Fees	Graduation ceremony	Infrastructure	Learning materials	Location	Pass rates	Recognition	Reputation	Safety and security	Teaching quality	Timely completion	TOTALS:
P 1: FGD01Prof1	1	5	0	0	10	7	11	5	0	3	1	3	8	3	5	5	19	6	6	92
P 3: FGD02Acad	0	2	0	6	5	7	13	3	1	1	5	2	4	1	2	4	11	0	0	67
P 5: FGD03Acad	1	7	7	1	8	3	2	4	0	3	2	1	2	7	3	2	10	2	2	65
P 7: SS01EMOrg2	3	11	3	2	6	3	4	9	0	1	0	1	3	11	4	0	10	0	0	71
P 9: SS01MOrg1	1	0	2	4	5	7	9	5	0	3	2	1	3	3	1	0	4	0	0	50
P11: SS02EMOrg3	1	3	2	5	1	2	3	2	0	7	0	1	0	1	1	0	8	1	1	38
P13: SS02MOrg1	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	4	0	5	0	2	1	3	1	1	6	2	2	38
P15: SS03EMOrg4	1	3	11	4	2	1	1	4	0	2	0	2	0	3	1	0	8	3	3	46
P17: SS03MOrg1	0	1	1	0	2	1	4	3	1	2	1	1	2	0	5	1	6	0	0	31
P19: SS04EMOrg5	2	5	1	2	2	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	24
P21: SS04MOrg1	0	0	0	2	2	3	1	5	1	3	0	3	1	0	3	1	6	0	0	31
P23: SS05EMOrg6	1	6	0	0	2	2	4	6	0	1	0	3	0	1	2	0	5	5	5	38
P25: SS05MOrg1	1	5	3	2	1	1	0	3	9	0	7	1	2	8	3	3	1	7	0	57
P27: SS06EMOrg7	4	6	2	2	2	1	4	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	2	0	5	5	5	39
P29: SS06FOrg1	0	3	1	0	2	1	5	1	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	11	0	0	36
P31: SS07EFOrg7	1	7	0	7	3	2	5	5	0	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	9	4	4	49
P33: SS07MOrg1	2	3	1	0	3	2	10	6	0	1	3	1	4	1	1	1	8	0	0	47
P35: SS08EMOrg8	2	6	2	1	1	0	2	3	0	4	0	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	28
P37: SS09EMOrg9	1	5	2	1	4	2	1	5	0	2	0	2	0	1	2	0	3	2	2	34
P39: SS10EFOrg10	3	0	4	2	1	1	3	2	0	1	1	1	0	7	0	0	5	0	0	31
P41: SS11EMOrg11	1	4	2	1	6	0	2	5	0	2	3	0	0	5	1	0	4	1	1	38
P43: SS12EMOrg12	1	4	2	2	2	0	1	6	0	3	5	2	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	36
P45: SS13EMOrg13	1	6	1	4	1	0	3	1	0	7	0	1	0	2	0	0	8	0	0	35
TOTALS:	30	95	49	49	9	72	45	92	97	3	68	27	37	39	61	41	17	159	31	1021

Appendix 11 Information Sources

CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE												
Report created by Super - 03/01/2013 07:44:04												
HU: [C:\Documents and Settings\kelvin.kayombo\Desktop\kelvin.ka...\DBA First Research.hpr7]												
Code-Filter: All [37]												
PD-Filter: All [46]												
Quotation-Filter: All [1153]												
		Admissions office/HEI staff	Billboards	Education expos	Electronic media	Friends and alumni information	Internet	Print media	Relatives information	School visitations	Word of mouth	TOTALS:
1	P 1: FGD01Prof1	2	0	3	1	7	2	1	2	1	1	20
2	P 3: FGD02Acad	1	0	1	4	5	1	3	2	2	0	19
3	P 5: FGD03Acad	3	1	1	0	4	4	6	1	1	0	21
4	P 7: SS01EMOrg2	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	0	0	2	9
5	P 9: SS01MOrg1	0	1	3	5	1	2	5	0	8	0	25
6	P11: SS02EMOrg3	0	0	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	0	11
7	P13: SS02MOrg1	0	0	3	2	1	1	0	0	3	3	13
8	P15: SS03EMOrg4	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
9	P17: SS03MOrg1	0	0	3	2	2	2	1	0	2	1	13
10	P19: SS04EMOrg5	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
11	P21: SS04MOrg1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	5
12	P23: SS05EMOrg6	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	7
13	P25: SS05MOrg1	0	0	0	2	3	3	5	0	1	2	16
14	P27: SS06EMOrg7	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5
15	P29: SS06FOrg1	2	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	2	0	11
16	P31: SS07EFOrg7	1	0	5	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	12
17	P33: SS07MOrg1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	2	0	9
18	P35: SS08EMOrg8	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	7
19	P37: SS09EMOrg9	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	6
20	P39: SS10EFOrg10	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	4
21	P41: SS11EMOrg11	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
22	P43: SS12EMOrg12	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
23	P45: SS13EMOrg13	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	1	6
	TOTALS:	13	2	33	33	34	30	36	8	32	12	233

Appendix 12 Influencer of student choice

CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE										
Report created by Super - 03/01/2013 09:20:03										
HU: [C:\Documents and Settings\kelvin.kayombo\Desktop\kelvin.ka...\DBA First Research.hpr7]										
Code-Filter: All [37]										
PD-Filter: All [46]										
Quotation-Filter: All [1153]										
		Careers masters	Employment market	Friends and alumni influence	Parents	Relatives influence	Sponsors	Students/self	University agents	TOTALS:
1	P 1: FGD01Prof1	1	0	5	2	3	2	2	1	16
2	P 3: FGD02Acad	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	5
3	P 5: FGD03Acad	0	6	1	1	2	0	4	0	14
4	P 7: SS01EMOrg2	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	5
5	P 9: SS01MOrg1	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	5
6	P11: SS02EMOrg3	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	6
7	P13: SS02MOrg1	2	1	3	1	0	1	0	2	10
8	P15: SS03EMOrg4	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
9	P17: SS03MOrg1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	4
10	P19: SS04EMOrg5	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
11	P21: SS04MOrg1	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	5
12	P23: SS05EMOrg6	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	6
13	P25: SS05MOrg1	1	0	4	3	0	2	1	1	12
14	P27: SS06EMOrg7	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
15	P29: SS06FOrg1	2	1	3	2	1	0	2	1	12
16	P31: SS07EFOrg7	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
17	P33: SS07MOrg1	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	5
18	P35: SS08EMOrg8	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	4
19	P37: SS09EMOrg9	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
20	P39: SS10EFOrg10	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	4
21	P41: SS11EMOrg11	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	5
22	P43: SS12EMOrg12	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
23	P45: SS13EMOrg13	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	6
	TOTALS:	11	8	37	31	10	11	25	5	138

Appendix 13 Codes Co-occurrence Table

	Collaborations	Course availability	Credibility	Culture	Ease of entry	Employability	Environment	Facilities	Fees	Graduation	Infrastructure	Learning materials	Location	Pass rates	Recognition	Reputation	Safety and security	Teaching quality	Timely completion	TOTALS:
Collaborations	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	6
Course availability	0	0	2	0	3	3	0	3	8	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	9	4	37
Credibility	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	7	0	7	0	0	31
Culture	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	7
Ease of entry	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Employability	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	0	3	1	0	19
Environment	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	6	0	0	5	2	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	22
Facilities	0	3	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	14	7	0	1	0	1	10	1	0	44
Fees	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	4	1	2	0	3	4	0	26
Graduation ceremony	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Infrastructure	0	1	0	2	0	0	5	14	2	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	0	6	0	37
Learning materials	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	13
Location	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	8
Pass rates	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	4	0	3	0	0	2	3	0	6	0	0	23
Recognition	3	1	9	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	8	0	2	0	0	31
Reputation	1	1	7	0	0	4	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	3	8	0	5	1	0	35
Safety and security	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Teaching quality	0	9	7	2	0	3	3	10	3	0	6	3	0	6	2	5	0	0	3	62
Timely completion	0	4	0	0	1	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	15